What the heck does Best Friend mean anyways?
by Mystic_Harley

Summary

Marcie has a dilemma regarding who her best friend is. Thankfully, good ol' Charlie Brown is there to help.

It was rare for Patty’s and Charles’s teams to face each other during the little league season. Of course, Marcie knew next to nothing about the actual sport; she was pretty sure that Charles had just failed to score a goal using the racket but that’s besides the point. When the two teams squared off with each other, Marcie found herself at an impasse.

Who did she root for? Was it Patty’s team, the more than likely winners if she were to be honest with herself, or did she root for the eternal underdogs and give Charles that tiny morale boost he so desperately needed.

In the end, she always sat in the middle of the stands. Directly in the middle, wearing a garish clash of Patty’s colors and Charles’s colors. She would root for them both, since in the end it was just a little league, they weren’t going to win the Stanley Cup or something.

Of course, she attended each of their games, unless there was something pressing that she needed to attend or their games overlapped, but that was a rarity mercifully.

“Way to go sir! Nice hustle Charles!” She called out, waving both team flags (that she had made herself, although she had made a pair of flags for Snoopy for Charles’s team) emphatically and beaming brightly at them. She always felt a little stab of happiness when Patty and Charles waved at her in the stands.

It was always strange for her to admit that she was close to Charles in a much different way than Patty was. Of course, Patty had the benefit of being confident and bold and outgoing, and Charles enjoyed Patty’s company immensely, Marcie could tell.
But Charles liked spending time with her just as much. He didn’t mind that Marcie enjoyed reading books together quietly, or thought the most exciting thing that day was some astronomical discovery and not that the women’s basketball team won the World Series. That was a bit silly to her, but she knew how much Charles and Patty liked it.

Could she call Charles her best friend? Marcie knew Patty was her best friend, there was never any doubt about that. But she felt a similar connection (and if she were to be really honest with herself, which she rarely was, felt something more for him) to Charles, but she wasn’t sure if you could have more than one best friend. That defeated the whole point the fact it was a singular title, rather than plural. Marcie had never heard of someone saying they had best friends after all.

If Charles wasn’t her best friend, then what was he? This was a circular argument that had been going on in Marcie’s mind for a good while now. She wanted to talk to Patty about it but knowing Patty she might take it the wrong way and Marcie would be crushed if she hurt her feelings.

There was cheering and Marcie had completely spaced out on what had happened, but she cheered and waved her flags anyways, because it would be weird if she didn’t. Of course she hadn’t the faintest idea who was winning but she suspected it wasn’t Charles, based on how sour he looked. Then again he always looked a bit sour so that in itself wasn’t a very good indication of what was going on.

Instead, Marcie distracted herself with some home-made lunch. The game had stretched on for a while now (which was a little rare, Patty’s team was usually done by now) and she had just finished chowing down when the game was over and Patty and Charles were shaking hands. Despite the fact that Charles pretty much always lost, he had a smile on his face as he walked with Patty and talked with her about the game, which flew over Marcie’s head as she waved at them.

“Marcie, did you see the final inning? Chuck here nearly caught the ball!” Patty exclaimed excitedly as Charles blushed a little.

If she were to be honest she hadn’t seen the final inning, she was more focused on her moral quandary about the nature of friendship, but in the interest of looking polite she smiled and nodded. “You did very well Charles. Maybe soon you’ll finally catch the puck.”

“Ball, Marcie. Catch the ball.” Patty stressed, and Marcie gave her a disarming smile. “Why do I bother.” She muttered out loud, which caused Marcie’s smile to widen a tad and Patty to narrow her eyes suspiciously. “Anyways… I wish I could stay Chuck but the coach promised us pizza if we won, but I’ll catch you later!”

Charles didn’t seem to mind, he just shrugged and waved her off. Patty ran back, waving and shouting encouraging words as she joined the team and it wasn’t until the field had basically been abandoned that he realized Marcie was still there. “I thought you were going with them Marcie, lost your appetite for pizza?”

