

# Triage at the Chophouse Restaurant

Category: Nursing

written by Amy Haddad | January 24, 2026

I jumped when a woman cried out, "Albert! Albert! Someone help!" I rushed over to their table; told her I was a nurse. His head slumped next to the bill he had just paid. My fingers moved on their own to find his thready pulse. "Call 911," I told the waiter. Albert was soaking wet with shock and sweat. His hand covered mine on the hospital white tablecloth. I bent close to his ear; told him I would stay until help arrived. He squeezed my hand in reply. We stayed tethered this way for nine long minutes. I had to kneel to keep my head level with him to whisper assurance, ask if he took any medicine for his heart.

The restaurant slowly came back to life: people talked, silverware and ice clinked, people went on with their lives. I told the wife he was alive, that I could feel his pulse, that he was breathing. She nodded and continued to sit across the table until help arrived. She followed the procession of EMTs, her husband stretched across the gurney; lines tangled across his skinny chest.

I rejoined my dinner party, then got up instantly to retreat to the restroom to wash my hands and calm myself.

I never learned what happened to him. I heard only his first name, the one she screamed when he collapsed.

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