

INSIDIOUS ACTS

by

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FADE IN

DISSOLVE TO: 900 MANHATTAN AVENUE

INT: ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM

A beautiful seven year old ABIGAIL seats by the window with her blonde curled hair shimmering as tears run down her eyes.

(Speaks softly)

Why do they hate me so much. All I wanted was for him to smile at me and hug me like he does others but instead he got very angry when he saw me. He smiled and hugged MARCUS and NICK but he could'nt stand me.

(Cries softly)

BEGIN FLASHBACK

Abigail lines up behind other congregants in church to greet the father.

Marcus and Nick her brothers are also in the queue. She watches as he hugs and lifts them up smiling.

She reaches the front, smiles and stretches her hand towards the father.

PETER

(Bends towards her and
whispers angrily)

What the hell do you think you are doing here stupid girl? Get out of here I have more important things to do and you are just but wasting my time.

A sullen look falls on Abigail's face as tears well her eyes.

PETER

(looks irritated)

Dont you dare cry. Get out of here,
now!

Abigail walks away fast with her head bowed down.

END FLASHBACK

Abigail reaches out for her teddy bear MIA, and hugs it tightly as she cries softly.

DISSOLVE TO: SIX YEARS

INT: ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM

Abigail sits by her bed staring at the wall with her bedroom door open.

She hears the bathroom door open and turns only to catch her father standing naked, facing her room with a grin on his face.

She runs quickly towards the door, shuts it and sits on the floor by the door shaking.

Hearing her father laugh loudly, close the door and hum to a hymn she begins to cry.

ABIGAIL

(Softly)

Why does dad look for every opportunity to do this? Do I tell mum? Will she believe me?

A soft knock on the door startles her and she stands and opens the door.

The mother walks in holding folded clean clothes and heads towards the dresser.

Abigail closes the door and walks fast towards her.

ABIGAIL

Mum.

EMMA

(Looks irritated)

What!

ABIGAIL

(Speaks softly and looks down)

I was wondering if I could talk to you.

EMMA

(Shouts)

About what Abigail? What the hell do you want from me?

ABIGAIL

(Pulls backwards in fear)

I'm sorry mum. It's...

EMMA

(Speaks softly and harshly)

Shut up! Is it about your father again, huh? Listen keenly you fool, your father has done nothing. You are to blame for everything. Let me warn you ungrateful, moody, negative, unloving and unlovable child, if I hear you or catch you, I will kick you out of this home. Do you hear me?

Abigail steps back in fear as the mother throws the folded clothes on the floor and walks towards the door.

EMMA

(Stops and turns)

You think I dont know what you are up to. Put those clothes away.

Emma bangs the door behind her as Abigail picks up the clothes on the floor in tears.

DISSOLVE TO: CHURCH

INT

The family stands beside the father as he introduces them to his minister friends.

Abigail watches as minister MARK AND LAWRENCE greet her mum and brothers.

Minister Mark reaches her and hugs her tightly for too long. Emma sneers at Abigail as she tries to politely pull out of the hug.

Minister Lawrence who is now waiting to greet Abigail also hugs her tightly. Abigail watches the smirk on the father's face as looks on.

LAWRENCE

(whispers to her ears)

I would like to have a little of this.

He squeezes her chest towards him and rubs slightly on her breast. She struggles to free herself and Minister Lawrence steps back smiles at her and winks.

Abigail moves quickly behind the brother and looks down.

MARCUS

(Whispers angrily)

Get from behind me silly.

Abigail steps back and follows the family as they leave.

ABIGAIL (O.C)

Why would he say such words to me?
What did I do wrong? Mum always I
am to blame but I dont know what I
did wrong.

DISSOLVE TO: 7 YEARS LATER, SACRAMENTO CALIFORNIA

INT: CHURCH

Abigail walks towards the pulpit to greet the minister.

