

Tracy Island; Monday, May 7, 11:30 AM

Brains looked up as Tin-Tin walked into the lab for the first time since returning from Wyoming. He noticed that she seemed different. She looks so refreshed and... well, happy!

She smiled at him and went to her desk to check her computer files and mailbox, not hearing his quick intake of breath. She turned it on and was soon engrossed in the mail that had piled up while she was gone.

For the first time in a very long time, Brains looked at his screen without seeing what was on it. He found himself less interested in his work and more in his co-worker. Her smile had knocked him for a loop, although she didn't seem to notice. He sat there, staring at nothing in particular, thinking about it, until his computer beeped at him, indicating that he'd gotten an email message. It startled him and he jumped, causing his legs to hit the underside of the desktop. "Ow!"

She turned around. "Brains? Are you all right?"

"Er, uh, yes, uh, Tin-Tin. I was just concentrating, and was startled," he replied, rubbing his legs. Then he screwed up his courage and said, "You seem to be -- I don't know -- more relaxed and happy than I've seen you in a long time. I guess you must have had a good time at the ranch?"

She smiled again. "Oh yes. It was so enjoyable. And you know what? I wasn't annoyed or jealous or anything like that when some of the girls drooled over Alan. It felt -- no, it feels so good to finally be over him. Now, maybe I can find someone with whom I can share a more permanent relationship."

Wow! She's really over Alan! I wonder if -- no, I can't. How would I approach her? And what would it do to our relationship here in the lab? Can I risk that? Should I even think of taking the chance to --

"Brains!"

"Huh? Oh, I'm sorry, Tin-Tin. What did you say?"

"Never mind. It'll keep. You know, you have been working too hard. You haven't had a real break in ages. I think we should both stop and take a long one."

"What, now?"

"Sure. No time like the present. How about the two of us taking a walk along the beach? We could take a picnic basket, since it's almost lunchtime. I think it would do you a world of good."

His jaw had dropped as she spoke. Now he closed it quickly and swallowed hard. "Y-you want to have a picnic on the beach -- with me?"

"Right now I can't think of anyone I'd rather have a picnic with. Oh, come on, Brains. I'm sure anything you're working on can wait until this afternoon. I tell you what. I'll change into a swimsuit and see what's in the kitchen that we can take with us. You go change into some swim trunks, and I'll meet you by the pool in half an hour. We'll leave from there. Okay?"

"S-sure, Tin-Tin. Half an hour it is. See you by the pool!"

From: Hobbeth Sent: 9/7/2005

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