

THE DECEIT AND DESIRE

Written by

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INT. SCOTTISH CHILD ABUSE INQUIRY CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Superimpose: Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry. 2020

LADY SMITH [65] sits behind a long table in a small conference room. To her left, a lady is taking notes at a smaller table while to her right PATRICIA DISHON [54] sits behind a table with a red file in front of her and a card that displays her name.

Opposite Lady Smith, MR MACAULAY [44] sits with other officials while behind him, journalists and members of the public watch the proceedings unfold.

Each person has a microphone placed in front for them to speak into.

Mr MacAulay glances across to Lady Smith.

MR MACAULAY

Good morning, my Lady. The first witness this morning is Patricia Delaney Dishon.

LADY SMITH

Thank you.

She glances towards Patricia Dishon with a friendly smile.

LADY SMITH (CONT'D)

If I could just ask you to make sure you are speaking through the microphone, that's really helpful to us.

PATRICIA DISHON

Of course.

LADY SMITH

You have the red folder in front of you and you'll find your statement in the folder. If I could ask you to turn to the final page of the statement.

Patricia thumbs through the documents.

LADY SMITH (CONT'D)

Can you confirm you have signed the statement?

PATRICIA DISHON

I have.

LADY SMITH

Do you say that you believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true?

PATRICIA DISHON

That's correct.

LADY SMITH

You tell us in your statement that your grandfather, Patrick, died in July 1979.

PATRICIA DISHON

Yes.

LADY SMITH

Thereafter, you developed an interest in the background of the Delaney family?

PATRICIA DISHON

Yes.

LADY SMITH

How did that come about?

PATRICIA DISHON

After his death, my aunts were cleaning out his house and found an old bureau in which they found a number of documents from the Court of Session in 1886 regarding his children. This raised our interests so we began to investigate further.

LADY SMITH

Would you care to explain what you discovered?

EXT. EDINBURGH ROYAL MILE - DAY

Superimpose: 1882

ARTHUR DELANEY [22] is dressed in workman's attire and flat cap as he strides up the busy street, smiling, as he carries a bag of tools. Horse-drawn carriages and carts trundle along the cobbled road, which he crosses.

PATRICIA DISHON (O.C.)
 Arthur was part of a large
 community of Irish Catholics who
 had immigrated to Scotland and
 settled in 'Little Ireland' around
 the Old Town.

A passerby acknowledges Arthur.

ARTHUR DELANEY
 (to passerby)
 You doing alright, Davie?

PASSERBY DAVIE
 Never been better Arthur! You not
 stopping in for a pint?

Arthur laughs as he continues on his way.

ARTHUR DELANEY
 Need to get back for Mary. She's
 expecting me.

He enters the doorway of a tenement.

INT. ARTHUR DELANEY TENEMENT STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

He enters the dank, poorly lit stairway and climbs the steps. Voices can be heard from behind the doors of the flats he passes. Two children in bare feet run down past him, almost bumping into him.

ARTHUR DELANEY
 Be careful laddies!

He reaches the landing and opens the door.

INT. ARTHUR DELANEY TENEMENT/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The cramped flat contains a modest living room comprising of adequate but basic seating arrangements around a coal range fireplace. Within the flat, there are two bedrooms. One for the two eldest children, James [7] and ANNIE [6], and the other for themselves and ROBINA [4] who shares their bed.

Arthur steps into the living room to find Mary, who is showing signs of the latter stages of pregnancy, bent over the range stirring a bubbling pot of broth while the two oldest children are sitting on the floor drawing with crayons on sheets of paper.

MARY DELANEY
 Your dinner will be ready soon.

Arthur drops his bag of tools and throws his cap on to a worn-out armchair before advancing towards her and kissing her on the cheek.

ARTHUR DELANEY
 Sit yourself down, love and rest
 yer feet.

The couple sit in opposing armchairs then Arthur reaches over to pick up a penknife and small piece of wood.

ARTHUR DELANEY (CONT'D)
 (to James)
 Will I finish this for ye?