ABIGAIL

PASTOR MIKE, how have you been? The sermo today was powerful, you have really blessed my heart.

MIKE

(Surprised)

Abigail, is this you?
(runs his eyes on her
body)

He grabs her, hugs her tightly and pushes his pelvis on her rubbing slightly.

Abigail jerks back in surprise and quickly walks away.

Mike stares at her leave with a smirk on his face.

MIKE

(Speaks to self)

I wouldn't mind a taste of her. She has grown fine.

ABIGAIL (O.C)

What in the Lord's name is wrong with these men of clothe? Why would he do that?

Abigail looks back and sees the smirk on his face and quickly turns and exits the church.

DISSOLVE TO:SACRAMENTO

EXT: 1220 ARDEN HILLS LN

Abigail bumps into minister DONELL while taking a walk.

ABIGAIL

(Suprised)

Minister Donnell!

DONNELL

(Surprised)

Abigail! Wow you have really changed.

(runs his eyes on her
body)

How are you?

ABIGAIL

(Smiles)

Fine but busy with College and all.

DONNELL

What are you doing in this part of the city?

ABIGAIL

I was around the neighborhood and decided to take a walk.

DONNELL

Great to see you. How about dinner tonight? My treat. At The Villa?

ABIGAIL

Oh I dont know?

DONNELL

It's just dinner and sharing as we catch up.

ABIGAIL

I am not sure but okay. What time?

DONNELL

Six!

ABIGAIL

Fine I will be there.

DONNELL

When you come please come up to my room then we can go down for dinner together?

Abigail has a quizzical look.

DONNELL

(Smiles)

I promise I won't be long.

ABIGAIL

Okay.

DONNELL

Great. See you then.

ABIGAIL

Sure.

Abigail walks away while donnell stares at her walk and licks his lips suggestively.

DISSOLVE TO: THE VILLA - EVENING

INT: RECEPTION

Abigail walks up to the RECEPTIONIST.

ABIGAIL

(Smiles)

Hello.

RECEPTIONIST

(Smiles)

Hello ma'am. How can I help you?

ABIGAIL

I am here to see Mr. Donnell. He is expecting me.

RECEPTIONIST

Your name please.

ABIGAIL

Abigail.

RECEPTIONIST

One minute as I confirm our entries for the day.

ABIGAIL

Okay.

RECEPTIONIST

Is it Mr. DONNELL RICHARD'S

ABIGAIL

Yes.

RECEPTIONIST

Please proceed to room no. A15 on the first floor.

ABIGAIL

Thank you.

Abigail walks towards the lifts and disappears.

DISSOLVE TO: 1ST FLOOR ROOM A15

EXT

Abigail knocks on the door softly and hears Donnell speak.

DONNELL (O.C)

One minute Abigail, one minute.

The door opens and the minister stands in front with a silk bathrobe on.

DONNELL

Please come in.

Abigail hesitates at the door as Donnell holds out his hand and ushers her in.

INT

The door closes behind them and Donnell opens his silk bathrobe revealing his nakedness.

Abigail steps back with shock on her face.

ABIGAIL (O.C)
 Oh my goodness, this man is naked!
 What the hell! What do I do? Jesus
 Christ this is so confusing.

Donnell sits on the edge of the bed and beckons Abigail to sit on his lap.

Abigail stands frozen near the door, shakes her head vigorously in refusal.

Donnell stands up and pulls her forcefully towards him. She pulls herself back with all her strength and pushes him onto the bed and runs to open the door.

ABIGAIL
 (Door open)
 I will be waiting for you at the
 restaurant Mr. Donnell.

She exits and closes the door behind her.

DISSOLVE TO: RESTAURANT

Abigail sits quietly and shaken by the corner table watching Donnell walk towards her with a smirk on his face.

DONNELL
 (Sits opposite Abigail)
 Why did you run away? Sorry if I
 was too fast, I thought you were in
 for it. Guess we shall try next
 time.

