

## Sydney's Doomed Flight

**Introduction: Sydney and Louis have just gotten on the airplane for France and Sydney is very nervous about meeting Louis' family for the first time. In addition, Sydney has been given a very long list of tasks related to the French wedding by Louis' mother, Simone, and he is about to tell her about one last request...**

As we settled into our seats, I found myself smiling and humming to myself. Maybe I had finally had a breakthrough. Maybe Sydney Durand had finally learned to take herself less seriously. MAYBE Sydney Durand was going to have a great time in France.

Louis turned to me suddenly. "Syd, I don't want you to panic, but there is something that I need to tell you about the ceremony. There is something that my mother would like you to do for her..."

Then again, maybe not.

I looked over at Louis like he was completely insane. He should know by now that prefacing a statement with "I don't want you to panic" will absolutely cause me to panic. Honestly, I don't know where I had gone wrong in his Sydney handling education.

He sighed. "Please don't worry. It is not a big deal. It is just..."

I looked at him with wide eyes. "What? What now? What else do I have to do? What possible other hoop is there for me to jump through for your family?"

Yikes. That sounded really harsh. I guess that I had had my fill of requests for this wedding and all of the activities that went along with it. Beyond all of the stress for this trip and this wedding, I still had a feeling of dread that something would go wrong with MY dream wedding while we were out of the country. There were just way too many scenarios that I could run through in my mind to cover the potential disasters for the weddings in both locations. I really do have that level of talent. But there's no need to be jealous...

I closed my eyes and let out a deep breath. "I'm sorry, Bluey. I have been doing my best to relax, but it just seems like every time that I turn around, there is something else that I need to do. I want to please everyone, but I am starting to feel like a performing seal."

Lest you think that I had finally morphed into Bridezilla, allow me to apprise you of the list of activities coming my way before the wedding: I was to be a special guest at his mother's weekly church group, one aunt's garden group, another aunt's bridge club, one uncle's hunting group and another uncle's fishing group. I was also to be recognized at a special town hall meeting in our honor, attend several dinners with Louis' childhood friends and accompany his mother to two dances - all during the week before wedding. Each event involved some type of special task due to my status as Louis' bride. Lucky Louis wouldn't even be attending most of these events, since he had his own list of activities with the male side of the family (Most of which involved guns and motorcycles. At least HE would be having fun.) I had no idea how in the world I was going to survive on my own with a serious lack of knowledge of both the culture and the language. I haven't even started on the pre-wedding events, which would mercifully include my family as well. I don't want to overwhelm you, so we will just have to discuss that later. Now we must return to my conversation with my husband...

Louis looked at me with chagrin. "I know that this is a lot for your, *mon coeur*. And I really appreciate how hard you are trying."

I looked at the ceiling and took a few deep breaths. "What is it that you would like me to do?"

He smiled tentatively at me. "Well....there is this poem that she would like you to read just before we say our vows."

I opened my eyes and glared at him. "And?"

"And since the ceremony is in French..."

I sighed. “I will need to read the poem in French.”

“Syd, your French is nowhere near as bad as you think it is.” He was desperately trying not to laugh. The bastard was really enjoying all of the lengths to which I had to go to please his family.

I narrowed my eyes at him. “Do I at least get cue cards?”

He hesitated. “My mother would really love it if you could do it from memory.”

That’s it. I need a drink. In fact, it’s a good thing that Louis’ family owns a vineyard, because I am going to need to drink a LOT of wine in order to get through all of this. Take a deep breath, Sydney. This is important to Louis, so you must grin and bear it.

However, I would like to state for the record, that I am the one that has to do all of the outrageous shit. His part sounds pretty easy; in fact, it actually sounds like quite a bit of fun. I was starting to wonder if these events were not actual French customs and his family was just messing with me because I am American. I closed my eyes and laid my head against the seat. His family had missed out on a lot, so if I had to be hazed to be accepted, then so be it. It’s not like I haven’t embarrassed myself before. It was just too bad that in this case, every horrific experience was going to be recorded for posterity.

Excerpt from *French Toast* by Glynis Astie, Copyright 2014