



## 211 Side Story: Chonky Thief

*'All this working out and what did I get in the end? I fell ill!'* 1

Amelie tried to sneakily look at the numbers on the thermometer but Liam snatched it too quickly, pulling it away from her. With a long sigh, he looked down at his wife, his eyes almost tearing up. "How did you manage to fall ill? I mean, it's spring and there is this nasty cold going around, but even Oscar is well!"

The boy peeked from behind the door, his pretty face distorted with a worried expression.

Amelie sighed as well. "It is good that he is not sick so please keep him away from here; I want him to remain healthy."

Her sentence ended with a loud cough which scared Oscar who darted back into the hallway, hiding behind a tall flower vase. Liam sighed again and tucked his wife under a soft blanket.

"Get some more rest, alright? Dr. Johnson left you some medicine, but she insisted you only take it after you eat, so I am going to take care of that now."

Amelie shot him a rather uncertain look which disappointed the man, but he allowed her such audacity since she was ill.

Having made sure his wife was warm and cozy, he left the bedroom, then walked up to Oscar, and picked him up, holding him in his strong arms.

"Alright, little fellow. Our Lily is sick so as the men of the house, we have to take care of her to help her recover faster. Will you help me with this important mission?"

Oscar's eyes glistened with excitement. He nodded his head, spreading his pouty lips into a wide smile and Liam patted him on the head. "Very well then, let's start!"

As the two of them stood in the kitchen, Liam rolled his eyes when yet another suppressed giggle seeped into the room. The maids, whom he kicked out of the space, still spied on them as instructed by the chef, and it was utterly impossible for them not to laugh.

Indeed, their joy was understandable: Liam and his son stood before the cooking table, wrapped in colorful aprons, and Oscar even had the honor of wearing the chef's hat which was much too

big for his head and kept sliding down on his eyes.

"Chicken broth..." Liam's eyes ran over the page of the cooking book left for him by the chef. It was a simple meal to make, especially for someone who had taken cooking classes in the past, but since today he had a little helper by his side, the task was beginning to seem rather daunting.

"Oscar," he addressed his son and fixed his hat again, "I will take care of most of the stuff, but you are still in charge of the most important task--tasting! We can't let mommy eat a bad broth, right?"

Oscar nodded, his expression turning serious which only made his father laugh. "Let's begin!"

As Liam started preparing both the chicken and the vegetables for the broth, Oscar sat on the chair next to him, carefully observing his father's every move. From time to time, Liam would give Oscar a piece of carrot or celery and the boy gladly chewed on them, continuing his observation. 1

Once the ingredients for the broth were prepared, Liam stood next to the stove, waiting





for the water to boil when he felt a slight tug on his pants.

"Oscar?" He looked down, widening his eyes as he noticed that the boy was crying. "What is it? Did you get hurt?!"

Oscar shook his head, wiping his tears as he barely managed to answer. "Pantaloon... stole chicken!" 1

Liam quickly shifted his eyes to the table which was now indeed devoid of chicken. He then looked at the kitchen door, catching a glimpse of a tiny round butt disappearing into the hall.

"You chonky thief!"

Helping Oscar climb his shoulders, Liam secured his position by holding his short legs and started running, his son clutching his black hair between his tiny fists for support.

"Stop it right there, you fluffy butt!" He yelled as he ran through the hall, alerting the maids who dropped their tasks, rushing to check what was going on.

"Help me catch the dog! He stole the chicken!" Liam pointed at Captain Pantaloon who ran through the living room with an unexpected



speed, holding a large piece of meat between his teeth.

The maids were stunned by such a weird display while Liam ran past them with little Oscar sitting on his shoulders and pulling his hair as if controlling his father's direction. 1

The chef, Mr. Lane, only shook his head and clicked his tongue, buttoning up his white uniform as he walked back to the kitchen, mumbling, "Should have just asked me to cook it myself."

Once the dog was finally captured and the piece of chicken retrieved, Liam fell into the kitchen chair, placing his son on his lap as the two of them inspected the meat, disappointed. "We can't use it anymore. I will have to do it all over again."

"Papa, look!" Oscar pointed his finger at the small pot on the table in front of them with a small note placed next to it that read, "Chicken broth with chopped carrots, salary, and tiny dumplings. Please make sure Mrs. Bennett eats it all!"

Liam looked at Oscar and sighed. "One thing we could have done for Mommy and we failed. That



chonky butt is not getting any more food today!"

As Liam stepped back into the bedroom, he saw Amelie sitting in the bed with Captain Pantaloons snoring loudly with his head on her lap. "What happened to him? He came here looking exhausted and fell asleep the moment he climbed into the bed." 1

The man shot him an angry look, then placed a little table with a bowl of steaming hot broth over his wife's legs, offering her a spoon as he mumbled, "That stupid dog!"

He then quickly changed his tone to a more lighthearted one and forced a smile. "Enjoy the broth, honey! And don't forget to take your medicine after! I will be back again soon."

Amelie wanted to thank him but Liam dashed out of the room, looking both disappointed and upset. The woman flinched when he banged the door closed and looked down at the sleeping dog, her eyebrows arched. "What was that all about?"

Liam looked at Oscar who had been waiting for him in the hall, then let out a long sigh, and grinned somewhat menacingly. "Alright, take two! Let's go, son, perhaps your mother will





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want something sweet when she wakes up!"

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