

The Ruined Bride of Velvet Nights by Brick Moving Ant

Chapter 49

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- The crushing workload of senior year AP classes hit like a freight train.
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- Sid and I both attacked it with a kind of obsessive focus. We discovered we were intellectual kindred spirits—both genuinely energized by learning rather than exhausted by it.
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- We devoured new concepts, already thinking ahead to college coursework.
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- We fell into an easy rhythm of swapping notes, talking through difficult concepts, and challenging each other with extra problems neither teacher had assigned.
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- Days blurred together in a productive bubble that felt safely distant from my old life.
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- After midterms, during evening study hall, I heard the chair beside me scrape against the floor.
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- Without looking up from my calculus proofs, I slid over a container of sliced apples and
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- strawberries.
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- “My mom’s on a health kick again. She sent enough for both of us, Sid.”
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- “How much longer are you planning to keep up this bullshit, Phoebe?” My head snapped up.
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- Zephyr was lounging in Sid’s seat.
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- He had positioned himself to block me into the corner, one arm stretched across the back of my
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- chair.
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- “So you ghosted me, switched to AP without saying a word, and now you’re playing house with this preppy little bitch to make me jealous? Who the fuck said you could do that?”
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- “Listen carefully—if you’re still hoping we end up at the same college, you need to drop this loser immediately. I’m not playing around.”
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- The classroom went deadly quiet.
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- Everyone suddenly developed an intense interest in their textbooks while obviously straining to hear every word.
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- I let out a laugh that contained zero humor, meeting his eyes directly.
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- “Move. That’s Sid’s seat.”
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- Zephyr’s eyes narrowed dangerously.
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- “No. I decide where I sit.”
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- I tried pushing him away, but he grabbed my wrist, yanking me toward him with familiar
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- roughness.
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- His grip was bruising, his physical advantage obvious.
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- That same feeling of powerlessness I’d felt in the bathroom returned like a wave.
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- The same mix of humiliation and heartbreak.
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- “Excuse me.”
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- Two precise knuckle taps on Zephyr’s desk.
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- “I believe you’re in my assigned seat.”
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- Sid stood there with perfect posture, head slightly tilted as he regarded Zephyr with what appeared to be genuine confusion.
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- “I don’t recognize you from our AP Physics section. Are you new?”
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- He said “AP Physics” with just enough emphasis to make his point without being openly insulting.
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- Zephyr’s face transformed with rage, launching to his feet to grab Sid’s collar. “Say that to my face again, you fucking nerd.”
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- Sid didn’t flinch. He calmly pointed to the clock on the back wall.
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- “Dr. Williams will be here in approximately twenty seconds. He’s very strict about non–enrolled students disrupting his study hall.”
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- Zephyr’s face darkened as he spat out a string of obscenities, shoving Sid aside as he stormed out.
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- The moment Sid reclaimed his seat, he turned to me, concern in his eyes.
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“Are you alright? Your wrist is red.”

I felt mortified by the whole scene.

“I’m so sorry about that. I apologize for how he acted.”

“Could you... maybe not apologize for him?” Sid was quiet for a moment before adding gently: “You’re not responsible for his behavior. And hearing you take ownership of his actions... it hurts to

see,”

I stared at him, completely unprepared for such a direct but tender statement, heat rising unexpectedly to my face...

I excused myself to the bathroom, splashing cold water on my cheeks.

Trying to cool down whatever this new feeling was.

But as I stepped into the dimly lit hallway, someone grabbed me from behind and shoved me into an empty classroom.

Zephyr pinned me against the closed door, his voice a threatening whisper:

“Congratulations, Phoebe. You finally got my attention.”

“What’s your price for ditching Pretty Boy? Just tell me what it’ll take to get you back where you belong.”

♡ (0)