

Compos Mentis

Marilyn Millstone





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COMPOS MENTIS

(Note: The Latin phrase "Compos Mentis" means "of sound mind.")

By Marilyn Millstone

CAST

PATRICIA AMBROSE, MSW: Mid-40s, relentlessly pleasant and professional

ALESE LANGFORD, MSW: Late 60s-70s, elegant and refined

ROBERT LANGFORD, PhD.: 70s-80s, attractive, charming, Alese's husband of 46 years

Place

The office of Patricia Ambrose, Assistant Director of Administration,
Silver Glades Independent Senior Living Condominiums, Baltimore, Maryland.

Time

Bright and early Monday morning.

(Note from the playwright: *Compos Mentis* is intended as an homage to wise and witty seniors everywhere. Please refrain from playing it as slapstick.)

COMPOS MENTIS

Setting: *The cheery office of PATRICIA AMBROSE.*

At rise: *Patricia rolls her desk chair out from behind her desk, so that she sits facing Alese. They maintain intense eye contact throughout this exchange, subtly trying to “size each other up.”*

PATRICIA: *(smiling)* Good morning!

ALESE: *(slowly, politely)* Yes.

PATRICIA: *(confused)* Yes...is that how you...normally greet someone who says “good morning?”

ALESE: *(with a polite smile)* Yes. *(beat)* I’m agreeing with you. It is a good morning.

PATRICIA: Oh! I see! Funny. *(writes in her notebook)* We love a good sense of humor around here.

ALESE: How nice.

(beat)

PATRICIA: Mrs. Langford. We’ve favorably reviewed the application you and your husband have made to reside here at Silver Glades Senior Living. You and your children seem to be united in making what we know is always a very difficult decision.

ALESE: United?

PATRICIA: Yes. Your children passionately believe it’s in your best interests to move to...an easier lifestyle, and clearly you and Robert feel the same way. Am I right?

ALESE: *(smiling enigmatically)* You’re certainly right about our children. They are passionate.

(beat)

PATRICIA: *(returning her smile)* Yes. Well...your children care about you both a great deal.

ALESE: Yes. *(beat)* We're fond of them, too.

(Patricia smiles, not knowing exactly how to respond. She checks her notes, looks over at Alese, smiles. Alese politely smiles back.)

PATRICIA: Yes. Well. Mrs. Langford, as I believe you know, today's face-to-face meeting is the last step before we make our final decision about *(patting her papers)* your application. In this meeting, we're required to ask you certain questions, just so we can get to know you better.

ALESE: *(looking around)* Is there someone else here?

PATRICIA: *(confused)* No.

ALESE: Ah. Then it would be more accurate to say that *you* would like to get to know me better. You said "we." I thought there might be someone watching us, perhaps on hidden camera.

PATRICIA: *(finding this amusing)* I like your sense of humor, Mrs. Langford. May I call you by your first name?

ALESE: Of course.

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!