

Death By A Charming Smile

by

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INT. UPCOAST HOSPITAL TRAUMA WING HALLWAY - 9:30 AM

Nurse ABIGAIL GILLENDER, 37, walks down the hall to the desk holding her morning coffee and reaches to grab her pile of patient's charts.

She is a well kept, pretty woman with stylish scrubs on and a visually happy attitude.

DOREEN, 45, a fellow nurse is filling out some charts at the desk in the hallway. She looks more aged than Abigail but is still an energetic kind woman.

Abigail walks up and starts looking for her charts.

ABIGAIL

Good mornin'!

DOREEN

Morning! Glad you just came in, I was thinking about you.

ABIGAIL

Why?

DOREEN

(sarcasm)

Your favorite guy Dr. Falcon was up here early this morning.

Abigail looks pissed and almost disgusted.

ABIGAIL

Probably trying to show his face all over the hospital. Some hot shot medical journalist is here to profile some of the top doctors or something.

DOREEN

What is your problem with that guy?

ABIGAIL

He is playing the game, doing his rounds, looking like he owns the place.

DOREEN

He is the top neurosurgeon on the east coast, plus he's hot as all hell.

ABIGAIL

Ya well that guy ain't what he says
he is I can tell you that much.

DOREEN

Then who is he?

ABIGAIL

He is a fraud.

Abigail is frustrated. She grabs her charts and walks away.

INT. MONIKA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - 9:45 AM

Patient MONIKA EVERGREEN, 18, lays in bed depressed. Her head is bandaged up, she lays stiff and is all bruised up. She is an extremely attractive girl.

She walks in and open's the curtains. When Abigail comes in Monika gets excited.

Abigail starts to change Monika's head bandage.

ABIGAIL

How we feeling today sweetheart?

MONIKA

I'm feeling great! Have you heard
the news?

ABIGAIL

What is there a celebrity here or
something?

Abigail sets up a new set of bandages on a little table and prepares for her morning routine with Monika.

MONIKA

I'm going to get a new kind of
spinal surgery this week, some
surgeon stopped by this morning. He
said I'll recover way faster.

Abigail stops what shes doing and looks up at the patient.

ABIGAIL

Dr. Falcon?

MONIKA

Ya. Eben. How cool is that name
too?

ABIGAIL

Oh goodness.

Abigail gets silent for a moment and turns to pretend like she's looking at something out the window.

MONIKA

I'll try to be back in this unit when it's over so don't worry! I'll make sure I recover here.

ABIGAIL

So it's a new kind of surgery? Don't you think that is a little risky?

MONIKA

I trust Eben, he seemed really smart. I was up again all night in pain. This is my chance to get back on the field. If I can get ready by the spring season I can be recruited for the fall and then trailing in the winter -

Abigail sits on the edge of Monika's bed and faces her.

ABIGAIL

(cutting her off)

Sweetheart, let's not get ahead of ourselves. You have been in a very serious accident and this is not something you can just bounce back from. It is going to take a lot of time and rest.

MONIKA

Don't worry Dr. Eben told me it's a revolutionary new technique. He wants to operate soon. He said he would keep me updated. I need to just fill out some paperwork.

Abigail looks over at the paperwork.

ABIGAIL

Well get some rest now sweetie, we can look at it later.

MONIKA

Okay.

Monika closes her eyes and leans her head the opposite direction of her side table.

Abigail puts her charts on top of the surgery paperwork and then sneakily picks up all the papers, taking the disclosure agreements. She walks towards the door.

ABIGAIL
(to herself)
Not on my watch.

INT. MONIKA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - 10:30 AM

Monika lays in bed and surfs through the channels on the TV.

EBEN FALCON, 29, knocks and walks into the room confidently holding some charts. He holds his chin up high and is wearing very clean-cut slim fit clothes. He is undeniably sexy with the most CHARMING SMILE IMAGINABLE.

EBEN FALCON
Hello Monika, we met briefly this morning about the surgery.

MONIKA
Nice to see you Dr. Falcon -

EBEN FALCON
You can call me Eben if you want.

He flashes her a charming smile.

MONIKA
Of course.

Monika almost blushes.

EBEN FALCON
I am here to keep you updated as promised. So I would like to operate tomorrow. Have you had time to look at the stuff you need to sign? I know it is still early.

MONIKA
Not yet. Should be over there.

She looks at the table but nothing is there.

EBEN FALCON
Here are some more copies.

He pulls some out of a folder and hands them to her.

MONIKA
Thanks.

EBEN FALCON

So you know I have been reviewing the charts of the patients in your unit and I think you would be a great candidate for a spinal stabilization surgery I specialize in.

MONIKA

Yes you told me that.

EBEN FALCON

Well, with the way you broke your back in your car accident is different then usual trauma patients. You cracked your vertebrae perpendicular to the direction of your spine. Instead of recovering on your own, this could get you home sooner.

