
Subject: Re: Learning The Ropes

Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Sun, 22 Jul 2012 04:12:16 GMT

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Friday, March 2, 2068, 12:45 p.m., Mt. Sinai Hospital, NYC

"Now, you three stay here while we get you something to eat," Emily warned. "Cherry, you keep an eye on your brothers." She and Scott headed off in the direction of the cafeteria lines.

"It would have gone faster if we had gone to help. Grandma doesn't always know what we like," Tyler grouched.

"She just wants us where she can find us again," Alex said, matter-of-factly. He sat up suddenly. "Hey, isn't that the TV host, Ned Cook?"

Cherry groaned. "You're right, Alex. And he's coming this way!" The three of them put their head together briefly. "You remember what Mom said to him? Good. Let that be our motto."

Ned Cook had been haunting the hospital for the past week, looking to interview someone, anyone, about Jeff Tracy's accident, even though the story was barely news any more. The involvement of International Rescue had given him a fever of sorts and he was determined to get that exclusive. So it was with a lifted heart that he saw an elderly woman who had been identified to him as Jeff's mother, Emily Tracy, escorting three children down to the cafeteria.

Those must be his adopted kids! It would be a real coup to get their perspective on this whole thing. No one, and I mean no one, has been able to get to them since their adoption. I'd better brush up on their names. He consulted his very handy PDA. Since the accident, he'd dug and dug and dug some more and had a whole folder on the Tracy family.

Lessee. The girl is Cherie, the two boys are Alex and Tyler, with Alex being the older. He must be the blond. Okay, now to wait for an opportunity.

He watched as the foursome met up with a dark-haired man that Ned identified as Scott, the oldest of Jeff's now eight children. There was some discussion, then the three children sat down at a table, and the adults went off.

Now's my chance. Ned walked nonchalantly over to the table, coming to a stop before the three children. The youngest looked up at him with curiosity, the middle with indifference, and the oldest, the girl, gazed at him with an expression uncannily like that of her mother. Ned put that aside, and smiled his most ingratiating smile.

"Say, aren't you Jeff Tracy's kids? Here visiting your dad, are you?"

The three kept looking at him, saying nothing. Undeterred, Ned pulled up a chair, turned it around, and straddled the seat, resting his arms on the backrest.

"Well, are you? You're being awfully quiet and I think that's rude."

The middle one rolled his blue-green eyes, then said, "If we were, do you think we'd tell you? Besides, you're the one being rude; you haven't introduced yourself."

"Yeah," the youngest piped up, "we've been taught not to speak to strangers."

Ned's face twitched, and his smile became a wry one. "Point taken. Well, lady and gents, I'm Ned Cook, host of The Ned Cook Show. I was wondering...."

The girl interrupted with a soft Southern drawl that made her sound very much like her mother. "We know who you are, Mistah Cook. Just as Ah'm sure you know who we are. You wouldn't be talkin' with us if you didn't." She leaned forward, eyebrow raised haughtily. "Now, Mistah Cook. You aren't really going t' take advantage of three children whose fathah has been seriously injured, are you?"

Ned sat up, blindsided by Cherry's comment, sputtering, "Well, no, not exactly. I was just wondering if I could ask you how your father was?"

Before he could recover his composure, Cherry smiled, a lazy smile like a cat's. "Well, in that case, Mistah Cook, you should ask the public relations department at Tracy Industries. They've been issuin' updates on Fathah's condition every day."

"Ah!" Ned found himself back on solid footing. "I have been and they've been very informative. But I was hoping for your opinions on how he's doing. Are you hopeful he'll recover? Does this whole situation scare you? How does it feel to be a Tracy kid, anyway?" He smiled winningly. "My listeners are very interested in you three."

"Ah'm sure they are," Alex said, his face angry, his own drawl showing for the first time.

"You're jes' a nosy busybody, Mistah!" Tyler shouted.

Cherry put a hand on each of her brothers' arms. "Now, now, boys. No need t' go gettin' all hot about it." She turned her attention back to Ned. "You'd like a few words from us?"

Ned smiled and nodded. "Yes, I would."

Cherry exchanged glances with her brothers. "Well, then Mistah Cook, we'll give you the words that our mothah gave you."

And in unison, the three said, "Mind your own business."

Ned began to protest, but stopped at the sound of a cleared throat. He looked up to see an angry Emily Tracy, her hands on her hips, and behind her, a glowering Scott, his hands holding a tray full of food.

"Now, Mr. Cook, don't try to tell me you're taking advantage of my littlest grandchildren!"

"Uh, no, Mrs. Tracy. I was just... conversing with them." Ned got up. "I can see that this conversation is over. Good day, Mrs. Tracy, Mr. Tracy, children." He beat a hasty retreat.

"Nicely done, kids," Scott said as he put the tray down. "I caught the tail end of all that."

The three kids grinned. "Well, Mom told us what to say to any reporter," Tyler replied, reaching out for the drink that Grandma had indicated was his.

"And I'm glad you remembered," Grandma said. "Now, eat up and we'll go upstairs to see your father. He should be in his new room by the time we're through."

"Okay!" Alex said as he bit into his burger and joined the rest of the little group in fortifying himself for the rest of the day.

Post by Tikatu on 23/07/2004
