

## Resent Reject Regret

### Chapter 3 A Laughable Motive

After making sure Charlene was okay, Brendan returned to an empty living room. Frowning, he asked Steven, "Where's Deirdre?"

The question threw Steven off. He froze, but before he managed to come up with an answer, Brendan's phone rang.

It was a call from the old family residence.

His mother's laughter was heard when he picked up. "Brendan, you silly boy! How could you keep such great news from me? God, our Lena is pregnant! You gotta come home right this instant, son!"

By the time Brendan arrived at the family mansion, Deirdre had made herself comfortable on the couch and was nibbling on some snacks. His mother was holding her hand in sheer glee.

Deirdre's solace was ruined as soon as she noticed Brendan's presence. She froze, hung her head so low that it almost looked like her neck had shrunk into her collar bones, and averted her gaze.

Brendan was seething. However, he cracked a smirk. "Oh, this is just perfect."

So... His spineless prey had a card up her sleeve, after all.

Deirdre trembled despite herself, and Madame Brighthall sensed it acutely. Furrowing her brows, she glared at Brendan and grumbled, "What's that supposed to mean? God, one would expect the husband of an expecting wife to have a better attitude than this! Aren't you happy about Lena's pregnancy?"

Brendan gritted his teeth. He then shot daggers at Deirdre. "Why wouldn't I be happy? I am positively elated!"

Madame Brighthall gave him an easy smile. "Now, that's more like it. It's wonderful news! The two of you have been married for two years now, you know? This has been a long time coming! I don't care if it's a boy or a girl—this is wonderful news for the family, period. You better take care of Lena, sweetie. She's a little on the frail side, remember? If something happens to her kid, so help me God, I'm gonna come for you!"

She paused mid-conversation. "Oops! I forgot—I've got some broth cooking in the kitchen. I have to check on it."

Deirdre's fear spiked. She then leaped to her feet and offered instantly, "L-Let me help you!"

"No, you're staying!" Brendan snapped suddenly. He leveled a steely glare at Deirdre, one just like the death stare a hunter would shoot its victim, before narrowing his eyes dangerously. "We need to talk."

Madame Brighthall missed the glare altogether and innocently thought the couple was just trying to straighten out some minor spat. "Gee, Lena, you don't have to be so nervous, you know?" She smiled reassuringly and patted the back of Deirdre's hand. "Bren might have this terrible poker face that makes him look colder and less approachable than he really is, but I know that deep down inside, he's positively overjoyed about the baby. He loves you, Lena, that's why! So talk out whatever differences you two have, okay?"

He loved her? Oh, he loved her, alright—the real Charlene McKinney!

Deirdre could only bite her lips as she wistfully watched Madame Brighthall disappear into the kitchen. A second later, she felt a force crushing her wrist in a five-fingered cage. She yowled, and the aggressor pulled her wrist up high enough to make Deirdre meet his scornful eyes.

"I really underestimated you, didn't I, Deirdre McKinnon? I didn't think a spineless wimp like you would defy me like this, but you surprised me!"

His fury was palpable, and Deirdre's voice quaked in reply, "P-P-Please, Brendan, I... I'm not asking for much! I just want my child to live..."

"You honestly think I'm stupid enough to believe you!" Brendan scoffed. Contempt and disgust pooled into his eyes. "Don't you dare think I'm too stupid to know what you're trying to do, b\*tch. You'd rather pretend to be Charlene forever, even if it meant erasing Deirdre McKinnon's existence, than go back to being your pathetic self. Would you really leave my sight without any complaints after carrying that unwanted thing to term, hmm? No. I don't think so. After all, you already had the nerve to defy me! What's gonna happen after the child is born? You'll attract a media circus to advertise the kid's existence? Hmph. Wouldn't be the first time a b\*tch like you would debase herself by coming up with such a disgusting plot."

Deirdre's eyes reddened. His words were too caustic, even for him. He stabbed her heart callously, twisted the knife, and pulled it out as if her pain meant nothing.

She loved him. Undeserving and insignificant as her love was, she loved him—and yet, to him, it was just another laughable conspiracy.

"I... I—"

"You what? You want to keep this child no matter what it takes? Spare me the bullsh\*t of keeping the child as a memento of your 'love' for me when we break up. Your imagination is disgusting!" Brendan jeered, almost too gleefully. "I'm not stupid, Deirdre. I know what you're doing. So how about you do as I say, go to the hospital, and terminate your pregnancy like a good girl? It's either that, or you'll feel my wrath!"

