Chapter 14

• Chapter 4

The Ruined Bride of Velvet Nights by Brick Moving Ant

- The rain came without warning. • Fat raindrops pelted Navier's body, ice—cold and biting to the bone. • Her wounds were still raw. The rain soaked through her bandages, bringing waves of searing pain. • She tried to maneuver her wheelchair, desperate to leave, but there was no way to hail a ride on the • expressway. • Her fingers, frozen stiff from the cold, struggled to grip the wheels that kept slipping on the wet surface, nearly tipping over several times. • Finally, at a turn, the wheelchair lost balance and crashed to the ground. • Navier's knees slammed against the cold cement, tearing open her wounds. Blood ran down her legs, mixing with rainwater to stain the ground red. • She bit down hard, fighting through the pain as she tried to get up, but her weakened body failed her again and again. • The rain fell harder. Her vision blurred until she couldn't tell if it was rain or tears streaming down • her face. • She lay there, her body trembling, an overwhelming sense of humiliation clawing at her chest.
 - Eventually, with sheer willpower, she forced herself up-inch by inch-until she was back in the • wheelchair. • Her clothes were soaked through, her wounds bleached white from the rain, the pain nearly numbing. Still, she gritted her teeth, inching forward, pushing the wheelchair toward home. • 21:50

• Lysander had abandoned her for a glimpse of someone with the faintest resemblance to Ophelia.

How had she ever convinced herself he might someday love her?

• A bitter laugh escaped her lips, then turned to silent tears.

• She didn't know how long she lay there.

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- Five hours later, she finally made it home. • The housekeepers gasped when they saw her-a bruised, battered mess, soaked to the skin, barely able to sit upright. • Navier seemed not to notice their expressions. She simply said quietly, "Prepare some hot water and • clean bandages."
- Lysander didn't return until that night. • His suit was slightly disheveled, his expression weary, but his eyes held disappointment. • Navier sat on the sofa, glancing up at him. Her voice was eerily calm. "Couldn't find her?" • "I found her, but she wasn't like Ophelia after all."
- His thoughts were consumed by that Ophelia-like silhouette. It was as if Navier's existence was merely air.

• He didn't even notice Navier's injuries, nor did he ask how she'd gotten home.

Ophelia's photographs, lost in thought.

• She piled them in the yard.

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fire pit.

he relax.

• Then she lit a fire and threw the items in one by one.

Just as the fire was dying down, Lysander returned.

 Navier watched from a distance and felt absolutely nothing. Her body was healing.

• For the next two days, he left early and returned late, spending every spare moment staring at -

- And so was her resolve. • That day, she gathered everything she'd ever owned in this house-clothes, jewelry, perfumes-things she'd bought to please Lysander.
 - 21:50 The Ruined Bride of Velvet Nights 11.4%

Seeing the flames in the yard, his expression transformed. He charged forward and kicked over the

The flames devoured the memories, seeming to burn away her obsessive feelings as well.

- Embers scattered everywhere. Some landed on her bare skin, making her hiss in pain. "Ah..."
- Navier looked up, wincing from the pain. "These weren't hers. They were mine." Lysander froze, then rushed to his study to confirm Ophelia's possessions were intact. Only then did
- He exhaled, his frustration now directed at her. "Then why the hell burn your things?"
- Navier lowered her head, staring at the still-glowing embers on the ground, her voice barely above a whisper. "Because I'm leaving."
- "What the hell are you doing?!" Lysander's furious voice cut through the air. "Who the fuck gave you permission to burn Ophelia's things?!"