

THE LOVE LETTER

By goldieasj

Word Count 5,282

(an Easter story in emojis, with full text following) (just in case you need it!)

"I know, brother. 🧶 what?"

"👁️ just 😬 you might like to go, that's all. Lots of 🧑🧑🧑 there, Johnny!"

"🔴 trying to 🧑 me off on some 🧑 or other, Scott. Those 🧑🧑🧑 wouldn't be interested in me. Besides, I'm not 🔍 for a 🧑 friend right now."

"Bet you'd be 😬 with a 🧑 friend. Less 🧑, maybe. Big 🧑 coming up!"

"Forget it, Scott! I'll bet *you* don't even have a 🧑 for the 🧑!"

Scott was a little 😬. "Well, not quite yet, anyway."

"Ha! Better 🧶 your own 🌱🌱🌱 first! 🔴 😬 about me!" Johnny started 🧑 away, and then suddenly turned back. "What do you mean - less 🧑?!"

A couple 📅📅 later, Murdoch Lancer rode his 🧑 into 🏠 to pick up the 📧📧. Normally a boring chore, but he got a big 😬 on his 🗨️ when he picked up a 📧 addressed to his son Johnny. A ❤️📧!

"Mmmm! That 🧑 like 🌸," Murdoch said. "Now, who could be 📧 Johnny a 📧?????" Murdoch 😬 and 😬, but he just couldn't 😬 of any 🧑 who might. It was indeed a 🧩. "I'll 🧐 Teresa. Maybe she 🧑," he said to himself.

🧵, when Murdoch's 🧑 took him back to Lancer, Murdoch 👁️ for Teresa and 🗣️ her if she knew who might 📖 Johnny a 📧. But Teresa was just as 🧩 as he was! Perhaps Scott would know!

But when the 📅 of them 🗣️ Scott, he had no 🔍 either. "🧑" was all Scott could offer.

🧵 now all 3 of them were 😞😞😞. Apparently only Johnny would know!

But Johnny also said "🧑" when he 🪚 his 📧. 🧵 Murdoch, Teresa and Scott 🕒 Johnny read his 📧 and 😊. "Well, I'll 🐝!" Johnny said. "It's 🍷 by the Easter 🐰! She wants to 👁️ me. She says she ❤️ me!"

Teresa was 😞. "The Easter 🐰 is a 🧑?"

"😊!" said Johnny. "I guess 🧵!"

"And she ❤️ you, brother?" Scott said, 🗣️. "🧵 my shy brother has a 🧑 admirer! And she's apparently a 🐰! Or maybe you already know 🦉 it is?" he asked 😊.

"You 🧑 me! It's the Easter 🐰, Scott! 🍷 you beat that?"

"Who is it really?" Murdoch asked.

"No 🧑. But I'm going to 🍷 her and find out!"

When the big 📅 came, Johnny took a 🧑. He even used 🧊! He shined his 🦵🦵 and 🖋️ his hat and even wore a new 📧! Teasing, brother Scott said he looked 😞, but Johnny figured he was jealous. Especially since honest Teresa said he looked 😞 for his secret 🧑. Johnny knew Teresa was 📖, of course.

Anxious, Johnny 🏠 early. He rode his 🚲 to the meeting place outside 🏠 and waited.

Johnny waited and waited but no Easter 🐰 showed 📺. No 🐰 either! He was alone, or so he 😞. He was becoming more and more 😞, until he spotted the 🥚. It was painted in bright 🌈, and just lying under a 🌳. He looked further, and there was another 🥚, lying under another 🌳. And another, and another! He followed all the 🌈🥚🥚🥚 until he got to the last 🌳, and out from behind it stepped . . .

the Easter 🐰!!!!

"Hi, Johnny!" said a 🐰 voice, one he didn't recognize. The Easter 🐰 was a 🐰! A 🐰 who was wearing a 🐰 costume and had tall 🍌🍌 and a cute cotton 🧶 of a tail! And, with those 🍌🍌, she was even taller than him! Johnny 😞 she probably had a pretty 🐰 (a human one) under that white fur. "Thanks for 🍌 me. I guess you liked my 🎵! I'm 😊," she said in a high voice.

