

---

Subject: Re: New Beginnings

Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Mon, 30 Jul 2012 01:36:50 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

Monday, December 31, 2068, 11:57 p.m., Foxleyheath, England (12:57 p.m., Tuesday, January 1, 2069, Tracy Island)

"Where's Virgil?" Jeff asked as he accepted a flute of champagne from a server.

"He's coming." John peered over the heads of their fellow party-goers.

"Here we are." Virgil, one hand grasping Elise's, pressed through the crowd. "Is everyone here?"

Emily glanced over the small group. "Looks like it."

Cherie was about to reach for a champagne glass, when Scott frowned and took the one she was reaching for. "Parker is supposed to come with something non-alcoholic for you." He glanced around, then nodded, drawing his sister's attention to his left. "And here he is."

"My h'apologies, Miss Cherie." The butler-cum-chauffeur bowed to the girl. "Ay was h'unavoidedly detained."

"That's okay, Parker," Cherie smiled, a tired expression. She took the proffered glass with a sigh. "Maybe some day I'll be able to have some of the real stuff."

Jeff felt someone tug his sleeve, and turned. "Tyler? Alex? What are you two doing up?"

"You should be in bed," Dianne said, smoothing her hand over Tyler's stiff hair, which stuck up in all directions. Her efforts were in vain; the unruly patches immediately bounced back into position.

"We couldn't sleep," Tyler whined.

Alex nodded, leaning up against Jeff. "It was too noisy." He yawned. "We came down to see if it was the new year yet."

"Not yet." Jeff looked at his watch. "Just one more minute." He put arm around Alex's shoulder. "You can stay up long enough to ring in the new year, then back to bed you go."

"And Cherie will go up with you," Dianne added, giving her daughter a significant look. Cherie made a sour face and folded her arms belligerently; her mother shook her head slightly in response.

Parker, who had disappeared when the boys arrived, came hurrying back, two more glasses in hand. "Ay thought Master Alex and Master Tyler should have summat wiv which t' toast the new year."

Dianne smiled, taking one of the glasses and handing it to Tyler. "Thank you, Parker. That was very thoughtful of you."

Parker smiled, and touched an imaginary cap brim with a finger. "You are very welcome, mum. An' a happy New Year to you all."

At that moment, Lady Penelope took the microphone. "We are fast approaching midnight," she said. "A mere ten... nine... eight..."

The crowd picked up the countdown, and by the count of five, the Tracys had joined in, lifting their glasses.

"Five... four... three... two... one... Happy New Year!"

Suddenly the air was full of song and streamers and confetti and balloons. Jeff kissed his wife, murmuring, "Happy New Year, love" in her ear. Elise and Nikki joined in singing, "Auld Lang Syne", and after a moment, Dianne and Jeff, then the boys were singing, too... Gordon, his arms around John and Scott, swaying back and forth. Neither of his brothers budged, and Scott rolled his eyes. As the song ended, the Tracys touched glasses all around, then downed their drinks.

"I'll take the kids back upstairs," Dianne said, almost hollering in Jeff's ear over the fresh din of the party.

"We'll go together," Jeff insisted. His arm still around Alex, he apprised Scott of their destination. "Keep an eye on things here, son."

"F... Will do, Dad," Scott replied, nodding and taking Jeff and Alex's glasses, putting them down on a side table. He gave Cherie a kiss on her forehead, subtly taking her glass. "Happy New Year, Sis. Goodnight."

Another dance tune had sprung up as Jeff and Dianne gathered up the younger ones and headed out of the ballroom. Virgil whispered in Elise's ear, and she giggled, then nodded. They stepped out onto the dance floor again.

John turned to his grandmother. "May I have this dance, ma'am?"

Emily smiled widely. "I was hoping one of you boys would ask your old grandma for another dance."

"Well, I guess I'm the lucky grandson, then." He offered his arm. She took it, and they joined the throng.

Scott turned to find Alan and Nikki had slipped off somewhere without a word. Gordon, however, nudged him.

"I'm going to get a drink. Want anything?"

Scott shook his head. "No thanks." He peered out over the crowd. "Gonna cut in on someone. Be back soon."

"Okay." Gordon looked in the direction that Scott had and saw who he was talking about. "It's your funeral. I'll be sure to send flowers."

"Won't need 'em," Scott said absently before striding off. He came up to a couple, and smiling, asked, "May I cut in?"

Penelope looked from her current partner, Sir William Frazer, to Scott, and smiled. "I don't mind, if you don't, Sir William."

The older man - head of the British Security Service - harrumphed. "Of course not, Lady Penelope." He bowed to Scott, and gave him Penny's hand.

"Thank you, sir." Scott returned the bow, slipped an arm around Penny's waist, and they took up the rhythm of the music.

"Thank you, Scott," Penny said in a low voice. "The man is brilliant, but he does tread on one's toes."

Scott laughed. "Like a certain duchess does?"

"Oh dear." Penelope's look was sympathetic. "Were you the sacrificial lamb this year?"

He snorted. "'Fraid so. John disappeared on us, and Alan was otherwise occupied. Grandma wouldn't ask Gordon to do it twice a row, which left only me."

"I am sorry, Scott. But Deborah is such a good friend..."

Scott waved a hand. "Don't worry about it, Penny. All in a day's work and that sort of thing. And at least I won't have to do it next year. Grandma will see to that."

They fell silent for a moment, letting the music take them across the floor. Finally, Penny gave Scott a soft smile. "There is something I should tell you, Scott."

"What's that, milady?" he asked, his tone light and his interest piqued.

She reached up on tiptoe to murmur in his ear. "Happy New Year."

Scott grinned at her. "And a very Happy New Year to you, too, Lady Penelope."

Party at Penelope's is done. Hope you had fun!