

## **The Resident**

written by

Dawn Johnston

hdjohnston@gmail.com

Management:  
John Ferraro  
Valleywood Ent, Los Angeles  
(323) 428-3042  
john@valleywoodent.com

EXT. BURTON LODGE NURSING HOME - DAY

A low-slung building surrounded by trees and grassy parkland. A sign in front proclaims it Burton Lodge. Only two cars in the lot. Other than birds chirping, it's eerily silent.

A dog runs through the lot, excited to be free. Its leash trails behind, jingling in the morning air.

The dog trots off toward the trees.

Leaving stillness.

INT. RESIDENT'S ROOM - DAY

The room is sparse and institutional. Several photos liven up the cheap dresser: a faded snapshot of a young couple jitterbugging, a stiff portrait in their golden years.

In the bed, the male Resident (80s) lies awake, a towel and razor abandoned on his chest. Shaving cream flecks his face and his blank eyes stare at nothing. Next to the bed, an overturned chair.

Running FOOTSTEPS approach from down the hall. The Resident looks to the sound.

A CARE WORKER races by his door. Her footsteps fade. A door BANGS.

The Resident's eyes shift to the window. Outside, a car starts, engine racing. The tires spit gravel as it peels away. Then silence again.

He closes his eyes.

INT. RESIDENT'S ROOM - LATER

The Resident opens his eyes. He throws back the covers and sits up. The razor clatters to the floor.

He slides his feet into slippers and stands. It takes him a moment to find his balance.

HALLWAY

It's quiet and empty. The Resident looks down the long hall to a door at the end, his goal. He starts toward it, feet shuffling, hand on the rail. His slippers slap softly on the tile.

He stops to rest, eye on the door. He's close now. The wheeze of his own breathing fills the air.

Behind him a door BANGS. Running footsteps approach.

A MAN in a suit rushes past the Resident like he's not there. He reaches the door. Slaps a code into the keypad. CLICK. And flies through.

CLANG. The door locks behind him.

Something makes the Man stop. He looks back through the glass and locks eyes with the Resident. He hesitates.

The Resident smiles and raises his hand to wave.

The Man SMASHES back through the door. Searches frantically for something to hold it. There's nothing. Dammit. He rips off his own shoe. Props the door wide. Gives the old man a final look.

And he's gone. His footsteps fade, leaving silence.

The Resident starts his slow shuffle toward the door.

Click. HISS. The hydraulic door-closer engages and the door pushes the shoe with it, slowly closing.

A metallic CLATTER from behind distracts the old man. He glances back toward the sound. All is quiet.

The door's almost closed. He resumes his mission. Reaches out. He'll never make it.

THUD. The shoe catches in the door frame.

EXT. NURSING HOME - DAY

The Resident steps into the brilliant sunshine. The parking lot is empty but he doesn't notice.

He closes his eyes and tilts his face to the sky.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Shoes off, the old man joyously digs his bare toes into the grass.

The dog emerges from the trees. Runs past him barking, trailing its leash. Bewildered. Lost.

The Resident smiles. A dog! He trots after it, snapping his fingers toward it in a friendly way. He has no chance of catching it. But he tries until --

His foot catches and he tumbles to the ground, landing in a heap. He lies still for a moment, assessing.

He rolls onto his back and spits out some grass, laughing. He stretches out. The big sky overhead. The warm sun glorious on his skin.

The Resident's expression slowly morphs from delight to puzzlement. His eyes widen in surprise.

A shadow passes over him, over the trees, the park, the whole damned countryside. Something huge blotting out the sun.

And the noise. A deep rumble, getting louder. The wind. Whipping into a frenzy around him.

The Resident throws out his arms and LAUGHS.

He scrambles to his feet, the wind nearly knocking him over. But it doesn't faze him.

He starts a creaky jitterbug to music only he can hear. It may be the end of the world, who knows. He's going out dancing.

And when he extends his hand, his WIFE (80s), the woman from the photos, appears and takes it.

They move in practiced steps, learned so many years ago. In, out. Together, apart. He spins her around. It's like they'd never parted.

They dance as the ROAR gets louder. Until it's like a thousand freight trains overhead. The ground shakes with the violence of it.

The Resident spins, and now he's alone again, his arms thrown up toward the sky.

He laughs. Great, joyous, giddy laughter.

SMASH to WHITE.

FADE OUT.