"You bet!" said Johnny. "Your 🎵 was 😊 to me."

The Easter 🐰 put her 🍌 over her 🍌 and giggled. "Oh, Johnny! You 🧑 the nicest things!"

"🦉 are you? I mean . . . have we met?"

"Oh yes! I've 🧑 you for a long time. I've . . ." She giggled. "I've 🍌 you from afar!"

Johnny 😞 to himself. "Then I 😞 I should 🧑 you! Take off your 🐰 😊 so I can 🧑 🦉 you are in that costume!"

The Easter 🐰 giggled, in a squeaky voice Johnny was beginning to appreciate. "Yes, Johnny. But not today."

Johnny was 😞 by now. "When then? Soon?????"

The Easter  giggled again. "Saturday at the  . I'll  your  that night. OK?  you there!"

"OK. And I'll  your ! I  we'll make beautiful  together." And then Johnny watched his  the  hop away.

When Johnny got back to the , he was anxious to  his family about his new . Murdoch and Scott were in , but Teresa  to his excited story. "She sounds nice," Teresa said.

"That's all you can ?! Nice? She sounds perfect!"

"Well, almost. I mean, she *is* a , after all. And she's taller than you!"

"It's a costume, Teresa! At the  she won't be wearing her big  . And I  she's probably beautiful under that Easter  stuff. Maybe she'll wear a ! And  instead of  .

"Easier to  with her then," Teresa .

Johnny . "She sure did have a high squeaky  though."

"Disguised  you wouldn't guess  she was, I suppose."

"Sure! That's it!" Johnny was  again.

When Scott got , Johnny wasted no  before  his  brother his Easter  story. Johnny was very ! "She  she  me, Scott!"

Scott was more . "Let me get this . Somewhere in the  there's a   who can  but obviously needs  because she  you! Uh huh."

Teresa 🙄. Murdoch 😏. "But she sounds like a very nice 🐰," Murdoch said.

"Well, Johnny," Scott continued, "if you're taking a 🐰 to the 🏠 🧑, I predict an interesting 🌃."

"She's really a 🧑 under that Easter 🐰 stuff, Scott! You're just jealous! Do *you* even *have* a 🧑 for the 🏠 🧑 yet?"

"Of *course* I have a 🧑 for the 🏠 🧑!"

"How about you, Murdoch?" Johnny asked.

Murdoch put his 🍷 around Teresa. "I'm taking my favorite 🧑. For the first 🧑, anyhow. 🏠 🧑 is my limit. After that..."

Teresa interrupted. "Murdoch's taking me so I can 🍷 lots of 🧑 🧑 🧑." She giggled.

"Good!" said Johnny, all 😊. "Then you 🍷 all 🧑 my beautiful new 🧑!"

"The 🐰," Scott said.

Johnny 😏.

The Saturday 🏠 🧑 couldn't come 🐰 enough. Johnny visited the 🏠, bought another new 🏠, and even took another 🍷 🧑 (with 🍷!). His whole 🧑 was 😊 for him, except for 😏 Scott, who said, "You're wasting your 🍷, Johnny. She's a 🐰! Probably can't even 🧑; probably has four left 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷!"

"You're 🏠, Scott. She's an 🧑, I bet. She's 🧑, I just know! I bet *your* 🍷 looks like 🍷!" Johnny laughed.

"Maybe 🧶, maybe 🧶," Scott retorted. "But my 🐻 has personality!"

"Actually, I'd say a 🧑🐰 has plenty of personality," Murdoch 🙌 out, and they all 🤔.

Scott 🏠 early to get his 🧑, and Johnny rode with his father and sister in the wagon. As soon as they got to the 🏠🧑, Johnny 🤩 for his new 🧑. There were several beautiful 🧑🧑🧑 there, but no 🏠🐰.