Abigail looks down and peeks at the waiter who is walking towards them.

ABIGAIL (O.C)
 What is wrong with me?

DISSOLVE TO: 7 YEARS LATER - 313 N CAPITOL AVENUE LANSING MICHIGAN

INT: APARTMENT NO. 5416

Abigail paces around the pleasantly decorated living room.

ABIGAIL
 (Speaks to self)
 I hope sure hope they turn up.

A soft knock on the door startles her and she rushes to open

LAURA
(Loudly)
Congratulations girl you finally
did it. I need to learn to call you
Doc.

They laugh as Laura walks in holding a cake box and a gift bag.

LAURA
(Looks around)
So where's everyone? You have done
a beautiful job with the decor.

ABIGAIL
(Smiles)
Well, there's only you. I am not
sure if mum and dad will come. I
had invited them.

LAURA
(Hugs Abigail)
It's okay gal..oops sorry Doc. I
got you.

A knock on the door startles the girls.

ABIGAIL
(Excited)
That must be them. How do I look?

LAURA
Perfect gal, perfect. Now get the
door or they turn and leave.

Abigail straightens her runs her fingers on her hair and walks towards the door.

Abigail opens the door and smiles.

ABIGAIL
(Opens the door and
smiles)
Welcome. Thank you for
coming. Please let me help you with
that mum.

EMMA
(Sneers)
Wa'ever. I got you something to
keep you reading coz that's all you
do.

Laura shakes her head and quickly walks into the kitchen

Abigail's father has a smirk on his face as he looks around.

EMMA

We are not here to stay so make it quick.

ABIGAIL

Let me get you something to drink. Please have a sit.

EMMA

(Softly)

Do you ever listen? I told you we are not here to stay. You called us to celebrate what again?

ABIGAIL

(Sadness in her eyes but trying smile)

I finally made it mum. I got my PhD and I thought it would be nice for us to celebrate.

EMMA

(Softly)

You thought wrong as usual. We shall leave now we have other things to do.

PETER

(Smiles)

You don't see you father child?

EMMA

I am sorry dad. Welcome.

She stretches her hand to greet him but he pulls her towards him and hugs her tightly pushing his pelvis towards her.

Abigail pulls back as the mother touches the father.

EMMA

(Softly)

Peter please lets go.

PETER

(Harshly)

What's wrong with you woman. I need to congratulate my daughter.

(Turns to Abigail)

Congratulations child.

EMMA

(Softly)

Please Peter let's go, we are getting late.

PETER

(Irritated)

I have told you enough time you don't tell me what to do is that hard to get woman?

EMMA

(Looks down)

No. I am sorry.

PETER

(Smiles at Abigail)

Okay. We shall leave now before the nagging begins.

Peter and Emma walk towards the apartment door and leave.

Abigail slumps on the couch, holds her face on her palm as tears flow.

Laura quietly walks out of the kitchen and sits next to her holding her hand.

ABIGAIL

(Crying)

I thought they would be happy for me. Why did I even bother to invite them over Laura? I never seem to get it, they just hate me!

Abigail reaches out to her mothers gift on the table and begins to unwrap with shaking hands.

ABIGAIL

(Crying softly)

A box of stationery! Really.

LAURA

I'm so sorry gal.

ABIGAIL

(Sits straight)

Mum hates me so much and I dont know why Laura. She always said I am moody, negative, unloving and an unlovable daughter.

(letting out a laugh)

Laura all her other children were her bright lights and I was that child that never really deserved to live.

Abigail stands and walks to the window.

ABIGAIL

(continues)

I have been through so much in this damned life. All through the only

(MORE)

ABIGAIL (cont'd)

thing I get is rejection. I was sidelined by my own brothers, rejected by peers and fellow interns. I was ignored by a family friend I chose to speak to about my struggles while growing up. To every eye I have the perfect and most wonderful parents making me the problem.