MONIKA

Wow that sounds fantastic.

EBEN FALCON

All I want to do is get you healed as fast as I can, your recovery is my priority.

Charming smile.

MONIKA

I really appreciate you coming back to check up on me. I am excited to see what happens.

EBEN FALCON

I guarantee you that you will not be disappointed.

INT. HOSPITAL TRAUMA WING HALLWAY - 11 AM

Abigail is on the computer at the desk looking at Monika's paperwork she stole.

She is on the UpCoast medical database and is searching the same words seen on the paperwork: "Micro lumbar stabilization surgery."

There is one entry on it and an error pops up saying "Research Information Blocked." Abigail looks frustrated and looks closer to see "Administrator: Eben Falcon" on the bottom.

She shakes her head and stands up grabbing the papers with her.

INT. TECH ROOM - 11:25 AM

There are a few desks with a lot of monitors and keyboards. There is a sign with the logo for the UpCoast Hospital Medial Database on the desk.

JOE, the administrator, mid 30's, sits at the desk.

ABIGAIL

Hi, my name is Agigail I work in the trauma unit. My patient is undergoing a surgery and the doctors asked me to retrieve information for them. The entry is locked and I just really need to access it.

JOE

Ya ya what is it called?

ABIGAIL

Micro Lumbar Stabilization

He doesn't look up at her, he just types away.

JOE

Ya there is one entry on it. It actually isn't even published yet, that's why you cant get it. I do see Mid-Lubar reconstruction, Spinal Rod stabilization....

ABIGAIL

Can I just see the unfinished one?

JOE

Sorry ma'am if you want to look at the research you have to find -

He squints and looks at the computer.

JOE (CONT'D)

- Dr. Eben Falcon.

Dr. Falcon is standing in the doorway.

DR. FALCON

Well my ears where ringing before!
What a coincidence.

JOE

What can I do you for Dr. Falcon?

DR. FALCON

Someone is trying to see my unpublished research, I wanted to see if you could tell me what computer it was coming from, I just got an e-mail notification.

(beat)

But looks like I'm lucky enough to just find out in person.

He holds his hand out to Abigail.

DR. FALCON (CONT'D)

Dr. Eben Falcon, pleasure to meet you. I see you are interested in my research.

Charming smile.

ABIGAIL

Abigail Gillender. I am actually Monika Evergreen's nurse.

DR. FALCON

What a lovely girl, I am sure she is happy you are taking such an interest in her medical endeavors. Shall we walk outside?

He gestures to the door.

ABIGAIL

Thanks Joe.

Abigail and Eben leave the room.

INT. HALLWAYS OF THE HOSPITAL - 11:45 AM

The two stroll around the hallways. Abigail looks cautious while Falcon looks confident.

DR. FALCON

I am glad you are taking an interest in Monika's procedure. It looks promising. The other patients who have had it are doing great!

ABIGAIL

Would you mind letting me see their files so I can prepare her Post-Op plan?

DR. FALCON

Those files are long gone! They are back in the other hospital I worked for.

Abigail does not look satisfied. They pass the coffee food court cafe. There is a very professional looking man sitting at the table typing and chatting with a few doctors.

DR. FALCON (CONT'D)

Coffee?

ABIGAIL

No thanks. Is that the guy from the medical journal?

DR. FALCON

Yes, he is actually interested on doing a piece on me.

ABIGAIL

On Monika's surgery?

DR. FALCON

Yes. Exciting right?

ABIGAIL

(sarcasm)

Enthralling.

DR. FALCON

Is there anything else I can help you with, anything you want to talk about in regards to Monika?

ABIGAIL

Ya, why are you performing a surgery with has no research behind it. Why are you risking the life of an innocent 18 year old girl just to impress some journalist. I am not happy Falcon.

She stops walking, he stops too.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

I don't trust you.

DR. FALCON

Wow, well I hope you find some peace with the situation. I can assure you I am experienced with this procedure.

(MORE)

DR. FALCON (CONT'D)

We will be operating tomorrow and I am very confident she will be healed.

ABIGAIL

Not without the paperwork signed.

DR. FALCON

Oh all the little details! I will have my assistant figure it out. I must get back to work though; I will see you tomorrow to evaluate Monika pre-op.

Charming smile. He walks away. Abigail pulls out the disclosure agreement from her pile of paperwork and rips it up.

INT. HOSPITAL TRAUMA WING HALLWAY - 7 PM

Abigail walks to the desk holding take out. She takes her coat off and hangs it up. She sits down to eat when Doreen comes out of a room and heads straight for Abigail.

DOREEN

Just wanted to let you know Monika left.

ABIGAIL

What?

Abigail drops her food and runs over and peaks into Monika's room.

