

Sydney & Louis' "Meet-Cute"

"What are you drinking?" I said and smiled, hoping that I didn't look too deranged after one too many shots.

He grinned at me. "It is called a coffin." Ooooh, what kind of accent is that? I swear, I felt my knees buckle a bit from the sound of his velvety voice. Please don't be gay, please don't be gay, please, please!

"That sounds pretty deadly." Wow, Sydney. That was original! I was sure that my face had turned bright red. I was officially going down in flames.

He took off his sunglasses and continued to grin at me. "Not as deadly as you. You are incredibly beautiful."

Hmmm. Is he just as full of it as the rest of these guys? Is it just that his incredibly sexy accent makes it sound better? I'm going to reserve judgment for the time being. Maybe he is actually sincere. Unlikely, but I am going to go with that for now.

"You are too kind." I looked at the floor.

"No, not kind, just honest." He put his finger under my chin and pulled my face up so that I was looking directly into the most achingly beautiful blue eyes that I had ever seen. Whoa. Was it the alcohol or the fact that I had not had sex for so long? I felt like my thighs were on fire. Get a grip, Sydney.

"My name is Louis." He pronounced it "Louie." His accent really was intoxicating. "And you are?"

"Dazzled." Oh my God. I think that I am actually going to die. I did not just say that. A cross between a hysterical giggle and a cough escaped my throat. I just couldn't think clearly when he looked into my eyes.

I looked at my shoes. "My name is Sydney. Sydney Bennett."

He waited until I returned my gaze to his. "Well, it is a pleasure to meet you, Sydney Bennett."

He then took my hand and kissed it, very tenderly. I started to think that he was totally cheesy, but the sensation as his lips touched my hand drove those thoughts out of my mind and into oblivion. I was completely mesmerized.

After a couple of moments, I realized that I was just staring at him. Will I ever stop embarrassing myself? This is just crazy. Think, Sydney, think. I said that first thing that came into my head.

"Where are you from?" I think that I actually batted my eyelashes at him. I am just hopeless.

He chuckled. "You cannot place my accent, can you? Many people have had trouble with this since I arrived."

It sounds like I may have some competition. No big deal! I can do this. (Clearly the alcohol was working its magic.)

"Really? Let me guess...are you from Germany?"

"I am not, but I do speak German. That has helped me out of a few tight spots with the police."

OK! I had found myself a near convict. Good going, Sydney! He must have seen the look on my face because he quickly backpedaled.

“Please forgive me. I am sorry if what I said was inappropriate. I am beginning to think that I do not know how to speak to American women. I have only been in the country for two weeks and I have seen many of those looks.” He shook his head ruefully. “I am from France. I grew up in the south, but I work in Paris for a small software company. They sent me here to set up a few things in the San Francisco office.”

Rats. He won't be here for long. Well, there is nothing wrong with a little fling right? Except for the fact that I don't know how to do flings, managing to get my heart broken every time that I try. I cleared my throat. “How long are you here for?”

“A couple more weeks. Then it is back to Paris for me.” He gave me that slow smile again.

Even through my drunken haze, I could feel the fear coming. I knew nothing about this guy. He was leaving in two weeks with no plan to return. He was looking for a fling. I couldn't do this. I had to run. That was the safe thing to do, Sydney. Come on! Race you to the door!

Something was keeping me there, standing in front of this man, gazing into his eyes. Why couldn't I just walk away? It was the easy way. It had worked for me very well over the past few years. No risk, no pain. That was the way I needed it to be. I just couldn't get my body to agree with me.

“Why don't you let me buy you a drink? I would like to know more about you.” He looked at me, pleading with his beautiful blue eyes and I felt my willpower draining.

“OK, one drink, but perhaps something less deadly than what you are drinking.” Seriously, Sydney, you need professional help. Just stop talking. He is going to change his mind!

“Would you like a rum and coke?”

“Sounds good to me.” Keep it simple. Excellent idea. This will greatly reduce your chances of saying something stupid.

Despite my usual moronic tendencies around attractive men, talking to Louis turned out to be pretty easy. (I am sure that the alcohol helped.) He told me about growing up on a farm in the south of France, his collection of motorcycles and his hobby of building computers. He asked all about my family, my job and my childhood. Before I knew it, two hours had passed. Maya came over and tapped me on the shoulder. She leaned forward and whispered in my ear, “I am so sorry to do this to you, but I am totally exhausted. I need to go home.”

She turned to Louis. “I'm sorry to take her away from you, but it is getting really late.”

He smiled at her. “Please do not apologize. I have had a wonderful time with Sydney. Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Louis Durand.”

Maya blushed. Ha! I knew it! It was those eyes. I am not totally ridiculous.

“My name is Maya.” She giggled. I felt so much better.

“It is a pleasure to meet you, Maya. I am so happy that you convinced Sydney to come out tonight. I owe you a debt of gratitude.”

Maya blushed again. This just got better and better. “You are most welcome.”

I sighed and stood up. “I'm sorry, Louis. I have to leave.” I think that I was actually pouting. Isn't that what French women do? His Frenchness was rubbing off on me.

Louis stood up and took my hand. “You have filled me with sadness, but I understand. Please give me your phone number so that I may call you. I must see you again.”

Was this guy for real? Did he feel obligated to ask? It was clear at this point that he was not getting lucky tonight. No matter, Sydney. Just give him the number. Why not pretend?

With no pen and paper available, I told him my number and he swore that he would remember it. “I could never forget something so important.”

OK, now I know that he is full of it. I wonder if this is how he gets his kicks. I am sure this will give him a good laugh for weeks to come. He and his French coworkers probably joke about the desperate, gullible American women they meet each night. Oh well! I guess that I will be one of them. It wouldn't be the first time that I was the unintentional source of someone's amusement.

“Thank you for a lovely evening, Louis.” I felt tears come to my eyes; sadness that none of this was real. I put my arms around his neck, planning on giving him a brief hug and running away when he pulled me in tight and held me for a few minutes. We just fit. It felt right. And he smelled amazing... Between the alcohol and his incredible scent, I had forgotten that I was supposed to be in a hurry and jumped when Maya called my name.

“Be right there!” I called to her. I turned and smiled at Louis. “Take care of yourself. I really enjoyed meeting you.”

“Why do you say this? You sound like we will not meet again. You are an incredible woman, Sydney. I will call you tomorrow.”

As I walked away, I was sure that I would never see him again.

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