

Saturday, May 19, 2068, 8:20 a.m., Tracy Island

John didn't look up from his packing as the door buzzer rang. "Come in," he said in a distracted tone. He heard the door swish open, then the quick light thudding of footsteps on the carpet. A thin body tackled him from behind and a skinny pair of arms wrapped around his chest. The force really wasn't enough to knock him over, but John knew how to play this game and fell onto his bed, missing the garment bag he had spread on it.

"Gotcha!" Tyler cried gleefully.

John laughed. "You sure did, Spud! Now, are you going to let me up or do I have to.... tickle you!" He reached down to the boy's exposed side and began to run his fingers up and down Tyler's ribs like a fast moving spider.

"No!" Tyler shouted between peals of laughter. "No tickles!" He laughed some more as John tapered off on tickling him. Once the tickling had completely stopped, Tyler levered himself off of his bigger brother, still breathless from the exertion.

John rolled over and came to a sitting position on the bed. The boy joined him. Looking at the garment bag, Tyler asked, "Where're you going?"

"Monte Carlo," John answered. "To watch a Grand Prix race."

"Monte Carlo... that's one of the tiny postage stamp countries in Europe, isn't it?"

"Yes, and no, Spud. It's a city in one of those teeny-tiny countries. The country is named Monaco."

"Oh, okay," Tyler said. He got up to peek inside John's garment bag. "Is Alan going, too?"

"Yep," John replied, returning to his packing. "I didn't get to go to Alan's birthday party, so he's invited me to share part of his present from Dad and Mom. He and I haven't had much opportunity to spend time together, until now."

"How long will you be gone?" Tyler asked, flopping down on the bed next to the garment bag.

"Just the weekend. The race only takes a day." John went to his closet and brought out a dressy suit with a double breasted, ivory jacket, and a dark blue shirt to wear with it.

"Why the suit?" the boy asked quizzically.

"Oh, I think we're going to the casino while we're there and it's usually a dress-up occasion to go there in Monte Carlo," John replied absently, adding a black tie to the dark blue shirt. "There, that should do."

"Can you bring something back for me?" Tyler asked. "Maybe a t-shirt or something?"

John ruffled the boy's stiff hair. "I suppose I can. I promised Kat I'd bring something back for her. She's really into auto racing, it seems."

"Kat? Into car racing? But she's a girl," Tyler said in disgust. "Girls aren't supposed to be into racing cars."

John laughed. "Spud, when it comes to women, you have a lot to learn."

"I hope I never have to learn it," Tyler muttered. He looked at his brother with a speculative eye. "Hey, how come she asked you to get something and not Alan?"

The older brother's eyebrow went up. "Well, why did you ask me and not Alan?"

Tyler rolled his eyes. "Duh! Because you're my favorite big brother, that's why!"

"Well then, Kat probably asked me because... because we're friends. Yeah. That's it. We're friends." John gave Tyler a smile.

The boy sighed. "Don't tell me you're going to get all kissy-face with her."

"Well, maybe," John drawled. "It all depends."

"Depends on what?"

"I don't know yet. We'll see," was the cryptic reply. The blond glanced over at the boy and said, "I promise I'll bring back something for you, too. Now amscray so I can finish packing."

"All right," Tyler said, slouching his way out of the room. He made kissing noises at John's back as he left, then hurried away as his older brother turned to throw a balled up pair of clean socks at him. The socks hit the door frame and bounced off, and a cheeky Tyler stuck his head back into the doorway with his hands stuck like antlers to his head and wiggling. "Neener, neener, neener," he said in sing-song. "You ca-an't hit me!"

John threw another sock ball at him and missed again, and Tyler took off down the hall toward the lounge, laughing. The blond stuck his head out the door in time to see the boy slam through the double doors at the end of the hall. Tyler paused one more time to stick out his tongue, then he disappeared.

The man shook his head and sighed, then went back to packing. "Kids," he muttered as he retrieved his socks.

Tyler passed out into the open air, and slowed down. "Kat! Hmph!" he said in disgust, huffing a breath. "Blech. If John gets all kissy-face with her, he won't have time for me." He sighed heavily. "But what can I do about it? All the big boys are gonna get kissy-face with someone sometime. Still... I don't know. We'll see how things go. If he makes time for me, then fine. If not... well... we'll see."

From: Tikatu Sent: 10/3/2005
