

## Resent Reject Regret

### Chapter 7 This Is Goodbye

Brendan realized, belatedly, that she was referring to his previous request regarding Charlene's crime. Still, not even the apocalypse could convince him that she meant what she had said about getting out of his life forever. How was he supposed to believe that when this woman had the tenacity and slobbering devotion of a dog in love with its master? She would not leave no matter his treatment. That child she was carrying for him would only encourage her to haunt him even more.

His tone was noticeably softer than usual, though. He still needed her to bear Charlene's sentence, after all. "Look, ease up. Now that you agreed to go in her place, I'll hold up my end of the bargain and make sure there won't be a death sentence. Just stay there for five months while I come up with a way to get you released. As for your mother? I assure you, I'll send some of my people to get her back."

For the longest time, there was only silence on the other side. Brendan was not known for his patience, so the fact that he had spoken that much to Deirdre was probably the maximum limit of his goodwill.

"Go. Now. Report yourself to the authorities," he added hastily, breaking the silence. "If there's nothing else to talk about, I'm hanging up. I am in the middle of a meeting."

"Brendan."

His name sounded uncanny, as though the word itself caused the woman agony.

"This is goodbye."

Brendan froze. By the time he snapped out of his surprise, the call was already cut.

He frowned. He could hear it in her voice—morbid determination. It strangely pissed him off. What was that supposed to mean? That she was finally going to leave for good just because she'd have to bear Charlene's sentence for a while?

Yeah-f\*cking-right. She was the same idiot who had shadowed his side for two goddamned years without any formal, legal, or emotional recognition. She was so slavishly devoted that she had lost even the will to complain or protest! Getting that same woman to give up was impossible!

That had to be it. This was just another one of her pity baits!

Besides, getting that b\*tch out of his hair would be like getting his biggest wish granted.

"Mr. Brighthall?" Steven spoke to remind him of their ongoing meeting. Brendan took it as his cue to discard this unexpected emotional wave and return to the conference room.

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Deirdre hailed a ride to the police station as soon as the call ended. "My name is Charlene McKinney, and I'm here to report a hit-and-run. I was the one who killed the victim. I was scared of the consequences, so I ran away. But now, I've come to my senses and I am ready to do my time. I plead guilty."

There was no life in her hollow gaze. She raised her hands in surrender as a mob descended upon her. They were family members of the dead, whose rage animated their fists and pommels. They screamed at her, hoping that she would die so that their daughter could have her life back.

Deirdre was battered. The best defense she could come up with was protecting her abdomen with her hands, hoping that no harm would come to the child.

The riot only stopped after the cops stepped in. News outlets ran the story, and the city stirred in response. Deirdre was imprisoned amid the furor.

"Move!"

At the end of a narrow, humid corridor, an iron gate opened. The prison guards pushed Deirdre through it, and after quickening her pace for a while, she looked up and saw four other inmates in her room. All of them had large, imposing figures and they shot her ugly glares of malice.

The door creaked and closed. The inmates walled Deirdre in, forcing her into a corner. "So this is the c\*nt, huh? Ptooy. I thought she'd at least look like an angel, you know? But we ended up with a b\*tch with sh\*t for a face! No wonder Mr. Brighthall was disgusted!"

Deirdre panicked. "W-What are you trying to do?! I'm t-t-telling the guards!"

Someone reached out, grabbed her hair, and slammed her head against the wall. Thud, thud, thud. A rhythm Deirdre could not be freed from took over, and black spots filled her vision.

"Yo, tryna' be a snitch already? We got a snitch b\*tch!" the leader of the posse snarled. "Go ahead and tell them, I dare you. You can even tell God if you want, but honey, not even He can save you. Here, you're just a b\*tch. Our b\*tch. Get on all fours and start barking!"

The rest of the posse parroted their leader. "Yeah, get down, b\*tch! Bark, bark!"

Deirdre bit her lip. "I..."

She had not even completed her sentence when she felt a kick to the back of her knees. Her legs buckled and she fell forward. Then, the inmates pinned her head down to the ground. She had to be on all fours for the rest of the day.

The night offered no solace either. They did not let her sleep on the bed, and she was only allowed to sleep in the corner of the room.

Deirdre tried to get the guards' help, but her pleas fell on deaf ears. All she got in return was escalating violence and bullying.

Her mental state deteriorated, and her face was permanently tear-stricken. The only things anchoring her to life were the child in her stomach and the promise Brendan had made. Five months, he had said. She would only be there for five months, and when that time was up... she would leave this city with her mother and never, ever come back.

Deirdre spent her time counting down the days. One day, as usual, she retreated to her corner and talked to the child inside her. At that moment, the door was kicked open, revealing her jail mates.

Their eyes were eerily fixed on Deirdre's stomach.

"You're... pregnant?"