The boy looks up and nods encouragingly before moving across to sit closer and watch his father, while Arthur finishes whittling the piece of wood into a figure.

Mary groans as she caresses her stomach.

MARY DELANEY
 I'm no feeling much movement
 considering how far on it is.

Arthur and James' eyes meet. The father smiles as he shows the boy how to whittle the wood.

ARTHUR DELANEY
 It'll just be sleepin'. Dinnae
 worry yourself.

Mary fumbles with a cross dangling from a necklace around her neck.

MARY DELANEY
 I meant to visit Father Macintosh
 today about the baptism but I'm
 fair worn out.

ARTHUR DELANEY
 There'll be plenty of time for that
 later.

He checks his handiwork before handing it to his son who reacts with glee as he checks it.

Arthur makes to rise from his chair.

MARY DELANEY
 Where're you going?

ARTHUR DELANEY
 Check on Robina.

MARY DELANEY

Leave her. She's fast asleep. I'll bring her through shortly for her feed.

He sits back down and relaxes.

MARY DELANEY (CONT'D)

When you take the weans to visit Helen, see if she'll come and look after them on Sunday while I visit the church.

He leans back in his chair and begins to fill a pipe which he lights.

ARTHUR DELANEY

You know she won't come here. I'll take them over.

Mary softly tuts to herself.

MARY DELANEY

You'd think, after all these years, our families could reconcile their differences.

Her husband sighs.

ARTHUR DELANEY

Aye, well that's religion for ye. It can bring out the worst in folk.

He puffs on his pipe.

ARTHUR DELANEY (CONT'D)

There's been more wars fought for God than anything else.

Arthur watches his son run through to another room and return with a handful of wooden figures which he places on the table to play with.

ARTHUR DELANEY (CONT'D)

Whatever they might think, you and the bairns are what matters, so to hell with all that Catholic, Protestant nonsense.

He rises from his chair and lays his pipe down.

ARTHUR DELANEY (CONT'D)

Right, you two. Get your coats and we'll go visit Great Gran Delaney.

INT. MACKENZIE PLACE HOME FOR GIRLS/COMMUNAL ROOM - DAY

EMMA STIRLING [48] enters a large room with MISS GUTHRIE [36]. Girls between the ages of five and fourteen, dressed in white blouses and blue frocks, sit at three rows of tables running the near-length of the room with bay windows allowing the bright sunlight to wash over female supervisors who are attending the children.

Emma Stirling, carrying a walking stick, limps across the room as she studies the children.

Advancing towards the girls, she places a hand on the shoulder of a girl who is holding a fork and playing with her food.

EMMA STIRLING
Felicity, don't play with your
food.

She strokes the long hair of the girl, who looks up at her.

EMMA STIRLING (CONT'D)
God has provided this to make sure
you grow up into a strong,
beautiful young lady. Don't
disappoint him.

FELICITY
Yes ma'am.

Emma gently pats her on the back, as Miss Guthrie watches adoringly.

EMMA STIRLING
That's a good girl.

The two ladies continue walking towards a set of double doors.

MISS GUTHRIE
A letter arrived from the lawyer
confirming the Canadian Government
had signed the agreement.

EMMA STIRLING
That is good news Miss Guthrie.

She opens the door to step into an adjoining room that is used for educating the girls. A large blackboard takes centre stage on the wall behind a teacher's desk that looks over rows of desks where girls would study.

INT. MACKENZIE PLACE HOME FOR GIRLS/CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

The two ladies cross the floor towards a set of open, glass-paned doors that lead out into a spacious garden.

EMMA STIRLING

The first boys were sent from their residence to Leadburn Farm yesterday for training. I plan to visit there tomorrow to ensure they are settled.

MISS GUTHRIE

How many?

The ladies step out into the garden.

EMMA STIRLING

Twenty-five.

EXT. MACKENZIE PLACE HOME FOR GIRLS/GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

The two ladies admire the manicured garden awash with colourful plants running around the walled garden. Miss Guthrie sighs.

MISS GUTHRIE

It is lovely to see life return in the garden as another summer arrives.

EMMA STIRLING

Hmm. God's handiwork is all around us.