Deirdre had already known the depths of Brendan's cruelty all too well. She had known he was like this all this time.

Her lips trembled.

Fortunately, Madame Brighthall finally re-emerged from the kitchen. The strange atmosphere weighed down on her, and immediately, she frowned and stepped between them, shielding Deirdre. “What’s going on?”

“Nothing, Mom. The truth is, she’s only here because she’s weirdly peeved at me today,” Brendan explained. “Don’t worry, though. We’re done talking. She’s going home with me.”

“Pardon me, Brendan, but why would Lena run all the way to my house if you were a good husband, hmm? Face it. You’re just not as good as you think you are!” Madame Brighthall declared. She was not going to stand on her son’s side just because!

Shielding Deirdre behind her, she cooed, “There, there. Ignore him, Lena. Stay here with me if you’re still mad at him, okay? I’ll gladly go on a shopping spree with you every day!”

Brendan frowned. “Don’t, mom.”

Deirdre shrank behind the older woman’s back. Frightened eyes darted across the man’s face before she clenched her jaw and replied, “You’re right, mom. I... don’t want to go back. I want to stay here for at least a couple of days.”

All hell seemed to break loose inside Brendan’s head. A squall was cackling in sheer ferocity behind those black eyes, and if looks could kill, Deirdre would die of suffocation right there and then.

She became defensively quiet.

Then, Brendan clenched his fists slowly. The air around him seemed to have frozen in response to his silent lividity about being defied. Milliseconds crawled by until, suddenly, he laughed.

“I get it. You’re mad because I’ve been burying myself in work at your expense. Alright, I hear you. I’ll stay with you here. Once you feel better, we’ll go home together.”

Brendan had donned one of his most winning smiles. To Deirdre, it seemed as though her collective nightmares were grinning at her. Her breath hitched in her throat, her face paled, and it took strength for her to muster a hasty retort. “But you didn’t pack anything—”

“Oh, it’s fine. I’ll only be staying for a couple of nights.”

Brendan had made a ritual out of climbing to the second floor, where Charlene’s comatose body rested, and talking to her every night. But now, his obsession with putting Deirdre under surveillance had grown so much that he was okay with leaving his beloved at home!

Unadulterated anxiety gripped Deirdre. He was never going to let her go, was he?! It was this kind of realization that caused her to feel despair and even more fear—she knew that even if she was safe from the man’s most overt wrath in the day, she’d still have to sleep in the same bed as him at night.

That night, Brendan entered their bedroom first. Deirdre balked for about half an hour before steeling herself enough to greet her fate beyond the door.

The first thing that crashed into her was the suffocating weight of an entire mountain in the air. Across the room, Brendan was sitting on the balcony in his silky pajamas. The wind swept across his hair and lifted strands into the air. His eyes seemed to have melted into the night surrounding him, and suddenly, he was less man and more of a nocturnal beast prancing in the dark, waiting to pounce on its prey.

Deirdre was shaking like a leaf as the man opened his mouth. “Over here.”

She obeyed him, quaking, and every step she took made new layers of cold sweat erupt on her spine. She had hardly made it close to the young man when, suddenly, a powerful hand struck out of the darkness.

Its claw-like fingers clamped around her throat, squeezing, and she found herself staring right into the burning inferno of his eyes.

“How—f\*cking—dare—you, Deirdre!”

She quivered.

Meanwhile, he was also shaking uncontrollably, and his rage was feral enough to rip out of his chest.

“So that’s what you’re asking for, is it, McKinnon?! You won’t know what pain is like unless I... Teach. You.”

He tore open her clothes, exposing her to the elements. The night chill pricked her skin and sent a jolt reverberating through Deirdre’s system. Feeling newfound clarity, she cried out, “No, Brendan! What are you d-doing?!”

The grip around her throat did not soften. He slammed her against the balcony table, forcing Deirdre to grapple at the reflection of her husband’s face—so beautiful, yet twisted in bloodcurdling, callous rage. “What am I doing? What do you f\*cking think?!”

His hands pressed themselves against her shoulder blades with the gingerness of a savage, pinning her to the table. “Isn’t this what you wanted, you f\*cking c\*nt? You wanted my child, so you did everything you could to f\*ck me, didn’t you? How else could a b\*tch from the slums like you even attract a man’s attention?

“You can’t possibly think I have no clue how pathetically excited you are about being f\*cked. You practically spread your legs for me, begging for me to f\*ck you every single time!” he snarled. “Okay—I’ll make your f\*cking wish come true!”

Deirdre’s eyes widened in panic.

Her child—something bad was about to happen to her child!