

Resent Reject Regret

Resent Reject Regret by Aqua Summers chapter 257

Chapter 257 Don't Tell Brendan

The cleaner had wanted Deirdre to embarrass herself so much that she had made sure to leave a thick puddle of soap powder on her path.

Deirdre

had always considered herself lucky to be able to work in such an accommodating restaurant, where everyone treated her with kindness and respect, but after today, that opinion changed. She had managed to make a few enemies after all.

"It's fine." She extended her other arm amid her agony. "Please help me out. If I get changed now, I can still make my shift."

The Good Samaritan was hard-pressed to go against someone so stubborn, so they led the way.

The entire session was hell from beginning to end. Deirdre's right hand could not conjure its usual force to press the keys, and it felt like there was an invisible thorn jabbing her elbow. She knew the customers were watching, though, so she forced herself to play despite the pain. By the time it was over, her back was bathed in cold sweat.

Her shift was finally over. Like clockwork, Sam appeared outside the restaurant to escort her home. He stepped forward as soon as Deirdre came out, but he easily noticed her ashen grimace and froze. She looked like she was suffering.

"Miss McKinnon? Did something happen? Are you okay?"

"N-Not now, Sam." Deirdre's voice was frail. "Can you get me to the hospital, please?"

The secret was revealed the moment the doctor inspected her. Her elbow had swollen into an alarming blue-and-black bump and was covered in a bit of blood. He waited until the treatment was over before glaring at Deirdre. "What happened, Miss McKinnon? Did someone bully you at work?"

"No! I slipped while I was walking." She denied it quickly, forcing a smile. A few moments of silence later, she dropped her voice into a hush and asked, "Can you please keep my hospital trip a secret from Brendan?"

"Why?"

“Because Brendan will go ballistic and conclude that I’m incapable of taking care of myself and I should quit my job,” Deirdre replied, looking down. “But I don’t wanna stay in the mansion forever. My job... It’s very meaningful to me.”

Sam hesitated. He was ultimately powerless against her incessant plea, so he

nodded. He drove her to the mansion, but as soon as he pulled over, he received a text. He gleaned it, and a frown crept onto his mien.

He got out of the car after Deirdre. “Miss McKinnon? Mr. Brighthall wants you to visit him in his room.”

Last night flashed across her mind despite herself. Her left hand found itself

pressing against her chest, her fingers grabbing a fistful of cloth. She found even the simple act of uttering an answer difficult. “O—Okay.”

Deirdre began to fitfully erect mental walls of defense before pushing Brendan’s door open. In a flash, she felt his telltale, stifling presence bearing down on her. She could feel the heat of his fury, barely contained behind the man’s steely facade, and her breathing hitched. Her face turned pale.

“Do you know what time it is?”

Deirdre’s mind went blank. The trip to the hospital from work must have taken more than an hour. As she bit her lip, Brendan answered his own question.

“11:49 p.m.”

He leveled his dagger—like eyes at Deirdre’s face, which was growing paler by the second as her fear increased. “You didn’t listen to a single word I said, did you?”

“N—No!” She cried, shaking her head and cupping her right arm.

Unfortunately, that was the only defense she could muster. She could not come up with any follow-up arguments. Should she admit to her injury? Brendan would just consider it proof of her incompetency to survive. He would then forbid her to work anymore.

She exhausted her mind to make up a believable excuse. “I was working overtime! The customers stayed a little longer than usual tonight and wanted me to play a few more songs. T—That’s why.”

Brendan laughed, but a new layer of chilling frost filled his glare.

Chapter 258 I Hate Being Lied To

"Do you really think I have no way of checking how long your shift really was?" Brendan raised a voice recorder, playing an audio clip of one of the restaurant workers speaking. "Deirdre McKinnon? She left at around nine," they said. "I don't have the deets, but if you're looking for a pianist for your dining experience, I'm afraid you'll have to come again tomorrow!"

Deirdre's face turned white as a sheet. She had not expected Brendan to come up with a counter-strategy.

The fury in his eyes had only grown exponentially. "I hate being lied to, you know that? So why do you keep pushing my buttons? We're finally out of the woods with Sterling Fuller, and you're hooking up with Trevor Carlson now?"

Deirdre's eyes widened. She hardly had the chance to wonder how Brendan had managed to get his name before feeling a force clutching at her jaw. Pain.

He bore down on her, his fury oozing out of him like miasma.

Suddenly, it was as if they had gone back to that time again—those cursed days when they had repulsed, disgusted, and distrusted each other.

"Who did you meet in those two hours after you left the restaurant?" He snarled through clenched teeth and shot her an icy glare. Then, brusquely, he ordered, "Undress. Now."

Deirdre raised her head, feeling shocked. He snorted. "What? Are you afraid? Is it because someone else has touched you?"

