

RIPCORD

ACT ONE

Scene 1

A double room in the Bristol Place Senior Living Facility. It's fairly homey, as far as these places go. There are two beds, a couple end tables, two sitting chairs, and two identical dressers. There's a door to the room stage right that leads out into the hall. A wide set of windows line the stage left wall. It's a very sunny day. A door upstage right leads into the bathroom.

As the lights rise, we discover Abby Binder in the chair closest to the windows, reading on an iPad. Her side of the room, stage left, has a few plants on the windowsill and some knick-knacks. Her bed is made, while the stage right bed is not. The stage right dresser has several framed family photos atop it, while Abby's dresser has a small stack of books.

There's a tap at the door. Scotty, a resident aide, enters carrying a tray with a couple covered plates on it.

SCOTTY. Hey, Abby. You didn't want to come down to the dining room?

ABBY. *(Doesn't look up from her iPad.)* Am I there?

SCOTTY. That's alright, I brought some lunch up for you. *(Places the tray near her.)*

ABBY. Why bother? I can't taste anything.

SCOTTY. I know, I'm sorry.

ABBY. Going on two months now. Which may be a blessing given what they serve down there.

SCOTTY. It's very common. Losing your sense of taste.

ABBY. No, it isn't.

START
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SCOTTY. I've seen it with a lot of our residents. It's usually the medications. Certain combinations do funny things.

ABBY. Oh, are you a doctor now?

SCOTTY. No. The plate's right there when you get hungry. It's shrimp marinara.

ABBY. It doesn't matter what it is. It all tastes like sand to me.

SCOTTY. Okay. *(He makes the unmade bed over the following.)*

ABBY. How long is that woman here?

SCOTTY. What do you mean?

ABBY. It's been three weeks. And she never stops talking. How long is this supposed to go on?

SCOTTY. This is where she lives, Abby.

ABBY. Well yes, for *now*, but I / meant —

SCOTTY. Not just for now. Indefinitely. This is Marilyn's room. Same as you.

ABBY. But I thought she was being moved as soon as a bed opened up. And from what I hear, that fat woman on the first floor died last night.

SCOTTY. Mrs. Moore. Her name was Mrs. Moore.

ABBY. Well I can't keep track of everyone's name. You knew who I meant. She's dead isn't she?

SCOTTY. She passed away, yes.

ABBY. Then there's an open bed.

SCOTTY. I think Marilyn prefers this room. She said she likes the view of the park. She's very happy in here.

ABBY. But everyone wants the first floor. It's closer to everything. And I've *always* had my own room, Scotty.

SCOTTY. That's not true.

ABBY. *Most* of the time. That Spanish lady was here for a few months, but after / her —

SCOTTY. If there's space, we try to accommodate you, but there's not always space. And you don't have a private room.

ABBY. Not officially maybe.

SCOTTY. If you and your family want to *pay* for a private room —

ABBY. If I *have* to have someone in here, why can't it be someone quiet? What about that woman without the voicebox? She seems nice.

SCOTTY. So is Marilyn. You just need to give her a / chance.

ABBY. That woman is troubled, Scotty. I think there's something wrong with her. She's always trying to make little *bets* with me.

SCOTTY. What do you mean, bets? What kind of bets?

ABBY. Just the stupidest things. Guessing games and quizzes. This morning she wanted to race me to the elevator. Last night she bet me she could balance a slipper on her head.

SCOTTY. Could she?

END

~~ABBY. I don't know, I rolled over. You have to get her out of here.~~

~~SCOTTY. I can't *force* her to leave, Abby.~~

~~ABBY. Management could. Charlie Hastings would've done it. He always made sure I had my own room.~~

~~SCOTTY. Well, Charlie doesn't work here anymore.~~

~~ABBY. Which is a shame. Charlie liked me.~~

~~SCOTTY. I like you too. But, I'm not in charge of room assignments. Miss Lorusso is.~~

~~ABBY. Well you're friends with her, aren't you? I see you in her office all the time watching those cat videos or whatever they are. They must be very funny the way you two carry on.~~

~~SCOTTY. They aren't cat videos.~~

~~ABBY. No?~~

~~SCOTTY. Not all of them.~~

~~ABBY. Can't you talk to her?~~