

Tracy Island, 11:30 PM

Everyone was sitting on the balcony, laughing and relaxed, filled with the different snack foods each one had contributed to the party. Suddenly Tin-Tin sat up straight. "We've forgotten someone!"

"Who? What do you mean?" asked Brains.

"Callie! She's alone up in Five." His assistant turned to him. "Is there any way you can transfer the feed from Five to here, Brains? I think we should call her and have her toast in the new year with us." She glanced at her watch. "We don't have much time. Can you do it?"

It's a good thing I can, Brains thought. Her eyes are so beautiful, I'd hate to see them filled with disappointment. "Dom, I presume you have a laptop. Would you bring it out here, please? That way, we'll have a screen large enough for all of us to see her and vice versa." As the nurse hurried inside to get the required item, the engineer continued. "That's a marvelous idea you had, Tin-Tin."

"I'm sorry I didn't think of it," added Will, as Cassie and Jenny both nodded their heads in agreement.

A minute or two later, Dom returned with the laptop. He set it in front of Brains, who proceeded to open it and entered a command. He apparently got the response he wanted, because he started working quickly, and only five minutes later, he had the connection set up. "Okay, who wants to place the call?"

"It's Dom's computer," said Jenny. "Let him do it."

"Good idea." Brains passed the computer over to Dom and said, "I've got it all set to make the call. Just hit enter, and give her a shout out."

"Wait a minute," said Will. "We should have our drinks first."

He and Jenny hurried inside and a few minutes later came out with a bottle of sparkling apple cider - non-alcoholic - and glasses. He held the bottle out, offering it to each of the others to open, but no one accepted.

"Okay," he said. "But don't expect the cork to go flying."

A deft twist, and a few moves to get the cork out, and he began pouring the drink. He turned to Dom with a grin. "Now you can make the call."

Dom grinned back at him and hit the button. "Thunderbird Five from Base. Thunderbird Five from Base."

A moment later, Callie's face was on the screen. Cassie had moved around to watch.

"Thunderbird Five here, reading you strength five."

"Hey, Callie. Got time to ring the new year in with us?"

"Dom! That is so thoughtful of you!"

"Well, actually it was Tin-Tin's idea, but we all agreed that you shouldn't usher it in alone."

By this time, the others had crowded around and behind Dom and Cassie. "Got anything at hand you can toast the new year with, Callie?" said Tin-Tin.

"No, I don't. Oh, wait a minute; I'll be right back."

She disappeared from the screen, but wasn't gone too long. When she returned, she had a glass filled with a bubbling liquid. "Martinelli's sparkling apple cider. I don't know who packed it for me, but I appreciate it. And I almost forgot about it. I can drink some when I call my folks to wish them a Happy New Year."

Brains smiled at her comment. "What do you know about that?" he said with an air of innocence. "We have the same thing down here."

Callie gave him a skeptical look, then chuckled. "Isn't that quite a coincidence?"

They chatted for a few more minutes, then they heard the countdown coming from the television.

...Five... Four... Three... Two... One!

"HAPPY NEW YEAR!"

The team members on the island tipped their glasses toward the screen - Callie did the same at her end - and clinked them with each other's. Then they all drank.

"Thanks, guys. You all made ringing in the new year just that much more special. I really appreciate it."

"You're more than welcome, Callie. Happy New Year," said Brains, and the rest of them echoed his last three words.

"Happy New Year to all of you, too. Thunderbird Five out." As her face faded from view, she tipped her glass toward the screen one more time.

When the transmission terminated, she stood up and walked to the window. Looking into space, she could see the blue waters and lands of the planet below. "Happy New Year, Earth."