Her lips trembled. "Don't do this, pl—"

"You forced me!" He suddenly bellowed, his eyes red, his hands around her neck. He slammed her against the bed and climbed on top of her. "You have no idea just how patient I've been, do you? I thought you'd learn and come around, but you just. Keep. Pushing. My. Buttons!"

His snarl was as cold as a blade. "I'm not gonna ask you nicely again. Take off your clothes yourself before I tear them from your body!"

Deirdre instinctively protected her left arm. If she undressed, her bandaged wound would be revealed. She looked down, her face still ashen, and said quietly, "If you must, then do it. I haven't had sex with another man, and you'll know it."

The way she looked down and hid her face only fanned Brendan's flames. Enraged, he snatched her arm.

She suddenly let out a pained whimper. Her lips turned white, and she began quivering.

"D—
Deirdre?" Brendan reeled, loosening his grip in disbelief and confusion. She was sweating, he realized, and her face was wet with tears.

His mind turned blank.

As soon as he snapped back to his senses, he removed Deirdre's coat and rolled up her sleeve. Bandages—covering the lower half of her entire arm—immediately met his eyes.

All the color left Brendan's face. "Who did this to you?!"

Deirdre was only able to speak after her initial agony subsided a little. Her eyes reddened with tears. "I s—s—slipped and fell a— and my elbow landed first. I got hurt, but it was an accident, I s— swear. It was an accident, and I—I'm gonna be even more careful n—now..."

She was in so much pain that her voice came out as a croak, yet she would rather croak if it meant she could emphasize that it had been an accident.

Brendan felt his chest wringing in pain. Instinctively, he turned to sarcasm. "For f* ck's sake, Deirdre, is your job your only God and salvation?! You're so f*cking worried about me being mad about your work accident that you'd rather make me think you've been going out with another man than tell me the truth? ! I guess I will not hear a word of truth when your hand gets amputated at work!"

Deirdre curled into herself frightfully, her lips thin. "I'm s—sorry!"

"No! Do not tell me you're sorry! That's not what I want, damn it! I want you to be true to me, Deirdre!"

He took a deep breath and suppressed his flaring temper. He gingerly traced the wound on her arm through the bandage and asked, "You were at the hospital, weren't you?"

Chapter 259 Aren't You... Mad?

Deirdre nodded, and Brendan—to the young woman's wildest bewilderment—asked, "Was it bad?"

She bit her lip in surprise. "A—Aren't you mad?"

Mad? Of course Brendan was mad. Furious, even. Furious for an entire day. He had been downright apoplectic in the evening, when he'd waited and waited for Deirdre to come home on time. Every second had burned!

So what? All that rage had melted away—how could he stay mad after witnessing the lengths this woman would go to just to conceal her injury and the pain it caused her? How could he honestly tell himself that her maddening refusal to be candid was not motivated by her fear of his reaction?

"If you could just... If you had just told me frankly that you were suffering from an injury, I would have calmed down much sooner!"

Brendan went downstairs and called Dr. Ginger on the phone in the living room. As he ordered the doctor to come as soon as possible, Deirdre quickly protested from the bed. "W—

Wait! You don't need to get Dr. Ginger! It's late, Brendan! Besides, I had a checkup at the hospital. It's not a big deal—

“He's just doing what he's being paid to do, Deirdre. What's debatable about that?” Brendan argued. “Besides, I need to know what exactly the nature of your injury is and how severe it is.”

He would remember this day. He would remember why she had not picked candor and why she would rather be maltreated than just tell the truth.

Brendan would make sure this never happened again.

“It's not severe, seriously! I swear, it's not debilitating or anything...”

“Of course, you industrial spirit! Ain't gonna let a broken arm stop us from going to work, are we?” he quipped.

Deirdre turned quiet. Brendan seized the chance and added, “Look. You don't have to worry, okay?”

I promise you can go to work, and that's a promise I intend to keep. You have the right and freedom to work, alright? You don't have to fret about it so much.”

He then walked out of the bedroom. Deirdre stared at the floor from her spot in a daze.

Brendan returned with a bag of ice. He settled it gently on her injured elbow, until the

sharp sting of pain subsided into blunt pressure, and then led her downstairs. Dr. Ginger arrived just in time, and as soon as he saw his patient, he quickly undid the bandage and gave it a good look.

“Did you take an X-ray?”

Deirdre nodded. “The doctor said it was a medium-degree sprain.”

“That's reassuring. It's not as bad as it looks, then.” The doctor redressed her injury.” But an injury like this necessitates a break from playing the piano. You need to let your arm heal, after all, and that means not putting too much strain on your injured arm. Otherwise, the whole thing could get worse.”

Deirdre paled. “Isn't there a way out of this?” she stammered, her hesitance marked. “A way I could play the piano without hurting my arm?”

Dr. Ginger took a sharp breath. “Bless your heart for even thinking about it!” He exhaled. “You're not gonna play a toy piano, ma'am. This isn't some mild injury we can handwave away. This is serious enough that I would be than

king God that my bone is somehow fine. Had you hurt your bone, you would have had your arm in a cast!"

