

212 Side Story: Definitely Happy [END]

"The two of them are really hitting it off," Elizabeth laughed as she watched Emma and Oscar play with Captain Pantaloons together. 1

Amelie turned to look at the children too, smiling as she noticed how happy her son looked next to Emma who had already become his best friend.

All of a sudden, a dark wave of sadness washed over her, bringing back painful memories from her own childhood.

"They look just like us... when we were kids."

The first time Amelie met Richard, she was shy and did not know what to do. He was a handsome boy with soft brown hair and dark eyes that shone under the warm orange light of the crystal chandelier in the living room of the Clarks mansion.

'Is he a prince?' She thought, peeking from behind her mother's skirt. He might as well have been, given that he was wearing a small plastic crown and had a small wooden sword strapped to the side of his belt.

How did the two of them get to become friends?

Both Amelie and Richard were popular among other kids. Many boys brought little Amelie gifts and flowers while girls ran after little Richard, offering him candy and ribbons they would tear off their pretty dresses.

Richard looked at them with disgust, and Amelie only looked at Richard.

Things changed completely when Amelie's parents passed away.

She refused to leave their house and move in with the Clarks and when Richard's parents tried to take her with them forcefully, she would throw a horrible tantrum, crying and kicking everyone who tried to approach her like a trapped wild cat.

Julia was of no help; though she, too, did not want to move in with the Clarks, she was older and thus, knew that they had to do that, but seeing her sister in such a broken state, for the first time in her life, she found herself at a loss.

She was just as shattered after all.

"If you keep crying like this, your face will become ugly, and then I won't be able to take

you as my princess."

Amelie raised her red, teary eyes up to the boy standing in front of her. Just like always, he was wearing a gilded crown and had a wooden sword hanging from his belt.

This time, however, he was holding a small bouquet of white lilies and the head of a plush toy dragon which he had evidently torn off its body.

"What is this?" She stared at the dragon's head, shocked, but Richard only scoffed and threw the toy's head to her feet, kneeling before the girl as he explained in an arrogant tone. "I have defeated the dragon that had been keeping you locked in this tower and brought you its head! Now, you are free! Take these flowers and come with me to my palace. My princess has to live in my castle, don't you agree?" 2

With that, he shoved the flowers between her trembling hands and smiled, wiping her tears with a sleeve of his sweater. "Don't you want to become a princess, Lily?"

Of all the gifts and attention she had ever gotten, that strange and childish act trumped them all.

For the first time in so long, Amelie finally

smiled.

'In the end, I accepted his flowers and I moved to his castle...'

A loud children's laughter jolted her back to reality and she noticed Oscar run after a man dressed in a plush dragon suit, with a plush sword between his hands.

It made her smile again.

"Another reporter has arrived," Elizabeth rose from her seat and fixed her dress, throwing a quick glance at their children. "I will go talk to him and then I'll be back with some iced tea. You look like you need something refreshing."

She winked at Amelie and left, almost strutting toward a man with a digital camera hanging down his neck.

Amelie sighed and took a slow look around.

After getting back her charity funds, she was once again in charge of all the Ashford welfare events, and this time, it was the annual gathering for the single parents' association.

It looked like it was going wonderfully well; with the enormous help of her friends and colleagues, every official event no longer felt like a chore,

and Amelie was incredibly grateful for having such an amazing team beside her.

As she continued to look over the venue, she suddenly froze, her heart sinking.

A tall man with dark brown hair and sparkling brown eyes caught her gaze as well, his lips curling into a subtle soft smile as he slowly approached her seat.

"Richard?" Amelie was finally able to call out her ex-husband's name once he stood right before her. Before the man could respond, her eyes moved down to his legs, catching a glimpse of a child, hiding behind Richard, his face red with embarrassment.

"Long time no see, Amelie. I hope you don't mind my coming here today... After all, I am a single parent too."

Amelie arched her brows and the man added, patting the shy boy on his head. "This is Christopher, I adopted him once I got out. He is... Samantha's firstborn."

Amelie felt her hands grow strangely numb while her heartbeat quickened. No wonder the boy looked so familiar; he really looked like his mother.

"So you..." she started, but found it difficult to compose a coherent sentence. "You are a father now too..."

Richard nodded, his smile fading. "I guess it's strange, but I felt like doing at least something right with my life for a change. I was all alone in the end, and I wanted to help someone who was just as alone."

Amelie was at a loss for words again.

During the years of Richard's conviction, there were still rare moments when her memory would return to some distant recollections of him, but no matter what kind of emotions they evoked, she could not bring herself to feel anything specific about them.

And now that he was there again, she felt a faint sense of relief and perhaps a little hint of sadness.

Life went on as intended. She felt good realizing that.

"Papa, can we go now? I want to get a toy too," the boy behind Richard's leg tugged him by the sleeve of his blazer, looking up at him with his big brown eyes. The man nodded and smiled--a genuine smile of affection that Amelie had not

seen before.

"Well, we will be on our way then. It's a really nice event you have gathered here, Amelie. I can see your touch in every little thing."

Amelie nodded thankfully, offering a kind smile to his son as well.

Richard turned around, prepared to leave, but then paused, facing his ex-wife again.

"It's nice to see you this happy, Amelie. The biggest regret of my life is that I was not the one who could do that for you." 1

And just like that, he disappeared, swallowed by the mingling crowd.

Amelie kept looking at the last place where she could still see his face, a bittersweet smile playing upon her rosy lips.

Her eyes twitched when she saw Liam run around the venue hall with Oscar sitting on his back, his plush sword stretched forward as if he was setting off to a battle.

Liam's eyes locked with hers and he smiled, waving his hand as he shrugged his shoulders and charged forward to meet John who had Emma sitting on his back in the same way as

Oscar. The mixture of their laughter and dramatic shouting enveloped Amelie's heart with a warm veil of comfort.

She chuckled and shook her head.

Yes, she was happy. She was definitely happy. 2

And she had no regrets. 1

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Thank you for reading this story! I haven't been active in the comments for some time, but I've read them all and I am grateful that I have such acti...

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Creator's Thoughts