

New Year's Eve at the Rinse-O-Rama

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. RINSE-O-RAMA 24-HOUR LAUNDROMAT - NIGHT

Only one patron: NULA FOSTER (20s). Expressive eyes. Edgy haircut. Comfy fleece pullover.

She eats orange Jell-O with a plastic spoon and watches her laundry tumble in a whirring dryer.

Next to her: a handwritten journal. Her handwriting has beautifully plump loops, especially her "Gs" and "Os".

Scrawled at the top of the page--"Entry 365: New Year's Eve."

Nula's cell phone is tuned in to a New Year's Eve countdown show. The Times Square crowd sways with anticipation.

Also depicted on the show: A countdown timer. Just twenty minutes left until the new year.

Nula glances at the time left on her dryer cycle: twenty minutes.

No doubt about it--the timer on Nula's load is perfectly in synch with the upcoming NYC New Year's Eve ball drop.

A shy smile. Nula takes a celebratory scrape of the last Jell-O remnants and tosses the cup into the trash.

Into the laundromat sway two wayward, tipsy visitors: DINO ELIOPOULOS and MARIA-ANGELIKI KAPPAS (both 20s).

Dino's wild hair points everywhere--north, south, east, west.

He's scruffy and blocky, as solid as a caboose.

Astonishment fills Dino's face.

DINO

This place is open?

Nula nods. She places her hand over her journal entry.

DINO

Didn't know you could do your wash on New Year's Eve. I thought they closed up early.

Maria-Angeliki, slender, dark-haired, rolls her eyes.

MARIA-ANGELIKI
 Didn't you read the sign? Open 24
 hours.

DINO
 Yeah, but...

He sways a little.

DINO
 This night's for parties, not
 laundry.

Nula blinks several times before responding quietly.

NULA
 It's a bash for my jeans and
 underwear. Check it out.

She points to the spinning dryer.

NULA
 They're clubbing in there.

Nula clears her throat and sheepishly mimics a nightclub's
 techno beat:

NULA
 Oots. Oots. Oots. Oots.

Dino's initial confusion turns into laughter. He joins in.

DINO
 Yeah! I hear it! Oots. Oots. Oots.

He whirls. He playfully bearhugs Maria-Angeliki and sweeps
 her off her feet.

DINO
 Oots. Oots. Oots.

He bounces up and down with her.

DINO
 Oots. Oots.

This evolves haphazardly into a Greek cheer...

DINO
 Opa! Opa! Opa!

He sputters, stumbles, sets Maria-Angeliki down, nearly
 toppling into her.

MARIA-ANGELIKI

(to Nula)

You gotta excuse my cousin for his wildness. He's part mountain yak.

DINO

It's the truth--we're cousins. I'm Dino Eliopolous and she's Maria-Angeliki. We live down the block.

NULA

I'm Nula.

DINO

Ain't there nobody working here tonight? An attendant?

NULA

Someone's probably checking in once in awhile, but they're not here right now.

DINO

We're headed to the corner bar--Goofy's.

MARIA-ANGELIKI

It's a dump. Gonna collapse one day from neglect.

DINO

But not tonight, I don't think.

MARIA-ANGELIKI

It will if you keep stomping around like a zoo bear. You'll knock over a support beam one of these days.

DINO

Nula, you should go to the bar with us.

This suggestion freezes Nula. No immediate response.

DINO

They got two-buck nachos. C'mon.

NULA

I'm sorry. My plan is to finish up here and go home.

Dino frowns and scratches his butt.

NULA

You guys seem cool, don't get me wrong.

A deep breath.

NULA

It's been a rough year, so I'm taking it slow tonight.

Maria-Angeliki nods.

NULA

I broke up a few months ago. There have been some family issues, too. Not easy. Overwhelming.

She scoops up her journal and closes it.

NULA

Last year for New Year's Eve I partied with a big group, but I felt completely alone.

She scans the laundromat.

NULA

I like it here better.

Maria-Angeliki places a hand on Nula's shoulder.

MARIA-ANGELIKI

God bless you, honey. We're gonna get out of your hair in two seconds. Give you time to yourself.

NULA

Being alone isn't really my objective. This is a public place. If I wanted to absolutely be by myself, I could have stayed home.

Nula shifts.

NULA

I wanted to be out in public, but out of the way, if you know what I mean.

DINO

Well, I'm sorry you had such a kick-in-the-ass year. But bein' isolated ain't so good.

He glances at the dryer.

DINO

So I'll save you a seat at the bar.
You can come by if you change your
mind about things.

NULA

You better hustle if you want to
celebrate the new year.

She checks the dryer's timer.

NULA

You have only seventeen minutes
until midnight.

Dino squints. He scratches his head in confusion.

DINO

Hold on. How'd you know that?

A shy smile from Nula.

DINO

There's something goin' on with the
timer, ain't there?

Nula nods. Her smile widens.

NULA

Yep. It's gonna buzz right at
midnight.

DINO

Is that a coincidence?

Nula shakes her head. No.

DINO

You set it up that way?