"Don't 😞, Johnny," consoled Teresa. "She's probably waiting to make a big 🏠."

"Sure! She'll 📍 you!" Murdoch said.

🧶, while Murdoch and Teresa 🧑🧑 their 🏠🧑, Johnny 🏠 patiently for his 🐰. Several beautiful 🧑🧑🧑 approached him, but he said no thanks – he was 🏠 for his special ❤️.

His wait was 🩲, however, because before 🏠 long, Johnny 🧑 his new ❤️. She was 🧑 right toward him! He knew right away 🦉 she was because she was wearing her 🏠🐰 costume!

"Hellooooo, Johnny," the 🏠🐰 greeted, in that 🏠 squeaky voice.

Johnny was very 😊 to 🤩 her. He ignored the voice. "I'm 😊 you came to 🤩 me tonight!" he told her. "But I 😞 you'd leave your 🐰 clothes at 🏠."

She giggled. "👁️ know. I'll change! But first, just 🏠 little 🧑? Pleeeeease?" She held out her 🍌.

Johnny could never resist a pleading 🐰, especially a potentially beautiful 🐰. 🧶 he put his 🍌 around her and they 🧑🧑 together around the room. The 🏠🐰 🧑 beautifully, although she kept wanting to lead. But with those big 🍌🍌 of hers, she was taller than him, 🧶 he let her! Johnny kept 🤔 her to remove the 🐰 costume, but secretly he loved the feeling of the white fur!

Everyone in the room was 🙄 them. The 🧑 was 🗨️, and when it ended, everyone 😊 and many 🍌.

She said, "You 🗨️ here. I'll go change now." "Hurry!" said a 😊 Johnny.

A few minutes later, Scott arrived and 🧑 his brother at the 🧑. "Hey, where's your 🐰?" he asked. "I'm anxious to 🍌 her!"

Johnny 😊. "She'll 🐝 🗨️ back," he said. "And where's *your* 🧑? I wanted to 🍌 her, too, you know!"

"I know. She's at 🏠. She had a 😊ache and couldn't come."

Johnny wanted to 🍵🍵🍵 his brother, but Scott looked so 😊 that he didn't have the ❤️. "I'm sorry," he said. "Thank you," said Scott, "but 🙄 your 🐰 will 😊 me up."

"She's not a 🐰, Scott! She's a beautiful 🧑!" *With a 🗨️ voice,* Johnny thought.

"🧑 where is she, then?"

Johnny was 😊. It *did* seem like the 🧑 was taking a long 🕒. When Johnny 🗨️ Teresa, he 🧐 if she would please go ✅ on his 🧑 who went to change her 🍌."

"Just look for a 🧑," Scott said, 😊. Teresa said OK and went to 🔍.

But Teresa came back and said, "🧑. She's 🗨️ here, Johnny. She's 🗨️ anywhere around here. I'm sorry. She's gone!"

Johnny was 🧑 up! His 🗨️ 🧑 was gone! Johnny looked so 😊 that Scott skipped his comment about the 🧑

returning to the 🐰 and just said, "I'm sorry, Johnny." Scott was 😊. "But we're both 🧑-less now, and there's several beautiful 🧑🧑🧑 here, Johnny. It's prophetic! 🗨️ 🗨️! Let's 🔍 a couple and have a good 🍌!"

"No!" said Johnny. "I'm going 🏠. I'm 😞 and I'm done for the 📺. You can all have your blasted 🧑!" Johnny truly did look 😞.

"Oh, come on, Johnny. Don't 🍁! There's lots of . . ."

"No! 🍁 me alone, Scott! I'm going 🏠."

"Well, then, brother," sighed Scott. "You might as well take my 🐾. I'll ride home with Murdoch and Teresa." Scott was 😞 for his brother.

And Johnny 📺 the 🧑.

