

"AULD LANG SYNE"

By

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EXT. APARTMENT BALCONY - NIGHT

ASH checks their watch: just minutes left until midnight. They look up and out at the city before them and sigh through their nose.

They're standing on the large, wraparound balcony of a nice apartment. Inside, a New Year's Eve party is in full swing. Out here, in the cold, various guests have stepped out for various reasons: for fresh air, for a smoke, for a break from the crowd, for privacy with one another. ASH does their best to ignore the lot of them--to keep their distance. They check their watch again.

The sounds of the party crescendo for a moment as the sliding balcony door is quickly opened and closed. Out of the party steps ASH's friend CHARLIE, carrying a bottle of champagne and two glasses. CHARLIE joins ASH by the railing.

CHARLIE  
(pouring drinks)  
I've got it!

ASH  
(taking a glass)  
Nice! What have you got?

CHARLIE  
I've been thinking.

ASH  
You've been thinking...

CHARLIE  
It's a thought. A bold thought.

ASH  
A New Year's resolution?

CHARLIE  
God, no! It'll be far too late by then.

ASH  
So let's hear it.

CHARLIE  
Not yet: first, we drink.

They 'cheers!' And drink. CHARLIE pours another round.

ASH  
So far, so good.

CHARLIE  
This isn't even "the thing".

ASH  
So what is "the thing"?

CHARLIE  
Drink again and I'll tell you.

ASH drinks. CHARLIE doesn't.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
I think we should kiss at midnight.

Pause. ASH performs the longest drink swallow of their life.  
CHARLIE fills ASH's glass again.

ASH  
You and me?

CHARLIE  
Yep.

ASH  
You want to kiss?

CHARLIE  
At midnight. For New Year's.

ASH  
I'm confused.

CHARLIE  
Don't be. It's a tradition, where-

ASH  
No, I get that bit. You want us to  
kiss at midnight?

CHARLIE  
I figure with you, I'm guaranteed a  
kiss. If I look elsewhere, I might  
not be so lucky.

ASH  
So it's insurance? Isn't that guy  
here? That one you want to...

CHARLIE  
Nathan. Yes, Nathan is here. And I  
thought about shooting that shot-

ASH  
But instead-

CHARLIE  
...I came out here.

ASH  
For me?

CHARLIE  
Little bit wishing I hadn't, now...

An OBNOXIOUS GUEST bangs on the glass door and mouths "GET READY!" Charlie downs their glass and pours another.

ASH  
What are you doing?

CHARLIE  
Catching up with you.

ASH  
You know that's not what I meant.

A "WHOOH!" from the crowd inside. CHARLIE smiles at ASH.

CHARLIE  
It might be nice?

ASH  
I think it could be.

CHARLIE  
Not where I'd planned the evening  
was gonna go...

ASH  
You can still go and find Nathan.

CHARLIE shakes their head. Inside the apartment, a muffled  
countdown begins: \*TEN\*, \*NINE\*, \*EIGHT\*, \*SEVEN\*...

CHARLIE  
So are we doing it?

ASH  
Is it a good idea?

CHARLIE  
That sounds like next year's  
problem.

ASH  
Just a kiss?

CHARLIE  
Maybe?

... \*THREE\*, \*TWO\*, \*ONE\*! The party erupts. Champagne,  
cheering, laughter, hugs, kisses. And ASH and CHARLIE  
together in the middle of it all.