(waving her hands)

Even with this damned PhD I still stand rejected. How much longer Laura? This hurts so bad and I cant hold myself together.

Laura walks up to Abigail and hugs her tightly while she cries her heart out.

ABIGAIL

(lifts her head up)

I remember when I applied for my PhD programme in Clinical Psychology I was rejected. I cried myself out feeling dejected and scared. God bless JOHN for challenging me to do the unexpected.

(smiling)

He asked me to challenge authority. I have never been more scared because I have never challenged anyone or anything.

Abigail walks back to the couch as Laura stands and watches.

ABIGAIL

(continues)

Apparently the Committee did not admit me because they felt they would be perpetuating the ease at which I get things because I am attractive. Jesus Christ Laura, I have never ever had it easy. I have cried all my life, I have fought to survive. What beauty is this they see when I am as ugly as a duckling? Why Laura Why?

LAURA

I am so sorry dear.

ABIGAIL

(Taps her fingers on the table)

I have to rise above this pain Laura. I have to make a difference for every woman out here who has

(MORE)

ABIGAIL (cont'd)
 been lumped up in the boys club and
 been objectified in the males gaze,
 assaulted, demeaned and
 demoralized. I cant live in this
 space of pain and self pity any
 more. I have come this far and I
 won't let pain eat me up.

LAURA
 (Smiling)
 I knew you would come through and
 that's my gal right there. You can
 do it. Tell you what dear, I want
 you to find your happy place and
 take a break from life once in a
 while. PhD was the ceiling
 remember?

DISSOLVE TO: ONE YEAR LATER - THE CENTER OF LIGHT MINISTRY
 LOS ANGELES

INT: OFFICE

Abigail and Laura sit at her office looking at a mural on
 the wall.

LAURA
 You did it, you actually did it!

ABIGAIL
 (Laughs)
 I guess something good does come
 out of hurt. Remember that chat
 during my PhD party? Oh my what a
 party. I have finally managed to
 rise above and now we have a center
 of healing. I am so anxious Laura.

LAURA
 (Smiles)
 I have never felt more proud of you
 Doc.

ABIGAIL
 C'mon on Laura, I am Abigail to you
 and Dr. Abigail to the rest.
 (Laughs)

LAURA
 So what's the plan with this
 beautiful place again?

ABIGAIL
 A center for the broken, assaulted
 dejected, in need of care, support,
 strength, peace, name it. Its going
 to be a healing center because
 healing has to be found.

LAURA

Wow, now that there is a big plan.
I have faith in you, I have watched
you this far.

ABIGAIL

Before I forget, I found a home. A
really special place.

LAURA

(Questioning look)

A home? I don't get it. Does this
have something to do with your
recent trips to Italy?

ABIGAIL

You can say that again. I have
found my two magical places.

LAURA

Abigail!

ABIGAIL

Every time I visit these two places
I feel totally accepted, embraced
and not judged. It's such a calming
and full of life feeling. A feeling
above and beyond anything I have
ever felt in my family. You Laura
dear once told me to find my
special place and take a break in
life.

LAURA

(Smiles)

I did! I need to stop giving you
advice or you might take a break
and go to Africa!

ABIGAIL

Sounds like an idea. You too need
to find your happy place and take a
break.

LAURA

You know what they say about
California gal. To capture a
California sunset in South Pasadena
is to hold and Angel's wing with
bated breath.

They laugh and sit back looking out the window.

DISSOLVE TO: 9301 WILSHIRE BLVD - TWO YEARS LATER

EXT: GAIL CLINICS

Dr. Abigail cuts the ribbons that open the doors to her new
clinic. Laura stands by her side as a few other friends

cheer on.

Abigail open the doors and ushers in her friends into the clinic.

INT

ABIGAIL

Welcome all and thank you for coming. I am honored and humbled by your presence.

Her friends enjoy a mocktail set inside the clinic as they look around and give an affirming and admiring look at Abigail.

