

The Ruined Bride of Velvet Nights by Brick Moving Ant

Chapter 22

- Chapter 12
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- Dealing with everything, Lysander returned home and embraced Celeste, whispering close to her
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- ear:
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- “Ophelia, you’ve finally come back. Manhattan has changed so much in seven years—let me take you
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- around.”
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- “Remember back then when you were sick, you always said you wanted to go outside and see the world. But I was too scared—you’d get worse if I took you out of the hospital. But now you’re here, healthy…… Let’s visit all the places you used to dream about.”
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- Celeste nodded obediently, letting him guide her into the car.
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- The vehicle pulled up outside Luna Park at Coney Island. Lysander held Celeste’s hand as they bought tickets and followed the crowd inside.
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- “You used to love the strawberry ice cream here,” he said, pointing to a small shop. “They were about to shut down, but I kept them afloat… Just in case you ever came back and wanted your favorite again.”
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- Celeste smiled faintly as she accepted the strawberry ice cream she secretly hated.
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- “I can’t believe you still remember what I like after all these years.”
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- Lysander smiled with a hint of pride. “Of course I do. I remember everything about you.”
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- At his words, Celeste felt herself tense further. Clearly, she would need to be even more meticulous
-
- in her performance.
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- As they neared the front of the line for the Ferris wheel, Lysander’s phone buzzed.
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- He ignored it, but it rang again.
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- After the third call, it finally stopped.
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- He glanced at a message from his secretary Nick:
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- “Sir, Ms. Armstrong has left the America. Current whereabouts unknown. Should we continue the
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- 21:51
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- search?”
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- Lysander’s reply was instant. “No need. She’s just throwing a tantrum. Her divorce stunt actually works out perfectly—keeps her from interfering with Ophelia and me. She’ll come back once she’s done sulking.”
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- Reading this response, Nick couldn’t shake a feeling of unease.
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- ‘Ms. Armstrong is gone. Will she really ever return?’
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- Lysander kept reassuring himself that Navier loved him too much. Even the divorce must be just
-
- another ploy to win him back.
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- They’d known each other for so many years, and she’d never left before—how could she suddenly walk away now?
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- Did she think her absence would make him chase after her? Impossible!
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- Pushing down his inexplicable discomfort, Lysander boarded the Ferris wheel with Celeste.
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- When they reached the highest point, he pulled her into his arms, tilted her chin up and kissed her
-
- deeply.
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- Yet in the midst of their embrace, Navier’s face unexpectedly flashed through his mind.
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- He remembered how she used to look at him, her eyes constantly filled with that devotion he once
-
- found irritating, as if he were her entire world.
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- No matter how many times he told her his heart only belonged to Ophelia, she continued to love him
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- fiercely and earnestly, impossible to drive away.
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- But from the day she submitted those divorce papers, the love in her eyes had begun to fade, inch by
-
- inch.
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- A flutter of panic rose in Lysander’s chest. He slowly released Celeste with his enthusiasm gone.

Outside the window, fireworks illuminated the night sky. They held each other, watching the spectacular display in silence.

For the next three days, Lysander canceled all his meetings to accompany Celeste.

21:51

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Chapter 18

They hiked upstate, visited the observatory to watch the meteor showers, walked along the Rockaway Beach shoreline at sunset.

Back home, Lysander stared at the chat with Navier, which still showed his messages undelivered, and fell into deep silence.

With Ophelia back at his side, he shouldn’t be thinking about Navier anymore. He was supposed to feel relieved.

So why did everything feel so strange? Why did her face keep appearing in his thoughts?

At dinner, he would reach to make a comment only to realize that Celeste’s across the table.

At night, with the rich scent of lilies filling his nostrils, he would pull Celeste close reflexively, yet find himself lying awake until the early hours.

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