The next 🌅, Johnny came down to 🐾 and sat in his 🐾 without even looking 📺. He was still 😞. Murdoch was also just arriving and Teresa was 🔍.

When Teresa brought the 🍷 to the table, she was very 😞 to 👁 a 🌈🥚 already on Johnny's 📺! "Where did *that* come from?" she and Johnny 🧑 together.

Johnny was 😞 but also 😊. "That means she's here! My beautiful mystery 🧑 is here at Lancer!" he exclaimed.

And then he 👁 her! In she walked, still in her Easter 🐰 costume, and she looked taller than ever, with those tall 👁👁. And also because he was 🐾. But to Johnny, she looked like an 🧑! !

(To Murdoch and Teresa, she looked 😞)

"I'm sorry, Johnny," said the 🧑 in that familiar squeaky voice, "but I 📺 the 🧑 because I was 🧑 to 🧑 you who I was. I didn't want you to find out until this 🌅📺."

Johnny jumped up and threw his 🐾 🐾 around her. "It's OK," he told her. "All that matters is that you're now!" (Mmmm, that soft white fur!) "Oh!" he remembered. "And that you 🧑 me 🐱 you are!" (That soft white fur! But he stepped back.)

The 🐱 / 🧑 hesitated. " 🧑 ? In front of everyone?"

"Yes, yes!" Johnny was 😊. "Take off your 😊!" Even Murdoch said, "I'm anxious to 👁, too."

"OK," she said. "This is 🐱 I 🍷!"

As the 🧑 / 🐱 was removing her 😊, it occurred to Johnny that her 🧑 had changed. It wasn't high and squeaky any more. In fact, she sounded just like . . .

"Scott!" yelled Murdoch. Teresa 🧑.

Johnny's reaction was similar to Teresa's. "Scott! Why are you wearing my 🧑's 🐱 costume?"

"It's *my* 🐱 costume, Johnny!" said Scott, as he set his 😊 down and started removing the rest of the furry outfit. "😞 Mrs. Applegate made it for me. Cost me eight 💰, but it was worth it." He 😊.

"I don't care about your eight 💰, Scott. Where's my 🧑? Is she 🧑 now?" Johnny looked around but saw no 🧑 except Teresa, who was still a little 😞.

"Oh yes!" said Scott, looking 😊. Johnny was getting 😞.

"Wait just a 🕒 here," said Murdoch. "Johnny, didn't you hear your 🧑's voice a little while ago?"

"Yeah. 🕒?"

Murdoch looked at Scott. "Then that means that voice came from . . ."

"*Scott!!*" Now Johnny was really 😞. "You were in that Easter 🐰 outfit??? That was *you?!*"

Scott was 😊. "Oh yes, it was me. The 🇺🇸 and only!"

Teresa was 🤖 all over again. Murdoch, used to the brotherly tricks, was more 😊.

"And it was *you* who 🇺🇸 me that ❤️🇺🇸?!"

"Guilty!" Scott was still 😊.

"And you 🇺🇸 those 🌈🥚🥚🥚 as a trail for me to 🇺🇸 you?"

"Me again!" Scott was enjoying himself.

Johnny was 🌋 by now. "And then you went to the 🇺🇸🇺🇸 as the 🇺🇸🐰 and you 🇺🇸 with me? You 🇺🇸 with *me?!!!!!*"

"Yup! And, by the way, you 🇺🇸 divinely!" Scott 😊.

"Dios! 'Just 🇺🇸 little 🇺🇸 first? Pleeeeease,'" Johnny 🇺🇸.

This time Teresa 😊. Scott and Murdoch, also.

'I'm going to kill you, Scott!'

"Johnny . . ." ⚠️ Murdoch.

"After you 🧑 me 🟡! 🟡 did you want me to look like a 🤡 in front of everybody?!" Johnny sat down and ✕ his 🦵 🦵. He was steaming 😡. "You have 🕒 minute to explain!"

