

Mad Woman

Dani Miller

A simple question hung on her lips.

"Brendon is OK, right?" Mary asked as she pushed her hair from her forehead. Callum Elementary had called to let her know that something was up with her son and the lady on the other end sounded distressed.

Dropping the laundry basket on the floor, Mary rushed out the door and sped to the school, hoping that nothing too terrible had happened. Everything was in a blur as she sped along the streets, melting together to form one color or none. Fearing the worst had happened, she quickly cast aside any scenario that ended with him in the hospital. Granted, she had a very active imagination and all the scenarios turned out to be the worst.

Half a year ago, something like this had happened before. In the beginning of the semester, Brendon had gone missing and no one knew where he was. John, Brendon's best friend, had told the teacher when questioned that he saw Brendon take off after their gym class, only to return near the end of the school day, not mentioning where he had gone or seeming to care the teachers were mad at him.

Keeping that memory in her mind, she raced through the town until she spotted the little school in the distance. Lights were on in the main building, indicating that there was someone still in the offices, even at this late hour. Mary parked her van and let it idle, trying to calm herself before she faced the music.

No one could understand how panicked she got when Brendon went missing.

Once, when they were at an amuse-

ment park, he took off without saying anything to her. Panic raced through her veins as she tried to find the little boy, calling out for him and looking like a mad woman. Quickly and efficiently, the staff of the park had located Brendon, sitting by the heart-shaped pond. Racing to him, Mary swept him into her arms, peppering him with kisses and holding him tightly. Squirming ever so slightly, Brendon worked his way from her arms, not wanting to give the onlookers even more of a show.

The receptionist at Callum must have seen Mary pull into the parking lot, because she was at the door, waving her over. Unable to take the anxiety anymore, Mary exited her vehicle and trudged up the stairs, not wanting to know what happened.

"Very nice of you to come on such short notice," the receptionist greeted her as the two women walked through the dark halls.

"What's wrong with Brendon?" Mary asked as soon as she was seated in the principal's office, not caring if she sounded rude or standoffish.

"Xeroxing your butt is an unacceptable use of school equipment," the principal said with no preamble as he handed over a folded sheet of paper for Mary to view for herself.

"You can't be serious," Mary whispered as relief flooded through her system and she burst into giggles, every bad scenario going out the door in an instant.

Zany was not a word she would use to describe her adopted son because he was always so quiet and withdrawn, but that was the one that popped into her head as she stared at the black and white image of his derriere.