

# The New Year's Eve Story

It's New Year's Eve. A group of four friends - Tom from Poland, Mary from the USA, Andres from Latvia and Elena from Spain are enjoying themselves surrounded by other guests who fill the space with laughter and cheerful conversations.

They dance, sing and have a great time, celebrating the end of the old year and the beginning of the new. They also talk about their hopes and dreams for the coming year, including travelling the world, passing future exams and meeting lots of new friends.

Tom is thirteen years old, with black hair and hazel eyes. He is confident and talkative. His smile is charming and unforgettable. Mary is fourteen, with blonde hair and blue eyes. She loves to wear black clothes and is interested in gothic music and style. Andres is fourteen years old, with short brown hair and green eyes. He is taller and stronger than the other boys. Elena is thirteen, with black hair and brown eyes. She is very shy and likes to express herself through drawing and painting. Tom is wearing comfortable clothes as always with his favourite grey hoodie, blue jeans and black Vans shoes. Mary is wearing a long black skirt and heavy black boots. Her makeup is striking, more extravagant than gloomy. It contrasts with her fair complexion. Andres likes checkered blazers with fashionable elbow patches. Tonight his jacket is more elegant than usual and perfectly matches his white shirt. Elena's style is artistic. She is wearing baggy clothes in eye-catching colours and patterns. *(by Julia)*

The party takes place on the 20th floor of a skyscraper in the centre of Warsaw. The teens hang out in a large flat with huge panoramic windows. The view of the city from above is simply breathtaking. Suddenly approaching midnight, the four friends approach the huge windows to catch a glimpse of the fireworks display. The night sky is like a sparkling diamond, like a fulgent avalanche of lightning. Colourful explosions fill the air, their sparks colouring the dark skyline and creating a mesmerising spectacle over the entire city.

After about thirty minutes of the fireworks display, the sky begins to darken, as if the fireworks have suddenly disappeared. Suddenly, they notice the last firework, which looked different from the others - it resembled an arrow and seemed to point to a distant place far beyond Warsaw. The windows began to disappear, followed closely by... *(by Karol)*

A loud bang deafening everyone around it. The area suddenly becoming pitch black with nothing other than darkness surrounding the young five, even the arrow is gone. The silence piercing their ears. When they become more aware of their surroundings, the slight panic dies down, but the confusion doesn't. The black endless void was not a hallucination of any sort, no, it was actually happening. The flabbergasted crowd slowly started to wonder on what's going on, yet not getting any "normal" answers.

After what felt like eternity, something finally happens. Another bang, out of nowhere, absolutely blinding all their eyes. One of the crew opens their eyes. To their surprise, the darkness has faded. A song hits their eardrums, „California Love” by 2pac and Dr. Dre. Officially releasing 1st of

January 1996. The fire ends up on a dancefloor in a friendly bar, just enjoying themselves, yet something feels off. Everything feels... old. *(by Nathalie)*

The soft hum of a nostalgic song filled the air as Tom, Mary, Andres and Elena blinked awake, groggy and confused. The bar was dimly lit, its warm golden glow bouncing off rows of bottles behind the counter. The unmistakable scent of old wood lingered in the atmosphere grounding them in the moment. Tom sat up first, rubbing his temple. "Okay, what happened? Last I remembered, we were watching fireworks. Did we... walk here? Or did we teleport?" His voice carried the remnants of sleep, but his tone hinted at both confusion and humor. Mary shouted "Teleport? No, Tom. That's not a thing. And for the record I blame the champagne. Elena yawned, strengthening her arms over her head. "Whatever happened, this bar looks oddly familiar. I think we've been here before." She scanned the room. It had a charming, almost magical vibe – like a place out of time. A chalkboard behind the bar read: "Happy New Year! Here's to adventures!"

"Wait! Listen to the song!" Andres said cutting through the banter. He leaned forward, his face intent. The melody was soothing, a haunting tune that felt oddly personal. "I swear I've heard it before. Does it sound... different to anyone else?" Mary frowned, tilting her head as she tried to focus on the music. "It's strange. It almost sounds like..." She trailed off, her face clouding with uncertainty. Tom pointed to the bar counter. A single envelope sat there, marked with four names: Tom, Mary, Andres, Elena... *(by Leo)*

Tom stood up and cautiously approached the counter where the mysterious envelope lay. He could feel the others' eyes on him, almost pushing him forward to uncover the answers swirling in their minds. As he reached for the envelope, something meowed softly behind him. He turned sharply, almost dropping the letter. Sitting on one of the tables was a cat – jet-black, with eyes so green they seemed to glow in the dim light. Its tail swayed slowly to the rhythm of the music, and it watched them with an unsettling intensity. "Where did the cat come from?" Mary asked, stepping closer. The animal didn't react to her voice but lifted a paw, gently nudging an object lying next to it – a small silver key that gleamed under the bar's golden light, as though demanding their attention. "Okay, this is getting weird," Andres muttered, moving to stand beside Tom. "An envelope, a cat, a key... All we're missing now is a magic spell." The cat meowed again, louder this time, almost as if responding to him. Elena looked at the animal with growing curiosity. "Maybe it's a sign," she said. "Let's see what's in the envelope." Tom carefully broke the seal and pulled out a sheet of paper. It was written in neat, old-fashioned handwriting, elegant but slightly eerie in its precision.

"Welcome. If you wish to return to where you came from, find the door it unlocks. But be careful – nothing here is as it seems. And the cat? It knows many things."

The group exchanged silent glances before turning their eyes back to the cat, which now sat perfectly still, its tail wrapped around its paws. It looked as though it knew exactly what was coming next. *(by Barbara)*

The cat started to run, so they thought that he just ran away, but Mary ran after him, because she really felt that he would show them something important. When he stopped, Mary saw doors, so she called her friends and they immediately came to her. The door seemed like the way they will

get back to the place where it all started, but the door couldn't open. Tom remembered that they had a key, so he tried to open it, nothing could be more wrong, they just opened. "Look, the key fitted the door perfectly." said Tom. "That's not the way that you will get back." said cat, and after that they found that is not over.

They were searching for something to help them escape, but all they found were cardboard boxes and a casket. Elena wanted to check the casket, but someone said, "Elena, this isn't the time for jokes. We seriously need to find a way to get back." Finally, she joined the search around the room. Suddenly, the door slammed shut, and they noticed an arrow the same one they had seen before, like a firework. They began to hear a strange sound, and Andres asked, "Did you all hear that?" At first, they weren't sure what he meant, but soon the others heard it too — it was a cat scratching at the door. When they opened the door, all they saw was New Year's Eve, with everything back to how it was at the beginning. *(by Karolina and Zosia)*