

Scott sped up as he saw his towheaded brother flop down into the lounge by the pool. Even from his view at the top of the steps from the balcony, he could see John's frustration. Scott's brows tightened. What on earth is the matter with him? he thought. As he neared his brother's side he heard a muttered, "What am I going to do?"

"What am I going to do with you?" He asked with a slight smile.

John jumped up as if burned and nearly fell sideways off the lounge.

"Don't do that," he said, clutching at his chest.

Scott shrugged and sat down on the side of the lounge next to John's and laced his fingers together, arms resting on his knees.

"Care to let me know what that was all about in the kitchen?" He asked.

Scott had played this game before more times than he could count. Sometimes he felt like 'Auntie Scott', forever the shoulder for all his brothers. John settled himself back on the lounge, composing his face into a look of unconcerned calm.

"Nothing," he said, looking into the distance. "I just wasn't hungry, that's all."

The look didn't fool Scott for one moment; as if that wasn't enough, John's stomach gave a loud protest at the lie. Scott shook his head as his brother coloured. John glanced over, and Scott pinned him with his best 'don't-give-me-that-bull-just-tell-me-the-truth' look, and as planned, John deflated like a punctured beach ball. Scott softened his gaze. Jackpot, he thought.

"I never thought it would happen," John said, looking back out to the horizon. He seemed to be talking more to himself. "I mean, I knew it could happen, but I didn't think it would happen to me..."

"Care to let me know what 'it' is?" Scott asked.

"It's bad, Scott, really bad. I can't believe it..."

Countless situations began to whiz through Scott's mind, getting progressively more serious with every idea. What was John in trouble? What was he keeping from them all? Was he sick?

"For goodness' sake John, what?" he asked irritably.

John turned to him, his eyes almost mournful. Scott's heart skipped a beat. What was wrong?

"I think...no, I know...I...I have feelings for Kat!"

It took Scott a few moments to take in the information. It was far from what he was expecting, and the relief, annoyance, and hilarity he felt burst out in one bark of laughter. John scowled at him.

"It's not funny, Scott!" He said.

"Oh, it is," Scott said around his laughter. "I thought... You had me expecting the worst! That's all that this is about?" He asked, schooling his face into a more sombre expression.

"Yes, it is!"

Scott lent forward and lightly smacked the side of John's head, grinning widely.

"That's my John all right," he said. John looked even more confused than before, so Scott continued. "Why are you making such a big deal out of this? It isn't even new news to me!"

"What? Well, it was to me this morning!" John was becoming more irritated.

Scott chuckled.

"I can read you like an open book, John Tracy," he said. "Me and Virgil were discussing it just yesterday."

"Virgil knows too?" John asked.

"And Gordon. He's probably told Alan, as well. And I'm pretty sure Grandma knows."

John's eyes were practically bulging out of his head. It made Scott chuckle even harder.

"Man, John, lighten up? Why are you so stressed about this?"

"Why? Why not? There's every chance that this'll mess everything up! What if I make a move on her, and she doesn't reciprocate? What if it makes her feel so awkward that she decides to leave the island? It has the potential to ruin Father's plans."

Scott shook his head and sighed. Typical John.

"Johnny, listen to me. You're blowing this all out of proportion. You won't ruin things for Dad, no way. With the new recruits, it was inevitable that there would be some relationships. And if something goes wrong? It doesn't have to end in another departure. Look at Alan and Tin-Tin. They broke up, and the world didn't cave in, did it? And believe me, John, you're blind if you don't think she wants to get to know you better, at least."

John blinked.

"Really?"

"Yes, really."

John sounded much more like himself now. Scott grinned, and reached across to pat John's shoulder. Crisis averted, he thought. Chalk another victory up to Auntie Scott.

From: ArtisticRainey Sent: 9/20/2005

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