

December 31, 2068 around 10:15 p.m., Tracy Island

This is definitely the warmest New Year's Eve I've ever experienced, Cassie thought as she quickly walked across the third floor of the balcony. The stars sparkled in the clear night sky and a cool breeze blew through the hair that she hadn't bothered to do anything with.

Reaching the steps by Will's apartment, she hurried down them. Soon she was standing outside the sliding doors of Dom's apartment. Shifting the container she was holding to one hand, she knocked on the door. It wasn't long before Dom opened it.

"There you are!" he exclaimed. He stepped aside, making a motion with his hand for Cassie to enter. "We were starting to wonder if we needed to come looking for you."

"Sorry. I was working on a letter that I needed to get done," Cassie commented as she stepped inside.

Brains and Tin-Tin were seated on the sofa. They both looked away from the program they were watching on the TV and toward the new arrival. Will put his glass down on a coaster on the coffee table and came over.

"Here let me take that from you," he offered, reaching out for the container of stuffed mushrooms she had brought with her. Cassie gratefully handed it over. "I'll take it to the kitchen," Will continued. "Jenny's kind of taken over in there with setting things up despite Dom's protests."

"If you don't mind my asking, why was getting the letter done now so important?" Brains asked, as Will headed toward the kitchen.

"Well, it's a New Year's tradition I have. I write a letter to myself every New Year's Eve, then New Year's Day I read the previous year's letter. It's interesting to see how things change," Cassie told him, as Dom slid the door shut behind her.

"I may have to try that myself," Tin-Tin commented.

"Have a seat," Dom told his newest guest. "Tin-Tin has insisted that we watch the concert from Cathedral Square in Christchurch."

"I can't miss a chance to see Cliff Richard, Jr. and the Shadows play!" Tin-Tin insisted.

"They sound pretty good," Cassie commented, remembering the group from their scavenger hunt on Halloween. Though she had meant to, she hadn't gotten around to checking the group out.

"Want some punch or soda?" Dom asked.

"Punch would be fine, thank-you," Cassie replied walking further into the apartment. Instead of

sitting, she placed the bag she was still carrying on the coffee table. "I brought a couple of things to make this seem more like a New Year's Eve celebration," she said, reaching into the bag. She took out a stack of party hats with Happy New Year on them. Colorful streamers were coming out of the top of them.

Cassie took one off the top and passed the stack to Tin-Tin. She placed the hat on her head, then turned back to the bag as Dom and Will rejoined them. Tin-Tin was now sporting a hat too. Taking a second one off the stack, she passed the rest of them to Dom, who had placed the punch he had brought out on a coaster near Cassie.

"I was hoping no one would think of hats," Will commented as he picked his glass up.

Despite Brains protests, Tin-Tin placed a hat with blue streamers on his head.

"And you can't celebrate New Year's without confetti," Cassie said, bringing out a container of multicolored pieces of paper. Noticing Dom's stricken look, she continued. "Don't worry, I'll stop by tomorrow and vacuum what confetti we don't get cleaned up tonight, seeing as I brought it."

"What, no noisemakers?" Will asked, he had a hat in his free hand but had yet to don it.

"As there is a sleeping child in the apartment, no, I didn't bring any noise makers."

"Good. Keep in mind if anyone wakes the wee one up, you're entertaining him."

There was laughter around the room.

"I've got everything set up in here if anyone is ready to eat," Jenny said, coming around the corner.

There was a chorus of consents and thanks from the others gathered.

"Here, Jenny! Have a hat," Cassie said, picking up one of the few hats remaining and crossing over to her as the others started to move toward the kitchen.

"Are you going to put that on, or just carry it around?" Dom asked Will, indicating the hat he was still holding.

With a shrug, Will placed the cheap party hat on his head.

Holding a plateful of chocolate-coated strawberries, Jenny chuckled while Cassie stuck the hat on her head. As Cassie plucked a strawberry from the plate, the hat slid to one side, hanging over one ear.

"Hold still for a moment; I'll get it on," Cassie said. She popped the strawberry in her mouth and reached out to right the hat.

New Year's Eve on Tracy Island Part 1 . . . written by starrynebula. Thanks to scuppy3 for help with Jenny!

