

The Ruined Bride of Velvet Nights by Brick Moving Ant

Chapter 41

- Chapter 8
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- When I opened my eyes again, I was in a hospital room.
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- Mom helped raise my bed, her face lined with worry: “How are you feeling, honey? Still hurting?”
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- “Sweetheart, I know senior year is crazy important, but you can’t keep pushing yourself this hard.”
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- “You spent your entire summer break at that competition instead of relaxing. I know grades matter, but all I care about is you being healthy and happy.”
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- My throat tightened with emotion, her concern washing over me like a warm blanket, and I
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- mumbled: “I know.”
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- I hadn’t told Mom about the Stanford automatic admission from winning the competition.
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- Before all this, I’d planned my entire future around attending UC Davis with Zephyr, or at least somewhere close by.
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- Zephyr and I had been in this weird almost–relationship for so long that both our families had
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- noticed and seemed thrilled about it.
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- Everyone just assumed we were endgame—that we’d naturally end up together.
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- That’s how I’d seen it too.
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- Growing up together, sitting next to each other through twelve years of school, our moms being best
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- friends—it all seemed like fate was pushing us together.
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- The occasional brushing of hands, the late–night study sessions, even his bad–boy phase—I’d
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- accepted it all as part of our journey together.
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- Now, I wanted absolutely nothing to do with him.
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- But I didn’t have the emotional strength to explain everything to my parents or deal with the fallout with Zephyr. I’d just let things naturally implode and pick up the pieces later.
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- Mom put a fresh cherry in my hand, smiling warmly: “Someone came to see you earlier, brought a huge box of these black cherries—they’re your favorite, right?”
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- Chapter 2
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- “They stayed by your bed for quite a while. Just stepped out but they’ll be back any minute. You should thank them when they return.”
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- My heart skipped a beat, a flutter of something I hated myself for feeling.
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- Not many people knew cherries were my favorite—besides my parents, only Zephyr knew.
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- I clutched the blanket tightly, my emotions a chaotic storm.
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- Despite everything—the humiliation, the bathroom, the cruel words—a tiny, pathetic part of me hoped it was him.
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- That he’d realized what he’d done.
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- That he’d apologize and things could somehow go back to before I knew the truth.
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- That maybe, just maybe, I hadn’t wasted years of my life loving someone who saw me as nothing.
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- The hospital room door soon opened after a gentle knock, and a warm male voice called out: “Mrs. Johnson? How’s Phoebe doing? Any better?”
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I turned my head, heart racing stupidly.

The boy who entered wore a neat white button–down shirt, his slender fingers absently adjusting his

cuffs.

His voice was soft and measured, his smile genuine but slightly shy. It was Sid Loxley.

That last tiny ember of hope in my chest went cold.

Even though I definitely didn’t want to see Zephyr after everything he’d done,

The moment I realized it wasn’t him, my heart twisted with a sharp, hollow ache—the final confirmation that everything between us was truly over.

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