INT. MONIKA'S ROOM - 7 PM

Her room is vacant, the curtains are closed and the bed is made with new sheets.

Abigail walks in the room then out of the room.

INT. TRAUMA WING HALLWAY- 7 PM

ABIGAIL

Where the hell is she? Fucking Falcon!

DOREEN

Whoa whoa whoa calm down. I talked to Dr. Falcon, he wanted to move her to the Pre-Op suites in the other wing.

ABIGAIL

Doreen! Why would you let them take her away! You know Dr. Falcon is not reliable.

DOREEN

You are the only one that thinks that. I am sorry you are so upset about this.

ABIGAIL

I looked into the surgery, he is literally winging it!

DOREEN

Doctors don't just wing surgeries!

ABIGAIL

Well this guy does; did he say anything about paperwork?

DOREEN

Um ya, I think.

ABIGAIL

(urgent and loud)

...And?

DOREEN

I don't remember!

Abigail hits the desk with her fist.

ABIGAIL

Ugh.

INT. ABIGAIL'S KITCHEN - 1 AM

Abigail sits at her kitchen table. Her house is clean and cozy (tchotchkes, pictures of her family) but her table is a mess, covered in papers, her laptop and sticky notes.

Papers with headlines, "Lumbar Surgery Risks," "Eben Falcon: Hero Surgeon," "10 Signs Someone is a Sociopath," "Professions of Sociopaths," "God-Complex," and many more.

She is distraught and runs her hands through her hair. She takes a minute to look up at a picture of her daughter and sighs.

She takes a sip of coffee and shakes her head as if to wake her up.

She gets back to her computer and sorts through some papers in a folder.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. UPCOAST HOSPITAL CAFE - 6 AM

The renowned medical Journalist, JOSÉ SANTANA, 40's, sits with Abigail drinking a coffee. Abigail has her laptop out and her paperwork.

ABIGAIL

Thanks so much for meeting me so early José, it will be worth your while.

JOSÉ

Of course, I was glad you called, I love a good story. Thank you for coming in before your shift!

ABIGAIL

Of course. So let's get to it.
(deep breath)
What do you know about sociopaths?

JOSÉ

Excuse me?

ABIGAIL

You know like people who have no empathy, who are impulsive, determined, charming....

JOSÉ

Yes, of course I know what you are talking about but I am not sure what you are getting at.

ABIGAIL

Eben Falcon.

JOSÉ

What?

ABIGAIL

As you know, Dr. Falcon is known to be one of the most talented neurosurgeon on the coast. But upon further investigation it has become very clear to me that he is a complete sociopath.

She looks up at José who looks interested.

JOSÉ

Continue.

ABIGAIL

First of all, his charming attitude parallels the common description of the glowing, sexy sociopath man. He has put up a fantastic facade.

She is pointing at handouts of a list of qualities of sociopaths. She then pulls out files on Eben and Monika's chart.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

As you can see here, he has performed a number of surgeries immediately after the patient was admitted...

(looks up)

Impulsive. He has never taken a day off work, even after failed surgeries, or been seen comforting a patient...

(looks up)

Heartless. And Eben thinks he can do whatever he wants, the God-Complex if you will.

She opens up her computer to the screen of the database. She also has open the file that says what surgery Monika is having.

JOSÉ

Why do you say that?

ABIGAIL

Because in about 4 hours he is going to operate on a girl who could recover on her own with an extremely risky technique that isn't even completely researched or published yet.

She points to the screen and clicks the article to show the error message.

ABIGAIL

This is the only literature on his so called technique.

JOSÉ

And no one picked this up?

ABIGAIL

I told you, he is a charmer, he beats around the subject, just says he is going to help the patient. Sociopaths are delusional, they think everything they say is true. He doesn't even realize it.

JOSÉ

Jesus.

ABIGAIL

I think you just got a new cover story on Falcon.

JOSÉ

Abigail, this is a very radical claim. Why would you come to me with this?

ABIGAIL

Because I know he is just rushing this surgery to prove to you he is a revolutionary surgeon. Nothing would ruin that guy's ego more than being taken down by what he thought was a big achievement.

JOSÉ

I like the way you think. So now what?

Abigail sips her coffee smiling.

FAST FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MONIKA'S NEW PRE-OP ROOM - 9 AM

Monika is laying in bed. Seated around a small table is Abigail, José, TED RICHMOND, the Chief of Surgery at UpCoast Hospital and a two other board members.

Ted, 55, is well groomed, wearing a fancy name badge and nice white medical coat.

They chat amongst themselves.

TED RICHMOND

Everyone just play this by ear. We need to see if he can admit to any of these claims or defend himself.

BOARD MEMBER 1

I can't believe we didn't see this before. This guy is a monster hiding in plain sight.

Eben walks in FLUSTERED, looking down at his notes as he walks in.

EBEN FALCON

Good Morning Monika, sorry I am late, someone slashed my tires last night, had to take a taxi.