Abigail walks towards her office and enters closing the door behind.

Laura follows quietly and opens the door and sees Abigail in tears. She enters and closes the door behind.

INT: DR. ABIGAIL'S OFFICE

LAURA

Gal why are you crying? Today is a happy day!

ABIGAIL

I just can't believe I have a clinic to my name.

LAURA

Phew! You had me worried. Yes a clinic and a centre lest you forget. You have potential and have always proved it so this is just additional proof of what you can do.

Laura walks up to Abigail, holds her hand. They laugh as they walk towards the door.

ABIGAIL

I think I will need a receptionist. Got anyone in mind?

LAURA

I think I have the perfect person for you. Remember MERLIN?

ABIGAIL

Oh yes, such a lovely lady. Can you ask her to come over tomorrow for an interview?

LAURA

Sure. I trust her to have your back plus I know you very well so she is the perfect fit.

The laugh and open the door to join the rest of the guests. A man from the crown claps his hands to draw attention.

JOHN

Ladies and gentlemen may I have your attention. Thank you.

(continues)

I remember like it was yesterday when Dr. Abigail admission for her PhD was rejected. Today I celebrate her strength she is indeed a woman of valor.

The people clap

JOHN

(continues)

I think its good we hear a word from our dear friend Dr. Abigail.

Abigail walks up to the front and smiles at John.

LAURA

(Smiling)

John thank you and yes were it not for you I doubt I would be here today. This clinic is very dear to my heart having come to fully understand assault of victims and what they tend to believe out of the traumas. These deep psychic wounds need healing and this little clinic is going to become the place to run to for comfort, peace and healing. For those who dont have their little Pasadena's to run to...

(smiling at Laura)

Then let them know this place can be the gas station that fuels and pumps their lifes back to factory reset and completeness. The insidious acts in life do not have to bring us down they should only make us stronger.

The guests clap.

ABIGAIL

Thank you all for coming and special thanks to my all time favorite gal who is permitted to call me Abigail.

(MORE)

ABIGAIL (cont'd)
(laughing while pointing
Laura)

To the rest of y'all I am Dr.
Abigail. Actually I am trying to
teach her how to transition from
calling me Abigail to Dr. Abigail
and it's very hard.

Laughter fills the room.

DISSOLVE TO: CLINIC - NEXT DAY

INT

Abigail seats at the reception desk looking outside the door
in expectations.

DR. ABIGAIL
(speaks to self)
Can't wait to see this room filled
with people. I need to get to work.

The front door pushes open and startles Abigail as Merlin
walks in.

MERLIN
Sorry I startled you Dr. Abigail. I
am ...

DR. ABIGAIL
(smiling)
Merlin. I have been looking forward
to seeing you. Such a good time
keeper. Please come in and have a
couch I guess.

MERLIN
(smiling)
Thank you.

Abigail walks towards the couch and sits next to Merlin.

DR. ABIGAIL
I hope Laura spoke to you. I need
an office manager or receptionist
or something like that. Well
business just started today so
don't worry about the emptiness.
(laughs)

MERLIN
(smiling)
Yes she did and I would definitely
love to work with you.

DR. ABIGAIL

Wow, awesome. I have seen your papers and made a few calls and I think we can work out something. Here is a contract I drafted, have a look and let me know when you can start.

Merlin opens the contract and scans through as Dr. Abigail stands up and walks towards the reception desk.

MERLIN

I can start today if thats okay with you. Do I sign.

DR. ABIGAIL

(surprised look)

Wow that was fast, I must have made an impression.

MERLIN

(laughing)

I like it already so why waste time postponing a decision I can make now.

DR. ABIGAIL

Mmh! I like you. Welcome to Gail's Clinic.

DISSOLVE TO: GAIL'S CLINIC - ONE MONTH LATER

INT: RECEPTION

Dr. Abigail walks towards her office reading a copy of Psychology Bulletin.