Scott became 😞. "That's 🧵 what I wanted, Johnny. That's 🟡 I waited until this 🌅, to 🧑 you at Lancer instead of at the 🧑. So you wouldn't be 😞 in front of all those 👤 👤."

"You're 🧵 making any sense, Scott! And you're wasting 🕒. You have forty seconds."

"Johnny," said a 😞 Teresa. "There's 🧵 even a 🕒 in here!"

"Never mind! Thirty seconds!"

"I 📺 you wouldn't go to the 🧑 without motivation. You've been 📺 lately and I felt you deserved a good 🕒. Maybe even 🔍 a nice 🧑! That's all! You've seemed 😞 lately and I was hoping the 🧑 would 🧑 you 📺."

Johnny was 😞. "You did this to 🧑 me 📺? Really? 🟡?"

"Because you're my brother. And you 😞, didn't you?"

Johnny 😞 again! "Yeah, guess I did at that!" He 🌸 for a moment. "Well . . . thanks, Scott. Oh – and thank 😞 Mrs. Applegate for me. That white fur sure felt good!" Everybody 🤔.

"🧵 am I forgiven?" Scott was secretly 🙏.

"Yeah, we're good!" Johnny picked up his 🍴 to eat, but then had a 😞 idea. "You know what, Scott? You 🧑 divinely, too!"

THE LOVE LETTER follows, in text only:

THE LOVE LETTER

“Big dance coming up next week, you know.”

“I know, brother. So what?”

“I just think you might like to go, that’s all. Lots of beautiful women there, Johnny.”

“Stop trying to pawn me off on some woman or other, Scott. Those beautiful women wouldn’t be interested in me. Besides, I’m not looking for a girlfriend right now.”

“Bet you’d be happy with a girlfriend. Less crabby, maybe. Big dance coming up!”

“Forget it, Scott! I bet *you* don’t even have a date for the dance!”

Scott was a little embarrassed. “Well, not yet, anyway.”

“Ha! Better sow your own field first! Stop fretting about me!” Johnny started walking away, and then suddenly turned back. “What do you mean – less crabby?!”

A couple days later, Murdoch Lancer rode his horse into town to pick up the mail. Normally a boring chore, but he got a big smile on his mouth when he picked up a letter addressed to his son Johnny. A love letter!

“Mmmm, that smells like perfume,” Murdoch said. “Now, who could be sending Johnny a love letter???” Murdoch thought and thought, but he just couldn’t think of any woman who might. It was indeed a puzzle. “I’ll ask Teresa. Maybe she knows,” he said to himself.

So, when Murdoch’s horse took him back to Lancer, Murdoch looked for Teresa and asked her if she knew who might mail Johnny a love letter. But Teresa was just as puzzled as he was! Perhaps Scott would know!

But when the two of them asked Scott, he had no clue either. “I don’t know,” was all Scott could offer.

So now all three of them were curious. Apparently only Johnny would know!

But Johnny also said "I don't know" when he saw his love letter. So Murdoch, Teresa and Scott watched Johnny read his love letter and smile. "Well, I'll be," Johnny said. It's signed by the Easter Bunny! She wants to see me! She says she loves me!"

Teresa was confused. "The Easter Bunny is a girl?"

"Sure!" said Johnny. "I guess so!"

"And she loves you, brother?" Scott said, laughing. "So my shy brother has a secret admirer! And she's apparently a rabbit! Or maybe you already know who it is," he asked slyly.

"You heard me! It's the Easter Bunny, Scott! Can you beat that?"

"Who is it really?" Murdoch asked.

"No idea. But I'm going to meet her and find out."

When the big day came, Johnny took a hot bath. He even used soap! He shined his boots and brushed his hat and even wore a new shirt! Teasing, brother Scott said he looked silly, but Johnny figured he was jealous. Especially since honest Teresa said he looked attractive for his secret admirer. Johnny knew Teresa was right, of course.

Anxious, Johnny left early. He rode his horse to the meeting place outside town and waited.

