

Discipline of Silence

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. INTERSECTION DOWNTOWN - DAY

TAMMY, 50's, leans back on a bench, her eyes tracking DR. DEBRA GREEN, late 30's, with her freshly dry cleaned labcoat over her arm. Debra stops at a crosswalk, waiting for the street lights.

TAMMY

That's a pretty labcoat. You're a doctor?

DEBRA

Yes, that's right.

Debra holds the badge hanging from her neck for Tammy.

TAMMY

Hi Doctor Debra. I'm Tammy.

DEBRA

(checking her watch)

I'm so sorry Tammy. I'm in a hurry.

TAMMY

That's okay. Want to be friends?

Debra smiles apologetically, locks eyes on the light until it changes and takes off.

TAMMY (CONT'D)

Bye Doctor!

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 wheelchair. Settling down on the other side of the table is SAMUEL, a stocky man in 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, migraines and dizziness she has suffers 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 did all the required testing, by the book. Such side effects Eileen's attorney describes is unheard of for what I prescribed, even if she mixed up the dosage. Until this lawsuit, she had been responding very well to her medication.

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 quickly looks away, suffering under her glare, as Michael starts laying evidence on the table.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

FRANK, 60, and RHIANNE, 40's, formally dressed, sit across from a pale-faced David.

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 here. You gave me a big raise last month!

Frank exhales over pursed lips, but soon mimics Rhianne's stoicism and silence.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Frank? I'm still pretty new to the 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 recline across from each other in a café, unwinding over a pair of sandwiches.

DEBRA

What jerks. How could they do that to you?

DAVID

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

Debra notices David suddenly busy with his phone, and in response starts gathering her belongings and tray.

DEBRA

Okay. Let's try to get through the rest of the day, shall we?

DAVID

(eyes still down)
Ya know... I'm going to miss you.

DEBRA

Aww, likewise.

David spots a 7pm time slot available for a restaurant.

DAVID

Why don't we meet up later to commiserate then?

DEBRA

You mean you'll be still around for lunch tomorrow?

DAVID

Oh, I meant... ummm...

Debra tilts her head. SAM, 30's, with blue eyes and stunning hair, leans into Debra's field of view.

SAM

Debra, how you holding up? You know I got your back if you need it.

Debra grins, her cheeks reddening.

DEBRA

I know you do, Sam. I'm sure it'll work out. David here works with healthcare insurance and offered a consult.

David drops some cash on the table.

DAVID

Worked... Hey, nice to meet you Sam.
See you tomorrow Debra.

David makes a quick exit. Debra fixates on the closing door as Sam takes the vacated seat.

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

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 fantasize about what it would be like inside one.

Debra sheds a tear, and looks away to wipe it, then turns back with her weakly forced smile.

EXT. INTERSECTION DOWNTOWN - TWILIGHT

Thoughts linger in David's eyes as he stares through a red crosswalk light.

TAMMY

I like your shoes.

David realizes the woman on the bench is talking to him and forces a smile.

TAMMY (CONT'D)

I'm Tammy. Want to be friends?

DAVID

I'm sorry. I just had a really bad day...

As the light changes, a mother and little girl walk by.

GIRL

Why is her nose so hairy?

The mother looks from the girl to Tammy in shock.

MOTHER

I'm sooo sorry.

The mother hurries the girl away toward the crosswalk. Tammy's eyes connect with David's. Tammy snorts out an infectious laugh, widening David's smile. David considers, then sits alongside her. Tammy lights up.

TAMMY

Dr. Debra was nice to me too.

DAVID

You mean Debra Green? You know her?

Tammy nods.

TAMMY

I met her this morning, but she was busy.

A ringtone blares from David's pocket and he looks at the screen.

DAVID

Well, that's a coincidence.

EXT. WALKWAY NEAR HOSPITAL - TWILIGHT

Debra holds her phone, but hesitates, wiping a tear.

DAVID (V.O.)

Debra?

Debra stays silent, then consciously breathes.

DEBRA

You meant dinner, didn't you?

DAVID

Well, yes but... do you mind if I
also invite Tammy?

FADE OUT.