



Deadly Legacy: A Brother's Betrayal

Jennifer Dickinson

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Gothic details blend with a contemporary setting to make for a modern, romantic beach read.

There's a certain pleasure in reading a good Gothic novel. From Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, stories about mysterious and sometimes supernatural events in ancient castles or manors are thrilling. In her latest book, *Deadly Legacy: A Brother's Betrayal*, author Jennifer Dickinson brings a new perspective to the genre.

The story opens as Meghan arrives at a Colorado chalet to spend time with friends. A movie is being shot on location there, starring hot, young actor Declan Montgomery. When Meghan actually meets Declan, it's hate at first sight for her. As time goes by, Declan is able to woo Meghan. But his amorous advances aren't purely about love. Meghan and Declan share an ancient connection—one linked to a treasure that includes a magical sword. But Declan's attraction for Meghan has put her in danger, as Liam O'Brien, an Irishman who shares this ancient connection with them, is coming after the young lovers wanting blood.

Deadly Legacy is truly a classic Gothic romance complete with handsome heroes, long-lost family legacies, and feminine but strong heroines. But don't mistake the word classic for typical. Dickinson brings a fresh, modern feel to her Gothic tale.

That begins with the author's attention to detail in the story. Dickinson takes the time to detail her surroundings, sharing the sights, sounds, smells, and sensations of the novel's world. In describing the grounds of Blarney Castle, she details the "lush greenery surrounding the outer walls" and the "perfectly manicured [landscape] with flowing flowerbeds and large trees."

Dickinson also builds believable characters. Meghan and Declan have an immediate tension that burns on the page. But Dickinson knows that you can't have a complete world without secondary characters. Meghan's friends may seem like those from the average rom-com, but she gives each of them their own quirks and vices. Cassie is Meghan's best friend from high school. Kaye is Cassie's hypersexual cousin who continually steals Meghan's boyfriends. Nathan seems to run in his own time zone.

Dickinson even has realistic-sounding dialogue and manages to convey the patter and pronunciation of the Irish brogue in a nonintrusive way. "Meggie, y' sure can be sarcastic when y' want to be," Declan says in one scene.

But Dickinson's greatest strength is her ability to build tension. From the prologue, which opens in a morgue, Dickinson sets up the expectation that something bad is going to happen and leaves that present in the background. The anticipation extends to other passages. Even when Dickinson isn't trying to be ominous, she is able to build tension between her characters. When Meghan meets the strange Eliza in the beginning of the novel, Dickinson shows Meghan's disdain when the older woman seems to always be at her elbow.

If the novel has a weakness, it's the pacing. At more than six hundred pages, the story could have been trimmed and

tightened. When the story lingers in a particular scene between characters, it's hard not to feel impatient for the plot to keep moving.

Those who love a good Gothic romance will thoroughly enjoy *Deadly Legacy: A Brother's Betrayal*. It's the perfect summer beach read for romantics who enjoy a little history with their red hot lovers.

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