

# The Ruined Bride of Velvet Nights by Brick Moving Ant

Chapter 73

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- As I walked out of the cemetery, I saw someone I hadn’t expected—my dad. Jackson must have gone
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- to see him, which is how he found out about my mom’s camera. He must have also known that I was
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- back.
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- With a somewhat tentative tone, he asked, “Have you eaten?”
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- I didn’t respond immediately and asked, “What do you want from me?”
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- He hesitated for a moment before speaking, “Could you come home for a while?”
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- I couldn’t hold back a sarcastic laugh. “You’ve always told me to stay away. I’ve followed your
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- wishes, so why now, all of a sudden, do you want me to return?”
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- His voice trembled as he said, “... Your sister is ill. She has cancer.”
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- I froze for a moment, taken aback.
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- “I’ve tried everything... we’ve sold everything we can. You’re her sister. Could you help her?”
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- His face was full of sorrow and regret.
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- “I know you resent me, but it wasn’t what I wanted. It wasn’t my choice to push you away...”
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- His eyes were filled with pain. “You’re my daughter. How could I ever bear to send you away? I had
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- my reasons.”
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- I looked at him quietly, knowing that our past was a tangled mess of misunderstandings. “I know,” I said, not needing further explanation.
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- He seemed to be lost in thought for a moment. I remembered how, on the day I received my college acceptance letter, I’d been so happy, eager to tell him that I was going to follow in my mother’s footsteps and become a doctor. I rushed home, hoping to share the good news, but when I overheard him arguing with my aunt in the kitchen, I heard words that cut through me:
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- “May will be going to college soon too. How are we going to afford it?”
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- “You’ve already raised her to adulthood. Isn’t that enough?”
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- Chapter 19
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- “Harry! You know it’s either her or me in this family!”
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- I’d closed the door softly and ran out, sitting on the street alone for the rest of the afternoon. That entire summer, I lived in a constant state of anxiety, waiting for an answer I could never fully understand.
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- But when the time came for me to report to college, I thought I had everything figured out. It felt like a new beginning, yet my world shattered.
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- “You didn’t want our home to fall apart again, so you sacrificed me. No matter how much it hurt, you still sent me away,” I said quietly.
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- He opened his mouth, but I interrupted, “I don’t resent you. I understand.”
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- I paused and added, “But as a daughter, you’re not a terrible father, but you’re also not a good one.”
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- I reached for my phone and transferred 300,000 yuan to him. Over the years, he’d sent money into my account from time to time, and I had saved it all, planning to repay him when the moment was
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- right.
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- “I’ve paid back the money you gave me. The rest... let it be my way of repaying your raising me.”
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- I added coldly, “Please, don’t come looking for me again.”
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- After I left the restaurant, I felt a wave of lightness wash over me. All the burdens that had weighed heavily on my heart seemed to lift and disappear, one by one.
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- I turned a corner and found myself at the flower shop where Joseph had once bought my mother the bird-of-paradise flowers. The owner recognized me, but the shop was almost empty. She was loading the last of the flowerpots onto a truck.
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- I asked, “Where are you moving these to?”
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- She smiled, “We’re closing down! I want to try something different.”

I paused for a moment. “Well, that’s alright.”

She took the remaining lilies of the valley, hyacinths, and olive branches, and wrapped them into a bouquet for me. “May we all embrace new beginnings.”

We shared a brief, heartfelt hug before parting ways.

## Chapter 19

As I walked home, the sunset painted the sky in vibrant hues. I stopped for a while, taking in the beauty of the moment, before my phone rang. It was the dean, his voice tense.

“Joe, your leave might need to end sooner than expected.”

I immediately asked, “What’s going on?”

He sent me a news article: “Lebanese Conflict Escalates, Multiple Pager Explosions Reported.”

“The hospital thinks you might be the best person to handle this-”

I interrupted him, “I’m going.”

I pulled out the necklace with Joseph’s name engraved on the tag from my collar and kissed it gently.

I knew then that there would be no other answers. Wherever the smoke of war rises, that’s where

we must go.

We will always hope that everyone in this world, no matter how deep the darkness they face, will find a glimmer of hope.

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