

The Ruined Bride of Velvet Nights by Brick Moving Ant

Chapter 57

• Chapter 3

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• When I got home from the hospital, I dug out a few dusty camera bags from the depths of the

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• bookshelf.

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• They held remnants of a life I had deliberately buried.

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• The touch of the camera’s casing felt unfamiliar, and the batteries had long since drained.

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• While waiting for the charger to finish, I inserted the memory card into my computer and opened those long–forgotten photos.

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• The first photo showed me treating a Black woman receiving cholera medication on the street.

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• The second was of a five–year–old child soldier, so small the rifle towered over him.

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• The third captured refugees in North Kivu province living under torn, tattered tents...

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• The smell of smoke and dust seemed to waft through the screen, piercing the present.

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• My heart clenched as if seized by sharp claws, the ache spreading through me.

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• Leaning back in my chair, I closed my eyes, trying to calm my racing pulse. A bitter smile tugged at my lips.

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• If Jackson saw these photos, would he still describe me as “obedient and docile”?

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• Just as that thought crossed my mind, my phone buzzed twice.

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• It was a message from Jackson: the restaurant’s location.

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• That’s when I remembered–tonight was the gathering he’d arranged with his groomsmen and

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• bridesmaids.

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• I didn’t have many close friends, so these were all his people.

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• But I knew this wasn’t just a casual get–together.

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• Because today, Sara had returned.

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• 09:22

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• The Ruined Bride of Velvet Nights

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• By the time I arrived at the restaurant, they’d already ordered.

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• Scanning the table, I saw Jackson seated at the head, with Sara beside him.

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• There wasn’t a seat for me.

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• When Sara noticed me, a faint, amused smile appeared on her lips. She gave me a once–over and said nonchalantly,

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• “Go grab a chair and sit wherever you like.”

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• I dragged a chair over and sat at the farthest corner from them.

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• Jackson watched it all unfold with indifference, never uttering a word.

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• Someone broke the silence, asking, “Sara, we thought you wouldn’t make it back this time!”

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• “Are you kidding? This is Jackson’s wedding! Even if I had to crawl, I’d be here to see what kind of woman he’s marrying.”

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• Her words were met with knowing glances exchanged around the table, their laughter tinged with

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• sly undertones.

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• “Well, that’s true. You and Jackson do share a special bond.”

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• The conversation naturally revolved around Sara from that point.

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• She recounted her adventures: fishing for yellowfin tuna in the Mediterranean, trekking the Camino de Santiago in Portugal, and climbing Uluru in Australia.

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• Everyone at the table listened with rapt attention, their eyes gleaming with admiration.

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• “Zoey, you’re a woman! How do you even dare to go to such places?”

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• “Hmph!” Sara glanced at me briefly, her tone light but laced with derision.

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• “I’m not the kind of woman who only thinks about cooking, husbands, and kids.”

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• Her words hung in the air, sharp and cutting.

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• I downed a small glass of white liquor, the burning bitterness numbing my tongue, stripping the

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• The Duined Bride of Velvet Nights

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• food of all flavor.

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• Meanwhile, she remained the center of attention, the life of the gathering.

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• As the night wore on, everyone’s focus stayed fixed on her.

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• And Jackson, though mostly quiet, had his eyes on her too.

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• His gaze was tender, so soft it could melt.

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• When Sara began sharing her recent experiences dealing with scammers in Egypt, she suddenly

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• turned to Jackson and asked,

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• “Do you want to know how to say ‘my darling’ in Arabic?”

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• Jackson paused for a moment, then shook his head.

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• “I’ll teach you!”

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• Sara leaned onto his shoulder, blowing lightly into his ear.

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• "لبيدع"

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• ٥٧٤

• Jackson gently straightened her, his earlobes turning pink.

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• “Sit properly...”

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• “Come on, say it with me!”

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• Unable to resist Sara’s playful pestering, he sighed and gave in.

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• "لبيدع..."

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• “Bingo!”

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• “That’s right, you’re my c~”.

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• Her eyes darted mischievously before suddenly turning to me.

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• “Have you ever been to Africa?”

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