



204 Side Story: A Person You Call "Friend"

"I definitely like this Oscar Bennett more than I liked the original one," Kyle grinned as the baby grabbed both of his index fingers at once. 1

It had been a month since Amelle gave birth to her son, but Kyle only had time to greet the new member of the Bennett family now since he had been busy preparing for his departure back to Canada to finally join his father at his company.

Amelle was quite upset about his leaving but she could not overlook the fact that the man had to lead a life of his own, even though he was still clearly objecting to it.

"Mrs. Bennett, it's time for the baby to get some sleep," Mrs. Geller carefully took Oscar in her arms, offering Amelle a kind smile.

After the child's birth, the woman was re-hired by the Bennett family as a nanny, and Mrs. Geller could not be happier with her new position. Having worked for Amelle for many years, she had proven to be a reliable and kind person, and seeing how well she was handling the baby, there was no doubt that they had made the right



choice.

Once the nanny left the room, Amelle looked outside the window, noticing that the thick October clouds had finally parted and the day was lit with sunlight once again.

"Would you like to join me for a walk, Mr. Marshall?" She smiled at the man sitting beside her in the living room.

Kyle set his coffee cup aside and nodded. "Sure. And please, call me Kyle. If I am to be the godfather of your child, I think we should be addressing each other on a first-name basis from now on."

As the two of them walked side by side through the burning foliage of the gardens surrounding the mansion, Kyle could not help but feel a bittersweet pang of fading nostalgia.

"It was around this time that I was thrown into the thick of it," he smiled, his bright eyes looking ahead. "I still cannot believe I managed to pull all that and be left unharmed. If my father ever learns about all that... Well, I guess he will immediately sign me up with his entertainment agency because such acting talents should not go to waste."



He laughed, but Amelie noticed a hint of sadness behind that cheerful demeanor.

She had noticed it before too; just like Liam, Kyle seemed to be used to hiding his real emotions and always pretending for the sake of others. She wanted to know what was really concealed behind all that acting, but at the same time, she was afraid to overstep and hurt the man instead.

She took another risk and turned the subject of their conversation in a slightly different direction.

"What you have done for us... was truly incredible. I guess you and Liam are very good friends since you were willing to risk so many things for such a dangerous scheme."

Kyle let out a short laugh again, then sighed, brushing his hair away from his forehead as the cool October wind messed up his bangs.

"Yes... Well, would you like to know how he and I became such good friends?"

"Of course!" Amelie caught herself feeling a little too excited about that but she could not help it and Kyle found it cute.

"People speculate how exactly Liam and I got to



know each other, mostly because we never really talk about our friendship publicly. But the truth is, we met during our sophomore year of high school, back when we were in the same boarding school."

'Oh...' Amelle recalled what she knew about the two of them. 'Everyone thinks they met while club hopping in England. Looks like it was just another lie to protect themselves.'

Kyle continued.

"Believe it or not, when I was a teenager, I was not a popular guy. In truth, I was very lonely, rather antisocial, and kind of angry at the entire world around me. "Edgy" as the kids call it these days.

What's worse, after my mother's death, my dad buried himself in work, paying zero attention to me and ignoring the fact that perhaps I was struggling with grief too. Things went completely south when he signed up his new talent--a girl my age who was supposed to be a singer and from the moment she started her training stage, he forgot about me entirely.

That was the moment I felt like I had lost it all. No self-awareness, no self-control, just



nothing... I felt like I had forgotten even the mere idea of who I was. And that was when the real trouble began. That was the time I started writing a lot of hateful stuff on online forums.

At first, it started rather pathetically; you know, I wrote the things that every other hater did. I went through every single celebrity profile of my father's agency, writing hateful comments and spreading horrible rumors about them left and right.

I was given multiple warnings by the moderators and my father's employees even tried to track me down, but they always failed because I kept switching accounts and deleting the old ones.

Somehow, it started to feel rather liberating. I knew my father was dealing with my anonymous persona as well and the mere fact that he was interested made me feel like we were connected--however ridiculously--again.

That was, until I finally got in real trouble.

As it turned out later on, a lot of guys from our class were fans of that new girl my dad signed up with the agency and they too were trying to track down the person behind all that misinformation and hate.



One day, after yet another session of fighting with those people online and calling them all kinds of names for liking that girl, I logged out of the forum on the school computer and left the building to head back home.

As I walked past the soccer field to sneak out through the gate in order to make my route shorter, I noticed several guys from my class waiting at the fence behind the sports building. At first, I thought they were just hiding to have a smoke but as I walked past them, they all surrounded me, two guys threw my things on the ground and pinned me down, while their leader, surprisingly--our class president, loomed over me with a wicked smile on his face.

They managed to track me down. One of them watched me type on the forums in the computer class and that's how they confirmed it was me. How ironic.

Anyway, with five of them towering over me, I knew there was no way for me to get out of that situation unharmed. After all, I did call all of them pathetic losers if not worse. But before they could even do anything to me, someone else stepped outside the sports wing and started throwing pebbles at the guys.



I was stunned, rendered completely speechless. It was Liam Bennett, one of the most popular guys at school, and he was walking toward us, throwing pebbles at my bullies with a completely expressionless face!

The guys ran away when Liam got too close, scared that he might do more than just throw some stones at them, but that afternoon was the day our friendship started.

As it turned out, Liam was on cleaning duty that day and heard the guys planning to beat me up behind the sports wing, so he waited for us to meet before performing that weird stunt in order to save me. He said he could not simply let someone as sad as me get beaten up for it.

I can't believe he actually saw that; he really saw right through me."

Kyle paused and for quite a while, the two of them continued to walk in complete silence.

"He said he understood me and I had no choice but to believe him," Kyle finally spoke again. "After that day, I stopped going to the forums because I finally had something to talk to. He shared my grief, my loneliness, my sadness... And before we knew it, we had become



inseparable. My miserable life ended with him."

Suddenly, Kyle stopped in his tracks, turning around to look at Amelie. "Back then, I promised him that I would do anything to repay him saving me from my bullies. And what do you know... he had not cashed in that offer until you came along. That is how much you mean to him."

Amelie was at a loss for words. Kyle's story was strange, yet heartwarming, especially since it showed her husband in an entirely new light.

'It does sound like Liam... to save someone is such an unusual way and not ask anything for it.'

Her lips curved into a subtle, friendly smile as she replied. "That is how much the two of us mean to him. Both you and I... we are blessed to have someone like Liam by our side."

"We are. We are blessed to have Liam as a person we can call our friend."

And thus, they resumed their walk through the autumn gardens, in silence once more, but neither of them could deny that they had managed to become closer.