Johnny waited and waited but no Easter Bunny showed up. No woman either! He was alone, or so he thought. He was becoming more and more frustrated, until he spotted the egg. It was painted in bright colors, and just lying under a tree. He looked further, and there was another egg, lying under another tree. And another, and another! He followed all the colored eggs until he got to the last tree, and out from behind it stepped . . .

. . . the Easter Bunny!

"Hi, Johnny!" said a female voice, one he didn't recognize. The Easter Bunny was a woman! A woman who was wearing a rabbit costume and had tall ears and a cute cotton ball of a tail! And with those ears, she was even taller than him! Johnny figured she probably had a pretty face (a human one) under that white fur. "Thanks for meeting me. I guess you liked my note! I'm glad," she said in a high voice.

"You bet! Your note was bliss to me."

The Easter Bunny put her paws over her nose and giggled. "Oh, Johnny! You say the nicest things!"

"Who are you? I mean . . . have we met?"

"Oh yes! I've watched you for a long time. I've . . ." She giggled. "I've admired you from afar!"

Johnny smirked to himself. "Then I think I should see you! Take off your rabbit head so I can see who you are in that costume!"

The Easter Bunny giggled, in a squeaky voice Johnny was starting to appreciate. "Yes, Johnny. But not today."

Johnny was eager by now. "When then? Soon?????"

The Easter Bunny giggled again. "Saturday at the Easter dance. I'll be your honey that night. OK? See you there!"

"OK. And I'll be your beau! I think we'll make beautiful music together!" And then Johnny watched his honey the rabbit hop away.

When Johnny got back to the house, he was anxious to tell his family about his new girlfriend. Murdoch and Scott were in town, but Teresa listened to his excited story. "She sounds nice," Teresa said.

"That's all you can say?! Nice? She sounds perfect!"

"Well, almost. I mean, she *is* a rabbit, after all. And she's taller than you."

"It's a costume, Teresa! At the dance she won't be wearing her big ears. And I think she's probably beautiful under that Easter Bunny stuff. Maybe she'll wear a dress! And shoes instead of rabbit paws."

"Easier to dance with her then," Teresa grinned.

Johnny was pensive. "She sure did have a high squeaky voice, though."

"Disguised so you wouldn't guess who she was, I suppose."

"Sure! That's it!" Johnny was happy again.

When Scott got home, Johnny wasted no time before telling his dear brother his Easter Bunny story. Johnny was very excited! "She said she loves me, Scott!"

Scott was more skeptical. "Let me get this straight. Somewhere in the world there's a dancing rabbit who can talk but obviously needs glasses because she is enamored with you. Uh huh."

Teresa laughed. Murdoch rolled his eyes. "But she sounds like a very nice rabbit," Murdoch said.

"Well, Johnny," Scott continued, "if you're taking a rabbit to the Easter dance, I predict an interesting evening."

"She's really a woman under that Easter Bunny stuff, Scott! You're just jealous! Do *you* even *have* a date for the Easter dance yet?"

"Of *course* I have a date for the Easter dance!"

"How about you, Murdoch?" Johnny asked.

Murdoch put his arm around Teresa. "I'm taking my favorite girl. For the first dance, anyhow. One dance is my limit. After that . . ."

Teresa interrupted. "Murdoch's taking me so I can meet lots of beaus." She giggled.

"Good!" said Johnny, all smiles. "Then you can all see my beautiful new girlfriend!"

"The rabbit," Scott said.

Johnny frowned.

The Saturday night dance couldn't come fast enough. Johnny visited the barber, bought another new shirt, and even took another hot bath (with soap!). His whole family was pleased for him, except for skeptical Scott, who said, "You're wasting your time, Johnny. She's a rabbit! Probably can't even dance; probably has four left feet!"

"You're jealous, Scott. She's an angel, I bet. She's beautiful, I just know! I bet your date looks ugly!" Johnny laughed.

“Maybe so, maybe so,” Scott retorted. “But my honey has personality!”