INT. HELEN DELANEY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

HELEN DELANEY [64] sits in a comfortable, tastefully decorated living room, that extolls someone of wealth, as the door opens for Helen's maid to reveal Arthur, hand-in-hand with James and Annie.

Instantly, Helen extends her arms to welcome the two children.

HELEN DELANEY

Oh, my bonnie wee cherubs!

The children rush forward into her arms as Arthur hands his jacket to the maid.

HELEN DELANEY (CONT'D)
 (to the children)
 Every time I see you, you've grown
 another inch!

The children laugh.

HELEN DELANEY (CONT'D)
 (to the children)
 Look yonder in those drawers and
 you'll find something special.

The children open the top drawer of a side cabinet and
 reveal a purse of bon bons.

HELEN DELANEY (CONT'D)
 Two each and put the rest back.
 I'll no having your mamee accusing
 me of spoiling you.

With the children occupied, Arthur bends down and pecks his
 grandmother on the cheek before sitting opposite her.

He looks up at the mantelpiece that is adorned with photos
 among a small statue of the Virgin Mary with a necklace of
 beads hanging from it and a silver cross dangling over the
 edge.

ARTHUR DELANEY
 You've settled in?

The children, sucking on a sweet, calmly advance towards
 Helen.

HELEN DELANEY
 (to the children)
 If you go to the kitchen, Bessie
 will fix you up some nice lemonade.

The children giggle and leave the room.

HELEN DELANEY (CONT'D)
 (to Arthur)
 Aye, but I do miss Philip.

She looks up at the photo of her dead husband and crosses
 herself.

ARTHUR DELANEY
 I know, but he was a fair age and
 he had a good life. You can't ask
 for more.

She sighs.

HELEN DELANEY

No. I suppose not.

The door opens for the maid to appear.

BESSIE

The children are playing quietly
ma'am. Would you care for some tea?

HELEN DELANEY

That would be lovely, Bessie.

The maid exits.

HELEN DELANEY (CONT'D)

(to Arthur)

I've had two good husbands. Philip
and your grandfather, God bless
them both, but it has been a cruel
fate to be left alone, again.

ARTHUR DELANEY

Och, Gran. Look around you. They
both gave you all the love you
could wish for and a family that
would be the envy of all.

HELEN DELANEY

You're right, son, but fate is
fickle. On the one hand your step-
brothers and sisters are lauded
with fortune and opportunity but
you and your brothers are left to
make do as best you can.

Bessie appears with a tray containing refreshments which she
lays down on a table and distributes before leaving.

Arthur leans over and takes a fine Chine cup while Helen
delicately pours some milk into her cup followed by a lump
of sugar.

HELEN DELANEY (CONT'D)

I can't speak for my brothers, but
I hold no grudge.

He takes a sip from his cup.

ARTHUR DELANEY

Anyway, my work affords our upkeep.
Life may be modest, but we are
happy and that's what matters.

Arthur studies Helen as she sips her tea in silence.

ARTHUR DELANEY (CONT'D)
Don't you think?

She doesn't look at him as she raises an eyebrow.

ARTHUR DELANEY (CONT'D)
Or are some things less forgivable
than others?

HELEN DELANEY
I'm saying nothing.

ARTHUR DELANEY
Yes. Your demeanour says it all.

HELEN DELANEY
Your parents looked forward to a
good Catholic lass joining the
family...

Arthur chuckles sardonically.

ARTHUR DELANEY
A mother who will have nothing to
do with me and a father who
absconded. What right have they to
be judge and jury?

Helen sips her tea.

ARTHUR DELANEY (CONT'D)
But I expected more from you.

She looks up at him abruptly.

ARTHUR DELANEY (CONT'D)
I expected you, of all people, to
be above such bigotry. Despite...

HELEN DELANEY
I am no bigot!

ARTHUR DELANEY
Despite Mary's family and mine
casting shame we have managed, but
your vocal support could have made
life easier.

Helen ponders on his words.

HELEN DELANEY
It was not for me to tell others
what to think or do.
(MORE)