Abigail smirks.

Eben looks up from his notes, startled to see everyone there.

EBEN FALCON (CONT'D)

Oh wow, hello everyone. Sorry about that, didn't see you there.

TED RICHMOND

Morning Eben. Don't worry, sorry about your car, teenagers are crazy these days.

EBEN FALCON

Yes they are... so what are we all gathered here for?

He puts his confident facade back up.

JOSÉ

Well as you know I am here to profile some of the top doctors of the country and their amazing surgical accomplishments.

TED RICHMOND

Dr. Falcon you have proven to us that you are a risk taker and very good at calling tough shots.... it is important to show the community that there are doctors out there like you.

EBEN FALCON

Well thank you.

Eben looks slightly confused.

TED RICHMOND

The board and I would like to talk about the surgery with you and your patient. Don't worry about the rush, I postponed the operation.

EBEN FALCON

Oh, of course. When will it be?

Ted gestures to an empty chair and Falcon sits. He makes eye contact with Abigail but does not say anything.

TED RICHMOND

Don't worry about it. So do you have all the documentation for the surgery?

EBEN FALCON

Yes yes, Monika did you sign the agreement I left you?

Monika sits up a little and gives Eben some sass.

MONIKA

No.

EBEN FALCON

Okay well that is something we need to do before we fix you up! Here are Monika's files from her stay here.

He hands a chart to them. Ted opens it.

TED RICHMOND

This is Abigail's chart from the trauma wing, do you have the research sheet on the surgery and procedure protocols written up?

EBEN FALCON

I actually prefer to prepare my team verbally before we hit the OR.

JOSÉ

Interesting.

EBEN FALCON

What is that supposed to mean?

TED RICHMOND

So what research are you basing this surgery on, what journals are they from?

EBEN FALCON

I do not have them on me right now chief.

ABIGAIL

There are no articles though Eben. Are they? Gentleman I tried to find the journals with help from Joe in the tech room. There are none.

EBEN FALCON

Excuse me?

TED RICHMOND

Dr. Falcon, your patient is not well informed of the surgical details, you have no plan yet you walk around like you are on top of the world.

EBEN FALCON

Confidence is key in my profession. Do you think I would be able to save as many lives as I do without it? If I was just a pushover? You just said I am good at making the tough calls.

TED RICHMOND

We find that you are not a suitable fit to be a surgeon right now. You are impulsive, sneaky and honestly I have never seen you be anything but confident, which worries me. You have a hard job, an emotional job, normal people aren't like that.

EBEN FALCON

(raising his voice)

Normal people? What?

TED RICHMOND

We will be sending your records to the mental health and ethics boards for review. Until then you are not permitted in this building or any other UpCoast facility.

Falcon looks over at Monika who gives him a death stare then looks back at the people around the table.

EBEN FALCON

What are you talking about? What about the article? And what even is *she* doing here? You put a nurse on the board now? You all do not know what you are doing.

He stands up and points at Abigail.

ABIGAIL

We did nothing Eben. You did this all to yourself. I can't wait to see what the ethics board digs up on you.

Falcon slams the table.

TED RICHMOND

Enough, both of you.

There is a pause and silence in the room.

JOSÉ

Maybe this will make sense when you read the article.

EBEN FALCON

What article? Apparently I am fired.

JOSÉ

Just forwarded you the quick draft I sent to my editor.

EBEN FALCON

Whatever, this is bullshit, call me when you guys realize that no other surgeon in this hospital can do what I do. I am the best there is.

Eben storms out the door and we hear his phone buzz as he exits.

José shows abigail his phone with the e-mail to his editor. The title on the screen reads "NEW COVER STORY: Monster Hiding in Plain Sight, Sociopath Surgeons".

EBEN FALCON (O.S.)

(screaming)

What?

There is crashing sounds of carts being thrown over and glasses falling.

JOSÉ
Definitely broke his ego.

He nods at Abigail. She walks up to Monika and touches her bandage on her head and strokes her hair.

ABIGAIL
Let's get you back where you belong
sweetheart. You will be on the
field in no time ok?

Ted walks over to the bed.

TED RICHMOND
Are you an athlete?

MONIKA
Yes sir. I was the starting striker
on the US Youth soccer team. Moving
up to the big leagues now though.

TED RICHMOND
First, I am so sorry you had to
deal with this but I'll tell you
what, my colleague specializes in
sports rehabilitation. I'll have
him stop by your room tomorrow to
see what he can do. Free of charge
until you are out of here and on
the field.

MONIKA
Wow... thank you so much.

The men leave all nodding off to Abigail with approval. Ted stops before he exits

TED RICHMOND
Good work Abigail. We need more
nurses like you.

He walks out and Monika reaches over to hug Abigail. The two embrace.

FADE TO BLACK.