She tried her best not to squirm but now she was feeling self conscious. She had lagged behind specifically to talk to Charles about the friendship mystery that rattled in her head when the time finally approached she found her confidence lacking.

No, she had to talk to him. If at the very least she had to try and talk to him. “A-Actually Charles… I was wondering if I could talk to you about something.” She played with her fingertips nervously, squirming a little as Charles sat down next to her without a second thought.

“Sure, what’s on your mind?”
That was part of the reason that Marcie liked Charles so much. Despite the fact his luck was atrocious at the best of times, he really was a good person and had a good heart. He tried and to Marcie that was a lot better than nothing. “Well… I… I was wondering um…. Do you think it’s possible to have more than one best friend?”

Charles blinked, taking off his baseball cap and setting it in his lap. He gazed out at the field, or perhaps the horizon. It was a little difficult to tell. The silence stretched on for a while until Charles finally, slowly, nodded. “I think you can. I mean, I know I have more than one best friend. I have Linus, Patty, and you.”

Marcie blinked under her glasses. “M-Me?” She whispered.

He nodded, and smiled at her earnestly. “Yeah Marcie. I like hanging out with you, and I’m always grateful when you help me with my homework. I like that we can go to the library and just read all day on Saturdays when Patty has practice. You’re really nice Marcie and a good listener. So yeah, I think we’re best friends.”

She felt like blushing under the praise that was offered to her, and in fact she likely was blushing. Adjusting her glasses, she cleared her throat. “Well Charles… you and Patty are my best friends too. I just… wasn’t sure. I didn’t want to hurt your feelings or Patty’s. I didn’t want to choose.”

“Well, now you don’t have too.” He smiled when Marcie pulled him in for a hug, and he hugged her back. “I’ll talk to you later? Patty’s probably gone through the whole pizza stock by now.”

“And she’ll still be hungry.” Marcie agreed, and they both laughed and separated. She hopped down from where she sat, and gave Charles and earnest smile. “…Thank you Charles. I’ll see you later.”

“Anytime Marcie.” Charles smiled back, and got up as well. They left walking the opposite direction, but they both had a big smile on their faces.

It was later at Marcie’s house, with Patty and her father invited over for dinner as usual (she still has nightmares about Patty’s father’s cooking), and they were lounging in Marcie’s room, some terrible movie that Patty wanted to watch was on the little TV. Marcie was laying on her bed and Patty was on her stomach on the floor.

“Hey Marcie, what’s gotten you in such a good mood?” Patty asked out of the blue, her eyes never leaving the screen.

Marcie adjusted her glasses a little. “I’m not sure what you mean, sir.” She felt her mouth twitch a little in amusement at the annoyed look that crossed Patty’s face.

“C’mon Marcie you can’t get anything past my eyes. You’ve been practically glowing ever since you got home. So what’s gotten you so happy?”

“Well sir, if you must know.” Marcie said in a faux-slightly annoyed matter of fact voice. “I… had a talk with Charles after the game.”

Now Patty looked up at her, shifting so she was looking at Marcie. “And?”

“And, he helped me realize something. I can have more than one best friend.” Patty blinked at her.

“Well isn’t that obvious? You and Chuck are my best friends. I thought you knew that.”

Marcie scowled in annoyance at that, which caused Patty to burst into a fit of giggling. “No, sir, it was not obvious. I… I didn’t want to hurt your feelings. Or Charles’s.”
Getting up on the bed, Patty pulled Marcie in for a hug. “Marcie, Marcie, Marcie. You’re never gonna hurt my feelings that easily. You’re my best friend you know.”

Marcie smiled and hugged Patty back. “That term is overrated anyways.”

“I know! I should write a paper about it. I think our latest paper is about something like that.” Hopping off of the bed, Patty pulled out a sheet of paper and a pencil. “I’m gonna get started on it right now and get an A!”

Of course, their latest paper was supposed to be a book report but Marcie had a feeling that Patty wouldn’t listen to her even if she had pointed that out. Shrugging, she snuggled against one of her pillows and watched the awful movie Patty had put on, while Patty chugged away at her latest ‘masterpiece.’

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