
Subject: Re: Cold Front

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Wed, 25 Jul 2012 21:21:28 GMT

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Wednesday, November 14, 8:30 p.m., Tracy Island

"...Happy birthday, dear Bra-ains! Happy birthday to you!"

The song ended in a cacophony of sounds, as Brains blew out the candles. Gordon lifted his voice into a near wolf-howl on the final syllable. Alan joined him, adding a drum roll on the table with his hands. Virgil, who had been trying to "conduct" the impromptu chorus, brought his hands down emphatically, and in the microsecond of silence that followed, Josh could be heard to say, "Happy burfday!" Then the group collapsed into laughter. Jenny and Kyrano took the cake away to be sliced.

"Speech!" Scott started the cry, which was quickly taken up by Will and Elise, then Nikki, Cassie and Callie added their voices. Soon nearly everyone was calling for Brains to say something, until finally he stood at his seat and put up his hands for quiet.

"Knowing this family as I do, I prepared a little something for this eventuality." Brains smiled and took out a small data pad. "The man of science may be a poor philosopher, but he's usually a pretty dry speaker if left to his own devices."

Callie, Tin-Tin and Jeff all chuckled at Brains's appropriation of Einstein's quote. Brains continued. "In all my years -- though they are admittedly fewer than some of us can claim..." There were laughs and groans from some of the diners, and a couple of sharp expressions of "Ha!" from the head of the table. "...I have never met another group of people who love to celebrate birthdays like my family does -- because you, the Tracys, are my family." He swept a hand to include all the recruits present. "And you, my new teammates, are my friends."

There were a few soft smiles and nods of agreement around the table as Brains paused. "I can't express how much I appreciate these celebrations because for many years of my life, such were few and far between. To know that I am important enough for you to throw a party just for me... it still boggles my mind sometimes." He smiled. "And you all know that my mind is not easy to boggle."

"It doesn't Scrabble well either!" came a comment from somewhere in the group, setting off a small burst of laughter. Jeff gave his wife a nudge, and a raised eyebrow; she smirked back at him.

"Too true, too true -- words are not my fort . I'll take numbers any day..."

"Forty-two!" "One hundred and twenty-seven!" "Nineteen-ninety-nine!" A few other numbers were shouted out, to accompanying laughter, until Brains put his hands up again.

"Now you've managed to totally derail my little speech -- which may be a good thing, as I see a few of you are waiting eagerly for cake, and I have presents to open."

"Gotta love them presents!" Gordon chimed in, wagging his eyebrows. Elise socked him lightly on the shoulder; he frowned and rubbed his arm in an exaggerated fashion.

"So, thank you all for celebrating the day with me. I couldn't have asked for better."

Those around the table burst into applause as Brains sat down, his face flushed. Then Jeff stood, and took up a wine glass, holding it out. The others around the table, including the children, whose glasses were filled with sparkling grape juice, followed suit.

"To Brains." Jeff's smile was wide as he made the toast. "An intellect unequaled, a passion to create, a heart undaunted -- we are blessed to have you on our side, and to count you as one of our family." He dipped the stemware a touch. "Happy birthday and may you have many, many more."

The others echoed, "To Brains!" or "Happy Birthday!", clinking glasses together and drinking their wine.

Jenny came up, smiling. "First piece to the birthday boy!" she said as she put a huge piece before him.

He glanced up and returned the smile. "Thank you, Jenny."

"Cake!" Joshua cried, clapping his hands.

"You'll get yours, wee man," Dom said, wiping his son's hands. "Though I'll wager more will get on you than in."

"That's what makes cake so fun at this age," Emily said. "It's squishy and it's sweet -- the perfect food!"

As Jenny served a piece of cake to Jeff, he put up a hand to keep her for a moment. "Everyone, this is our new support crew member, Jenny Finch." There were a few calls of, "Hello, Jenny," and "Welcome, Jenny!" which made her blush a little. Jeff glanced up at her, and nodded, indicating that she could continue serving. "She'll be helping out in the kitchen and with housekeeping. I'll leave it up to you to introduce yourselves; we'll be here all night if I have to."

"So, who has the first present for Brains?" Scott asked, grinning.

"Mine!" Gordon said emphatically. He handed over a thick, square package. "Just what you need, Brains, to help you out with Braman."

Brains gave Gordon a dubious look, then tore the paper off. That was followed by second layer of paper, then a third.

"Gordon!" Tin-Tin said reproachfully.

The redhead just grinned at her and shrugged.

Brains peered at the black and yellow cover then gave Gordon a look of surprise. "Computer Programming.... for Dummies?"
