

## ***BACKUP GIRL NO MORE: ADIOS TO MY V-CARD AND MY FIRST LOVE***

### **Backup Girl No More**

Chapter 5

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That night, I filled the bathtub to the brim with scalding water, watching steam rise in thick clouds. I desperately wanted to wash away every trace of the past twenty-four hours, as if enough hot water could somehow cleanse my soul along with my skin.

But as I undressed in front of the bathroom mirror, the purple-blue marks scattered across my skin told their own story. Love bites on my neck, fingerprint bruises on my hips – each one a reminder I couldn't erase. The bruises weren't ready to fade, just like the memories.

Last night came flooding back uninvited – the burning heat of his skin against mine, his passionate breathing against my ear, the way he'd whispered my name in the dark. The ghost of his touch still lingered everywhere, like phantom hands tracing patterns across my body. The warmth of his chest pressed against my back, his fingers intertwined with mine – memories I wanted to forget but

couldn't seem to shake.

I shook my head violently, grabbing the sides of the sink until my knuckles turned white, trying to shake away these fragments of madness. These moments that meant everything to me and nothing

to him.

Grabbing my roughest loofah, I scrubbed and scrubbed until my skin turned angry red. My arms, my neck, my chest – anywhere his lips had been. As if I could somehow erase what had become the most humiliating memory of my life. The physical pain felt almost good, like maybe it could

overshadow the ache in my chest.

The raw, stinging pain kept me tossing and turning all night. Every position hurt – my skin too sensitive, my body remembering touches I was trying to forget.

Aiden didn't text, of course. For the first time in six years, since we got our first iPhones in middle school, there was no "goodnight" message. No inside joke about his calculus homework. No stupid TikTok he thought would make me laugh. No heart emoji that I used to analyze for hours. Just deafening silence.

Better this way.

It had to end sometime.

Might as well start detoxing tonight.

I drifted in and out of consciousness until dawn approached, finally falling into an uneasy sleep somewhere between counting sheep and counting mistakes.

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Just as morning light began filtering through my curtains, I felt what seemed like a gentle kiss on my forehead, so real it startled me from my dreams. For a moment, my heart stopped, thinking he might have used his spare key to check on me like he sometimes did before school.

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