

From: lynnbrody Sent: 6/24/2007 3:56 AM

Sunday, September 9 th, 2068, around 8 p.m. locally (Monday, Sept. 10 th, 12 p.m. Tracy Island)

It was a slow shift. There hadn't been a call for the 124 th Ladder Company since the third shift had taken over at three o'clock that afternoon. The game of Risk, which had been started after dinner, was now being cleaned up. Frank Calloway had gotten sick of the arguing and called an end to it. He had just disappeared back into his office, having just suggested that the group use their time constructively and clean out the refrigerator.

Neal Grant exchanged a look with Cassie. "How long until he figures it out?" he asked her.

"Not long," Cassie replied with a grin.

"Okay, who switched my pen with one that writes in invisible ink?" Frank asked, having popped his head back out of his office. "Grant, was it you?"

"I was wondering where that got to," Neal responded with a grin. "Last time I saw it, Cassie had it," he added, looking over at his accomplice.

"Sorry, Chief, must have dropped it while I was in there," Cassie answered, trying hard to keep a straight face.

"Yeah, well, that's okay. I was only writing a recommendation for you, Grant. Guess I won't have to rewrite it," Frank told him. Still holding the pen in his hand, he disappeared into his office, closing the door before laughing. Neal and Cassie could be a dangerous pair, but they always liked to take credit for their pranks, so you knew when they were up to something.

"Must have dropped it while I was in there," Neal said with a shake of his head. "Good one, Cassie," he said, giving her a high five over top of Jackie's head who was still sitting at the table.

The group finished cleaning up the game and then looked at the fridge. No one was even sure when it was cleaned out last.

"Maybe we should get our masks," L.J. commented.

"Oh, it can't be that bad," Jackie said standing up and marching toward the refrigerator. She opened the drawer with the fruit in it. "Or maybe it can?" she amended, holding up a bag of soft, black and green spotted oranges.

"Here," Lexis said, holding out an empty trash can for her coworker. Jackie dropped the bag into it. Soon a half bag of apples followed them.

Reaching past Jackie, L.J. pulled out a red bowl. He took off the lid and looked in.

"Anyone remember what this was?" he asked.

"I think it was the chicken," Neal commented, looking over L.J.'s shoulder. L.J. dumped the chicken into the trash can and put the bowl on the counter to be washed.

"I really hate this task," Jackie commented as she pulled out a carton of eggs from behind some bottles of soda. Checking the date, she saw that they were good to 5/2068. She added the carton to the trash can.

"What is in that one?" Jeff asked, pointing to a clear container in the back of the top shelf.

"I don't know, but I think something just moved in it," Cassie said.

"You know, I haven't seen our furry friend, Mr. Mouse, lately. Maybe he got thirsty," L.J. quipped.

"Ewww! Someone else get that thing. I'm not even touching the container," Jackie said, standing up and moving away from the fridge.

"I'll get it," Neal said. Neal stepped forward and grabbed the container. "I think my high school served this as their mystery meat," he said, taking a closer look at it. He dropped it in the trash can without opening it.

Shortly, the task of pulling things out of the fridge was over. They looked from the pile of containers on the counter to the trash can of bad food. A grin came to Neal's face as he looked at the trash can, where a chicken leg was still visible.

"You know, I was always wondering how far a chicken leg could fly. I've got a sling shot in my locker, and the East River would make a good firing range. Anyone up for a game?"

"I bet I can get one further than you!"

"No way, Kishi!" Neal told her.

"Get your slingshot, Grant," L.J. said, picking up the trash can. "I'll meet you on the roof." L.J. headed for the stairs.

"You guys are crazy," Lexis told them, even as she followed L.J. to watch the festivities.

Neal grabbed his sling shot and joined the rest of his coworkers on the roof of the fire station. They gathered on the side that was along the East River.

"I'm going first," Neal said as he joined them.

"You may want a pair of these," Cassie told him, handing him a pair of vinyl gloves she had grabbed from downstairs.

"What are you doing with a sling shot anyway?" Jackie asked as Neal slipped on the gloves.

"It's my son's. He was shooting marbles at the cat, so I confiscated it on the way out the door," he replied. He eyed the trash can of bad food and selected his ammunition. Taking out the chicken leg, he stepped to the edge of the roof. "Bombs away!" he commented as he took aim and fired. The rotten chicken leg sailed through the air and made a splash as it hit the East River. "Beat that!" he said turning around.

Gloves on, and egg in hand, Cassie took the slingshot from him.

Thanks to Lillehafrue for batting around ideas with me on this post!

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