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Subject: Re: Cold Front

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Wed, 25 Jul 2012 21:34:07 GMT

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Thursday, November 15, 8:35 p.m., Christchurch, NZ

Cherie was packing up her art supplies when Anneliese and Manjari came up to her.

"Um, we're going to the ice cream shop tonight." Anneliese sounded a bit hesitant. "Do you want to come?"

Cherie thought for a moment, then shook her head. "Not tonight, thanks. I wouldn't be very good company."

"Maybe we could cheer you up!" Manjari suggested, smiling, trying to look encouraging.

"I don't know," Cherie said, sighing. "You see, someone I know was shot early this week and is in the hospital..."

Anneliese's eyes grew wide. "Oh, no!" she said with a gasp. "Did he cark it?"

Cherie looked puzzled as she tried to decipher the question, then shook her head. "No, he's not dead. But he's going to be in the hospital for a long while. Months and months, my mom says. And it's all such a shock, y'know?"

"I guess it would be," Manjari said, her face sober. She brightened. "Still, an ice cream and a fizzy always cheer me up."

"Thanks." Cherie smiled, a slight, difficult expression. "I really don't feel up to it right now. How about next week?"

Manjari and Anneliese exchanged glances; the first shrugged and the second nodded. "Okay, then. Next week," Anneliese said. "And we'll hold you to it!"

Cherie nodded, biting her lower lip. Then a thought struck her. "Wait a minute." She pulled out a small pad of paper, and wrote a number on it. "This is my cell number," she explained shyly. She handed a copy to Anneliese, then one to Manjari. "Maybe we could chat during the week?"

The girls looked down at the pieces of paper, surprised. "Yeah, I could ring you up," Anneliese said. "When?"

"After three is good," Cherie said, her tone sounding more eager. "My schoolwork will be done by then." She paused, then added, "We're in the same time zone, too."

Manjari frowned a little. "What do timezones have to do with it, eh?"

"All my other friends are in different ones, so I usually have to calculate when I can call." Cherie sounded more cheerful now. "It'll be nice to have friends who I can call and they'll be on the same

time and day I'll be on."

"Are you sure you don't want to go to the ice cream shop?" Anneliese asked. "You sound like a box of budgies now."

"So, are we going?" Tim said as he came up suddenly on the group. "I thought about going with Aroha and Jen, just to shut them up, but they brassed me off last week, and told me to bugger off this week." He glanced from girl to girl. "Well?"

They all three looked at Cherie, who sighed slightly and smiled. "Okay. I'll come."

"Good on ya, mate!" Manjari said, grinning.

"Just let me tell my brother..." Cherie opened her phone and placed the call.

"Which brother this week, eh?" Tim asked. Anneliese frowned, and nudged him.

Cherie looked up mid-sentence and said, "Alan. Why?"

Tim nodded sagely. "The racer. I'd like to meet him sometime."

His comment made her pause and draw in a sharp breath. Then she resumed her conversation. "I'll see you at nine-thirty, then. Bye"

Straightening, she shut her phone and tucked it into her bag. With an almost grim smile, she said, "Well, let's go. I'd like to hear what else you've learned about my family."

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