“Actually, I’d say a dancing rabbit has plenty of personality,” Murdoch pointed out, and they all laughed.

Scott left early to get his date, and Johnny rode with his father and sister in the wagon. As soon as they got to the Easter dance, Johnny looked for his new girlfriend. There were several beautiful women there, but no Easter Bunny.

“Don’t fret, Johnny,” consoled Teresa. “She’s probably waiting to make a big entrance.”

“Sure! She’ll find you,” Murdoch said.

So, while Murdoch and Teresa danced their one dance, Johnny waited patiently for his rabbit. Several beautiful women approached him, but he said no thanks – he was waiting for his special sweetheart.

His wait was brief, however, because before too long Johnny detected his new love. She was walking right toward him! He knew right away who she was because she was wearing her Easter Bunny costume!

“Hellooooo, Johnny,” the Easter Bunny greeted, in that high squeaky voice.

Johnny was very happy to see her. He ignored the voice. “I’m happy you came to see me tonight!” he told her. “But I thought you’d leave your rabbit clothes at home.”

She giggled. “I know. I’ll change! But first, just one little dance? Pleeeeease.” She held out her paws.

Johnny could never resist a pleading rabbit, especially a potentially beautiful rabbit. So he put his hands around her and they danced together around the room. The Easter Bunny danced beautifully, although she kept wanting to lead. But with those big ears of hers, she was taller than him, so he let her! Johnny kept asking her to remove the rabbit costume, but secretly he loved the feeling of the white fur!

Everyone in the room was watching them. The dance was short, and when it ended, everyone laughed and many clapped.

She said, “You wait here. I’ll go change now.” “Hurry!” said an anxious Johnny.

A couple minutes later, Scott arrived and found his brother at the dance. “Hey, where’s your rabbit?” he asked. “I’m anxious to meet her!”

Johnny beamed. "She'll be right back," he said. And where's *your* date? I want to meet her, too, you know!"

"I know. She's at home. She had a headache and couldn't come."

Johnny wanted to tease his brother, but Scott looked so forlorn that he didn't have the heart. "I'm sorry," he said. "Thank you," said Scott, "but seeing your rabbit will cheer me up."

"She's not a rabbit, Scott! She's a beautiful woman!" *With a high voice*, Johnny thought.

"So where is she, then?"

Johnny was confused. It *did* seem like the woman was taking a long time. When Johnny saw Teresa, he asked if she would please go check on his date, who went to change her clothes.

"Just look for a rabbit," Scott said, smirking. Teresa said OK and went to investigate.

But Teresa came back and said, "I don't know. She's not here, Johnny. She's not anywhere around here. I'm sorry. She's gone."

Johnny was stood up! His Easter Bunny was gone! Johnny looked so forlorn that Scott skipped his comment about the bunny returning to the rabbit hole and just said, "I'm sorry, Johnny." Scott was sympathetic. "But looks like we're both date-less now, and there's many beautiful women here, Johnny. It's prophetic! Cheer up! Let's find a couple and have a good time!"

"No!" said Johnny. "I'm going home. I'm sad and I'm done for the night. You can all have your blasted dance!" Johnny truly did look sad.

"Oh, come on, Johnny. Don't leave. There's lots of . . ."

"No! Leave me alone, Scott! I'm going home."

"Well then, brother," said Scott. "Take my horse. I'll ride home with Murdoch and Teresa." Scott was very heartbroken for his brother.

And Johnny left the dance.

The next morning, Johnny came down to breakfast and sat in his chair without even looking up. He was still sad. Murdoch was also just arriving and Teresa was cooking.

When Teresa brought the food to the table, she was very surprised to see a colored egg already on Johnny's plate! "Where did *that* come from?" she and Johnny said together.

Johnny was surprised but also happy. "That means she's here! My beautiful mystery woman is here at Lancer!" he exclaimed.