MERLIN

(Smiling)

Good morning Doc.

DR. ABIGAIL

(Stops and turns)

Oh! MERLIN good morning dear.
(laughs)

MERLIN

Must be an exciting piece you are reading.

DR. ABIGAIL

Yes, quite. You should have a look at it later. How is our day?

MERLIN

Very busy. Several appointments and I see one on the way.

The door opens and a lady walks in with a huge smile on her face.

MERLIN

(Stands and smiles)

SANDRA you are just on time.
Welcome.

DR. ABIGAIL

(Smiling)

Welcome Sandra. Merlin, I will be
in my office.

MERLIN

Okay Doc.

(Turning to Sandra)

Please have a sit and we can get
you ready for your appointment in
the next five minutes. Coffee?

SANDRA

(Chuckles)

Oh sure. Thanks

FIVE MINUTES LATER

MERLIN

Sandra, the Dr. Will see you now
Sandra.

SANDRA

Thank you.

Sandra walks towards Dr. Abigail's office and knocks

DR. ABIGAIL

Come in Sandra.

INT: DR. ABIGAIL'S OFFICE

SANDRA

Hi Doc?

DR. ABIGAIL

(smiling)

Hello Sandra please have a sit. You
seem very happy today. How did the
court case go?

SANDRA

(Sits beaming)

Thank you. I got a restraining order
Doc. One running over 10 years, can
you believe this. I am thrilled.

DR. ABIGAIL

(Beaming)

Wow! That is some piece of good news.

SANDRA

(Smiling while tears flow freely)

It has been years of sexual abuse from a man I called husband Doc. Raping me while pregnant and getting chemotherapy at the hospital bed.

(Sighs)

It has been years of rape and I couldn't see beyond the pain or think straight. Took a judge to see on my behalf. I am so afraid and thrilled at the same time. I can't help but ask what next because I have never known any other kind of life.

DR. ABIGAIL

What next is that we begin the journey towards healing and finding you again. We shall do this together.

SANDRA

(Wiping away her tears)

Thank you very much.

DR. ABIGAIL

I am here for you Sandra. I will ask Merlin to book a few meetings for you if that's okay by you. We begin sessions as soon as possible.

SANDRA

Sure, I am very eager. I will leave you now and thank you.

DR. ABIGAIL

Anytime Sandra and plan to have a good day.

The door closes behind as Sandra leaves. Abigail stands and looks out the window.

The phone rings and she turns to receive the call.

SANDRA (O.C)

SUZETTE on line three.

DR. ABIGAIL

Hello Suzette. Quite a pleasant surprise. How are you doing?

SUZETTE (O.C)

Doc, I have never been better. I have missed our talks but you know what I have never felt this alive.

INTERCUT BETWEEN DR. ABIGAILS OFFICE AND SUZETTE'S APARTMENT

DR. ABIGAIL

Well now that is some positive energy I pick.

SUZETTE

I am sorry I stopped calling and please don't count me among the nine ungrateful lepers.

(chuckles)

DR. ABIGAIL

(laughing)

I will arrange to clear you from the list of nine now that things are in the clear. You know hearing you laugh is very reassuring.

SUZETTE

You have no idea how I feel. Oh by the way I moved to Massachusetts.

DR. ABIGAIL

Wow! You took at 360 I see.

SUZETTE

Yes I did thanks to you. Oh by the way I now go out and I stopped telling myself I am a tough bitch whenever I want to go outside.

(laughs)

I have found confidence and peace within.

DR. ABIGAIL

(Sighs)

There is no better gift you can give yourself Suzette. Rising up from a quiet, subdued and silent personality is the beginnig of living.

SUZETTE

Very true Doc. I have to run to work. I will be calling you soon to tell you more about my new adventures of life.

DR. ABIGAIL

Looking forward to this one call Suzette. Who knows I might make a trip to Massachusetts to experience your adventures