

Excerpt from “Lady Jigsaw” – play by Stuart J. Brown

<https://stuartjbrown.com/full-one-act-plays/lady-jigsaw/>

ACT I

SCENE 1 - Day 1 - MORNING

(JENNIFER RYAN, an administrator for a retirement complex is sitting at her desk doing paperwork. There is a knock at her door.)

JENNIFER

Come in.

SID

Yes, hi Ms. Ryan.

JENNIFER

Sid Mellman, good to see you again. Let me officially welcome you as a new resident of Coastal Dunes.

SID

Thank you. I was a bit early so I was just wondering around, getting a better feel for the place. I didn't have that much time during my initial visit.

JENNIFER

I'm surprised they didn't stop you at the front desk? I like to think I run a tight ship here.

SID

I told them I had an appointment with you. Very friendly staff.

JENNIFER

I like to think so. Still...

SID

Yes, very friendly.

JENNIFER

Would you like to have a seat while I go over the final checklist with you?

[SID wanders around the office, picking up items, checking them out.]

SID

If it's okay with you, I'd rather stand. I like to keep myself on my toes.

JENNIFER

Not at all.

[JENNIFER looks over the paperwork on her desk.]

You have a one-bedroom on the fourth floor looking out on the ocean. Lovely view. Did you know you can occasionally see whales swim by?

SID

Is that a fact?

JENNIFER

Just the other day a pod of humpback whales were splashing about.

SID

Is that a fact?

JENNIFER

Are you a seafaring man, Mr. Mellman?

SID

Please. Sid. All my friends call me Sid. Even some of my enemies.

[JENNIFER just stares with no reaction.]

A seafarer? I do enjoy a good surf and turf dinner.

JENNIFER

Ya know, Sid, you remind me of my father.

SID

Really?

JENNIFER

His dad jokes are just as bad your's.

SID

A kindred spirit. Your mom must get sick of them.

JENNIFER

She did. She passed away.

SID

I'm so sorry to hear that.

JENNIFER

My father's still here.

SID

That must be comforting.

[There is an awkward pause between JENNIFER and SID.]

I'm glad I was able to secure that room with a view. I do like the ocean. The beach. The solitude.

JENNIFER

That may be difficult around here. As you saw in your walk-through, Coastal Dunes is a bustling place. There are so many activities here. As long as you follow the policies and procedures we have here, you'll be fine. We have a reputation for being a very friendly place.

SID

There's that word again, friendly.

JENNIFER

Do you know anyone here?

SID

No, I don't.

JENNIFER

Well, that will change very quickly. Everyone is so...

SID

Miss Ryan...Jennifer, can we get down to business and go over what needs to be done? I'd like to start getting settled. You understand.

[JENNIFER is slightly taken aback by SID's brusqueness.]

JENNIFER

Why, of course...Mr. Mellman. As was explained to you before, meals are in the main dining room. You receive six dinners a week, lunch every day. Breakfast is on your own. We do have the café, where you can take your lunch instead of the main dining room. People like to bring their guests there. Do you have friends or relatives that will be visiting us here at Coastal Dunes?

SID

I don't think so.

JENNIFER

Children? We do have a very set visitor policy. Some of the residents think it's somewhat restrictive, but...

SID

I'll let them know. Is there anything else?

JENNIFER

No, I think we're finished. You just need to sign these forms. Oh, I can't believe I forgot to tell you about the renovated rec room. It was closed when you were last here.

SID

I'm not really a recreational guy

[Ignoring SID, JENNIFER continues.]

JENNIFER

The tower rec space is our pride and joy. You have a 360 panoramic view of the water. New carpeting and couches, more spacious bathrooms...

SID

That sounds tremendous. Where do I sign?

JENNIFER

We've even been able to add a few more tables and chairs. The residents do love their jigsaw puzzles and games of cards.

SID

Excuse me, what did you just say?

JENNIFER

What? Oh, ah, the new bathrooms?

SID

No, you said jigsaw puzzles.

JENNIFER

Yes, we have quite an assortment of jigsaw puzzles, mostly 500 and 1,000 piece puzzles.

SID

Jigsaw puzzles are, well, they're my thing.

JENNIFER

Really? I never would have guessed that from your, ah...so you like jigsaws. Imagine that?

SID

They calm my nerves.

JENNIFER

I know exactly what you mean.

SID

So, they're in the rec room?

JENNIFER

Yes, there for the taking...so to speak.

SID

Well, that's the best news I've heard in a while. I'll check them out after I move in.

JENNIFER

Perfect. Now, just sign these papers. Here and then there. Congratulations, Sid, and welcome to Coastal Dunes.

SID

Thank you, Jennifer.

[SID walks from room. JENNIFER stands up and shuffles the papers and then stops suddenly, remembering something she forgot to tell SID.]

JENNIFER

Oh, dear. I forgot to tell Sid about Mae...Well, too late now.