And then he saw her! In she walked, still in her rabbit costume, and she looked taller than ever, with those tall ears. And also because he was sitting. But to Johnny, she looked like an angel! (To Murdoch and Teresa, she looked ridiculous.)

"I'm sorry, Johnny," said the girlfriend in that familiar squeaky voice, "but I left the dance because I was afraid to tell you who I was. I didn't want you to find out until this morning."

Johnny jumped up and threw his arms around her. "It's OK," he told her. "All that matters is that you're here now!" (Mmmm, that soft white fur!) "Oh!" he remembered. "And that you tell me who you are!" (That soft white fur! But he stepped back.)

The rabbit/girlfriend hesitated. "Here? In front of everyone?"

"Yes, yes!" Johnny was excited. "Take off your head!" Even Murdoch said, "I'm anxious to see, too."

"OK," she said. "This is who I am!"

As the girlfriend/rabbit was removing her head, it occurred to Johnny that her voice had changed. It wasn't high and squeaky any more. In fact, she sounded just like . . .

"Scott!" yelled Murdoch. Teresa screamed.

Johnny's reaction was anger. "Scott! Why are you wearing my girlfriend's rabbit costume?"

"It's *my* rabbit costume, Johnny!" said Scott, as he set his head down and started removing the rest of the furry outfit. "Old Mrs. Applegate made it for me. Cost me eight dollars, but it was worth it." He smiled.

"I don't care about your eight dollars, Scott. Where's my girlfriend? Is she here now?" Johnny looked around but saw no woman except Teresa, who was still a little astonished.

"Oh, yes," said Scott, looking mysterious. Johnny was getting angrier.

"Wait just a minute here," said Murdoch. "Johnny, didn't you hear your girlfriend's voice a little while ago?"

"Yeah. So?"

Murdoch looked at Scott. "Then that means that voice came from . . ."

"Scott!" Now Johnny was *really* mad. "You were in that Easter Bunny outfit? That was *you*?!"

Scott was smug. "Oh, yes, it was me. The one and only!"

Teresa was aghast all over again. Murdoch, used to the brotherly tricks, was more bemused.

"And it was *you* who mailed me that love letter?!"

"Guilty!" Scott was still smug.

"And you left those colored eggs as a trail for me to find you?"

"Me again!" Scott was enjoying himself.

Johnny was irate by now. "And then you went to the Easter dance as the Easter Bunny and you danced with me? You *danced with me*!!!!!"

"Yup! And, by the way, you dance divinely!" Scott winked.

"Dios! *Just one little dance first? Pleeeeease*," Johnny aped.

This time Teresa laughed. Scott and Murdoch, also.

"I'm going to kill you, Scott!"

"Johnny . . ." warned Murdoch.

"*After* you tell me why! Why did you want me to look like a clown in front of everybody?!" Johnny sat down and crossed his arms. He was steaming mad. "You have one minute to explain."

Scott became serious. "That's not what I wanted, Johnny. That's why I waited until this morning, to tell you at Lancer instead of at the dance. So you wouldn't be embarrassed in front of all those people."

"You're not making any sense, Scott! And you're wasting time. You have forty seconds."

"Johnny," said an annoyed Teresa. "There's not even a clock in here!"

"Never mind! Thirty seconds!"

"I knew you wouldn't go to the dance without motivation. You've been down lately and I felt you deserved a good time. Maybe even find a nice girlfriend! That's all! You've seemed sad lately and I was hoping the dance would cheer you up."

Johnny was still suspicious. "You did this to cheer me up? Really? Why?"

"Because you're my brother. And you laughed, didn't you?"

Johnny laughed again. "Yeah, guess I did at that!" He paused for a moment. "Well . . . thanks, Scott, I guess. Oh – and thank old Mrs. Applegate for me. That white fur sure felt good!" Everybody laughed.

"So am I forgiven?" Scott was secretly hoping.

"Yeah, we're good!" Johnny picked up his fork to eat, but then had a mischievous thought. "You know what, Scott? You dance divinely, too!"

Easter 2021

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