

Discipline of Silence

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. INTERSECTION DOWNTOWN - DAY

PHIL, in his 60's, tries to read from a paper as it flaps in the wind. He desperately searches nearby street signs, growing increasingly agitated. Standing nearby in a lab coat, DEBRA, late 30's, notices and steps forth, but then hesitates, stares, and eventually looks away.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE SHOP - DAY

A disheveled STREET PERFORMER with oily skin is playing the guitar so beautifully, lost in his world. David Wycraft, 40, dressed in a black suit and blue tie, listens, surreptitiously glancing over with admiration. He looks at the open guitar case, then checks his wallet, finding only one twenty. The performer finishes his song with gusto. David remains silent.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE - DAY

Debra, in lab coat and stethoscope, stands next to the bed occupied by her patient AMANDA, early 20's, with a vibrant smile despite a tired face and bald scalp.

AMANDA

I don't know if I can keep doing the chemo. But I still want to go scuba-diving in Belize, and, would you believe I've been studying archaeology for this long and I haven't seen the pyramids in Egypt yet? Have you been there?

Debra grimaces, holding emotion back.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

When I was little, I used to dream about what it would be like inside one.

Debra forces a weak smile but has no words. Her phone beeps. She apologetically looks away, and reads a text message on her phone while wiping away a tear. "David: Lunch at Millie's?"

INT. OFFICE - DAY

FRANK, 60, and RHIANNE, 40's, both dressed formally, sit across from David Wycraft, who pockets his phone and sits, starting to appear anxious.

RHIANNE

Look, no one likes things like this dragged out, so I'll get to the point. We've decided we're letting you go. Immediately.

David goes white.

FRANK

Your...

(clears throat)

Your belongings will be sent home to your address, and you'll be escorted to your car by our security.

DAVID

But, why? I thought I was doing such great work at this firm. You gave me a raise last month!

Frank exhales over pursed lips, but sees Rhianne stoic and remains silent as well.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Frank? I'm still fairly new to the healthcare insurance industry. Can I at least use you as a reference?

Frank lowers his eyes. David stares in disbelief between him and Rhianne.

INT. MILLIE'S CAFE - DAY

Debra and David sit across from each other, relaxing over a pair of sandwiches in a café.

DEBRA

What jerks. How could they do that to you?

DAVID

From what you told me, I'm not sure who's day has been worse.

Debra gathers her belongings and tray, then David follows suit.

DEBRA
Okay, let's get through the rest of
the day, shall we?

DAVID
Umm, my day's already over,
remember?

Debra conspiratorially grins.

DEBRA
Maybe not. Interested in dinner and
drinks tonight?

David fixates on the door, hesitating for a long pause.

DAVID
Hey, I guess I need to update my
resume. I'll talk to you tomorrow,
okay?

Debra's face drops as she then follows David's lead out the
door.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

MICHAEL, a formally dressed, slick-haired man lifts his
attaché on the table and opens it. Next to him is EILEEN, an
older stern-faced woman in a wheel chair. Settling down on
the other side of the table is SAMUEL, a stocky man with five
o'clock shadow and a suit one size too small, and Debra.

MICHAEL
My client has gone on disability and
will be unable to work for at least
the next six months to a year. She
also asks for compensation for the
agonizing, life-altering pain she
has suffered as a result of Dr.
Debra Green's reckless malpractice.

Debra's head pivots to Samuel, who only takes notes, then to
Eileen, and then back to Michael.

DEBRA
I performed the procedure by the
book. There is no chance I could
have caused this. She was fine after
the procedure, and went home the
same day.

Debra stares at Samuel in disbelief, and leans in, quiet but
firm.

DEBRA (CONT'D)
C'mon, this is fraud. Please don't
let this happen.

SAMUEL
Don't worry. We'll discuss this
later.

Debra finally meets the eyes of Eileen, who looks away as
Michael starts laying evidence on the table.

EXT. INTERSECTION DOWNTOWN - DAY

Thoughts linger in David's eyes as he gets distracted by the
appearance of the same flustered man, Phil, with the same
paper in his hands, once again trying to make sense of the
street signs. People flow past, and eventually David leans to
approach, but a groan of anger stops him. Phil crumples up
his paper and tosses it into the trash bin, then sulks.

Phil suddenly loses his balance and catches himself on the
trash bin, his eyes wide. He hears a voice.

KATIE (O.S.)
Why is your nose so hairy?

David's face slackens. Phil looks down. A six year old child,
cute as a button, challenges him.

A woman rushes up and grabs her hand, glancing apologetically
at the man, who begins laughing.

KATIE'S MOTHER
I'm so sorry.

She steals the girl away as a jovial David takes her place.

DAVID
Kids can just say anything.

Phil rubs his leg.

PHIL
That girl's got a football career
ahead of her! All I need is another
knee replacement.

DAVID
You'll be fine, shaggy snout. Hey,
do you need help finding something?

FADE OUT.