Deirdre bit her lip. She knew how ludicrous she sounded.

Brendan's expression darkened. Suddenly, he said, "It wouldn't be a problem if you could play the piano with one hand. The question is: Can you?"

Deirdre's eyes twinkled. "Of course I can!"

"Mr. Brighthall!" Dr. Ginger was startled. No one had been more paternalistic to Deirdre than this guy—and yet he was the encouraging one today?!

How could Deirdre's work allow her to play with one hand? It was a job. Not some kind of physical therapy.

Brendan ignored Dr. Ginger's surprise and fixed his eyes on Deirdre. "I gave you a wood-carved music sheet book, didn't I? It was supposed to have been composed by a disabled pianist. It was made for players with a different dominant hand than yours, Deirdre, but if you can overcome that... you could still go to work."

"I... could?!" Deirdre's empty eyes suddenly seemed animated with joy. A smile—mirthful and alive—dawned on her face. It was the first time she had ever smiled so happily in her life. "I can do it! I can do it, I know I can!"

Chapter 260 A Surprise For You

Looking at Deirdre, the doctor suddenly understood why Brendan was so encouraging.

Brendan himself did not seem overly emotive, but a closer inspection of his eyes revealed thawed frost and an almost shy smile blooming beneath. "Yeah. I believe you."

Dr. Ginger read the room and knew it was time for him to go.

Deirdre went to search for the wooden music sheet upstairs. Halfway through, she stopped on the stairs, turned around, and declared, "For your information, Brendan, there is nothing going on between me and Mr. Carlson. Not today, not tomorrow.. and not ever!"

She let the handrail lead her back to her room. Behind her, Brendan's handsome features seemed to soften into a fluffier imitation of themselves under the house's gentle lighting.

Was this her definitive denial of his accusation?

This was the same woman who would make a conscious effort to spare him as few words as possible, but now... Look at how cute she was being, trying to explain herself!

Deirdre woke up early the next morning. She needed time to practice the scores on her wood-

carved music sheet, so she placed her good hand on her desk and imagined piano keys under her fluttering fingerwork.

The door suddenly opened. A grinning Maeve walked in, teasing her. “Dee Dee, come on! You gotta see this!”

Deirdre closed the sheet book but found herself unwilling to set it down completely.” What’s up, Mom?”

“Oh no, I’m not going to explain it and ruin the surprise for you, sweetie. You’re gonna have to see for yourself!” the older woman replied cryptically.

Deirdre wasted no time musing. She went downstairs, her hand led by the rail, and stopped by the living room. Maeve guided her hand to a smooth, cool surface.

She was startled. Her finger pushed against the surface and it caved inward, releasing a single musical note.

Was her hand... resting on piano keys?

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Maeve tittered. “I was watering the garden outside when I saw this huge beast sitting right there. Gave me a good fright, I swear! I bet it costs a lot too, doesn’t it?” Sawyer, the designated grunt tasked to move the piano into the house, chuckled.” More than \$30,000, ma’am. Rather premium quality, too. Mr. Brighthall made it really clear, though: He didn’t care how much it cost as long as Miss McKinnon liked it! So, how does it feel, Miss McKinnon? Is it good?”

Deirdre was left in a daze by the staggering price. She doubted the piano at her workplace was worth that much. “Can we return this?”

Maeve and Sawyer were nonplussed. The man scratched his head and wondered aloud, “Sorry—return it? You mean... you don’t like it? Well, there are more where this came from. We’ll just pick another one that you like!”

“That’s... not it.” She hung her head, her voice hushed. “It’s too expensive for me. I don’t even play at home, so there’s no point.”

“It’s Mr. Brighthall’s wish, though!”

“I know, I know.” Deirdre frowned. This piano cost so much that she was sure she could never repay him in equal measure. She had always believed that it would be best for her not to owe Brendan too much...

Sawyer was hard—pressed to argue with her, so he switched to Plan B. “Maybe I should give Mr. Brighthall a call. If he agrees, we’ll return this piano.”

He made the call, murmured for a few minutes, and approached Deirdre again. "Mr. Bright hall wants to talk to you personally, Miss McKinnon."

Deirdre could feel the phone being shoved into her hand. Hesitant, she placed it next to her ear. "H—Hello?"

"Don't like the piano?" His voice sounded placid, calm, and yet not far away.

She remained silent for a beat before replying, "No, it's just—"

"If it's money you're fretting about, don't. It doesn't matter if I bought it for your sake or to add to the room's ambiance. I'd never settle for anything less than premium quality. That said, that piano wasn't meant for you alone. It was a gift for our home."

Brendan sounded calm. He had his hands in his pockets, and his relaxed demeanor was all the more jarring to the rest of his surroundings, where a crowd of company members squirmed in their seats and traded nonplussed glances with one another.