

The Ruined Bride of Velvet Nights by Brick Moving Ant

- Chapter 3
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- I didn't have to wait long in the room. Callum soon entered with Mila, their matching features striking—both wearing gentle smiles, eyes full of apparent warmth as they moved to embrace me.
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- I instinctively stepped back.
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- Callum's smile faltered for a moment, but he said nothing. Mila's eyes filled with tears. "Mommy, don't you want to hug me?"
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- Her lips trembled, eyes glistening – the perfect picture of innocence that always melted her father's
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- heart.
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- Callum immediately knelt beside her, pulling her close. "Of course not, sweetheart. Mommy's dress is stained—she just doesn't want to ruin your beautiful birthday dress."
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- Mila's tears subsided as she processed this. Then her face lit up with that dazzling smile I once
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- treasured.
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- "Mommy, Daddy and I have a special surprise for you," she said sweetly. "Even though it's my birthday, we never forget what you went through for me. The gift isn't here yet – we need to go pick it up."
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- I remembered all the previous birthdays, how they'd always had a "special gift" for me, how I'd been moved to tears each time. Now I realized those gifts were just excuses to meet Sophie.
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- Looking at Mila – my precious daughter whom I'd have given my life for – I felt hollow. And Callum, who'd sworn never to betray me, had made those vows as fragile as smoke.
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- I nodded silently, watching them leave hand in hand.
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- From the balcony, I watched their car disappear. Downstairs, the party was winding down. Callum's friends were leaving, their knowing smirks making it clear – I'd always been their private joke.
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- Back in our room, I retrieved an old phone from a locked box. After charging it, I powered it on.
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- Years ago, when Callum and I first started dating, I'd learned about Sophie Blake. His childhood sweetheart, his "pure first love." Young and insecure, I'd created a secret social media account to monitor their relationship. Once convinced of Callum's fidelity, I'd locked the phone away.
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- Now, opening the app, I saw Sophie's recent post—a grid of photos at the beach. There she was with Mila, surrounded by sparklers, faces pressed together like mother and daughter. In the center photo, all three of them formed a heart against the sunset—the perfect family portrait.
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- Caption: "Celebrating my favorite little girl's birthday with the people I love most. This must be what pure happiness feels like,"
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I stared at the photos until my eyes burned. In one, while Mila played with sparklers, two figures embraced in the background. After seven years of marriage, I knew Callum's silhouette anywhere.

The betrayal had always been there,

Steadying myself against the desk, I went to his study. In the safe lay a share transfer agreement.

When we got together, Callum's parents—especially his mother had violently opposed our relationship. The compromise: they wouldn't interfere, but we couldn't legally marry. So Callum had given me this document as security, compensating for the lack of marital protection with financial guarantee.

Now, I thought, it was time to use it.

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