

- Chapter 20
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- Seeing Sid, Zephyr’s expression instantly darkened.
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- “Phoebe? So that’s it? You picked Stanford because of this guy? You-”
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- Sid stepped slightly in front of me, cutting him off casually.
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- “Actually, we both got early admission scholarships. Neither of us went through regular admissions.”
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- Zephyr stood there, visibly struggling to process this.
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- “You were completely into me for years. This doesn’t make any sense. When did you two even-”
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- I responded with calm clarity: “I submitted my Stanford application the night I overheard you discussing what kind of lingerie would look best on my body with your friends.”
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- “Sid was the one who sat with me in the hospital when I was burning with fever. He was the one who publicly defended me when those disgusting rumors spread. He was the one who saw me—really saw me—not just what he could get from me.”
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- As I spoke, I realized these words weren’t just for Zephyr’s benefit.
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- They were my acknowledgment of what Sid had meant to me during the darkest chapter of my life.
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- How his quiet support had given me space to heal on my own terms.
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- “There are a hundred more moments I could list... but honestly, I don’t think either of us needs to hear them,”
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- Zephyr’s face crumbled, his lips trembling, unable to form words.
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- I gave his shoulder a gentle squeeze—not out of lingering affection, but as a final goodbye to the childhood friendship that once meant so much.
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- “Zephyr, I’m genuinely happy now. You should try looking forward instead of backward. It’s much easier to see where you’re going that way.”
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- As we walked away, Sid leaned down and whispered with a playful smile: “He wasn’t even worthy
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- of the title ‘ex–boyfriend,’ so why waste another minute?”

I laughed despite the emotional weight of the moment: “Oh, so ‘ex–boyfriend’ would have been an acceptable title?”

Sid lifted our intertwined hands and kissed my knuckles gently.

“Not a chance. I’m planning to make sure you never have to use the prefix ‘ex’ with me,”

It wasn’t a grand declaration, but the simple promise in his voice made my heart flutter in a way that Zephyr’s dramatic gestures never had.

This wasn’t possession or obsession—it was partnership.

Behind us, Zephyr remained frozen, shoulders slumped, finally understanding what he had truly lost.