NULA

Yes. My dryer cycle ends when the
new year begins. Totally planned.

Dino stares in spaced-out awe. The wheels of his mind turn
'round and 'round.

DINO

That is so...jeez...

He rubs his wild hair, making it even wilder.

DINO
It's so fuck-me, fuckin' perfect!

His face lights up. He turns to Maria-Angeliki.

DINO
Why didn't I think of something so smart?

MARIA-ANGELIKI
'Cause you're a sasquatch from the Sasquatch Mountains?

DINO
You don't get it, do you? Nula's laundry's gonna tumble around. Five, four, three, two, one. The dryer buzzes. Happy New Year!

MARIA-ANGELIKI
(sarcastically)
Wow.

DINO
Yeah. Wow. Wow. Wow. I love this.

He bows to Nula in admiration.

DINO
Man, I wish I could be here when that happens.

NULA
You could stick around, if you want. I wouldn't mind the company.

Dino whirls toward Maria-Angeliki.

DINO
Could we?

MARIA-ANGELIKI
You'd probably mess it up.

Dino nods. He would mess it up, for sure.

MARIA-ANGELIKI
And you've been talking about going to Goofy's all day.

DINO
'Cause it's my favorite bar. Two dollar nachos.

He thinks for several moments.

DINO

Tell you what, Nula. Me and Maria are gonna stick with our first plan. We're gonna go to the bar. Is that okay?

Nula nods.

DINO

If we ever see you around the neighborhood, maybe you can tell us if your New Year's dryer trick worked.

NULA

I will, Dino. For sure.

DINO

Okay then. Happy new year.

MARIA-ANGELIKI

Yeah, God bless.

Nula waves to them and blows them a kiss.

Dino keeps staring at the dryer until Maria-Angeliki pulls him out of the laundromat by the arm.

Nula shakes her head and flips open her journal.

She writes furiously, likely documenting what just happened.

She resumes her mock-techno beat:

NULA

Oots. Oots. Oots. Oots.

She stops writing and watches her laundry roll around for several moments. Eventually she whispers:

NULA

What a strange year.

LATER

The dryer's timer says ten minutes to midnight.

Nula's cell phone shows more images from Times Square.

Commotion from outside. The laundromat door swings open. Back into the laundry come Dino and Maria-Angeliki.

Dino carries a giant sack of laundry.

Maria-Angeliki grips a toy bubble gun. She presses on the trigger and a few bubbles float into the air. She's a bubble commando.

DINO
Guess what, Nula. We're back.

He quickly starts pulling open dryer doors.

DINO
We decided that we're gonna do the same thing as you. I'm gonna put my clothes in these machines and get all the buzzers to go off at midnight.

He opens up his bag and flings dirty sweatshirts and underwear into a dryer. He stops and checks with Nula.

DINO
Is this okay with you?

A genuine smile from Nula.

NULA
Absolutely. I knew you'd be back. You couldn't resist, could you?

Dino pumps his fist and continues to fill the dryer.

NULA
Shouldn't you wash those clothes first?

Dino waves her off.

DINO
Nah. I'm a Greek. We do things backwards.

MARIA-ANGELIKI
Speak for yourself.

DINO
We dry first, then we wash.

MARIA-ANGELIKI
No we don't.

DINO
Ah, crap. We need change.

He rushes to the dollar changer, fishes out a twenty dollar bill, and feeds it into the machine.

He scoops the pile of quarters and runs to the dryers.

A stumble. The quarters spill out of his hands and bounce around on the floor.

DINO

Ah! Ah!

Dino chases quarters around the floor.

Smack! He runs face first into an open dryer door.

DINO

Ooof.

Nula and Maria-Angeliki come running to help him.

He shakes off injury. He's okay.

MARIA-ANGELIKI

Good thing your head's made of beef jerky.

The trio scoops quarters off the floor. Dino takes small handfuls of his laundry and tosses the items randomly into the open dryers.

He fills a row of eight machines.

DINO

Quick. Put the quarters in. How much time do you have left on your dryer, Nula?

NULA

Seven minutes.

DINO

Perfect. Let's put in the change and set 'em all to seven minutes.

Dino, Nula, and Maria quickly pop quarters into the dryers, trying their best to synch everything up.

Success: All eight dryers in the row are at seven minutes and counting.

Dino jumps up and down in excitement.

DINO

We're doing it!

The dryers rumble.

LATER

There's only one minute to the end of the cycle and the conclusion of the year.

Floating in the air are dozens of bubbles. They're produced rapid-fire from Maria-Angeliki's toy bubble gun.

Dino and Nula gawk at the New Year's Eve show. The ball moves downward in Times Square. The countdown starts, and Dino and Nula count along with it.

Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one...

A spit second passes. Nula's dryer buzzes.

Moments later, another dryer does the same...and another.

Buzz. Buzz. Buzz....Eight buzzers! Success!

Dino screams at the top of his lungs.

Nula and Maria-Angeliki hug him in celebration. They collapse to the ground in a happy heap.

Dino bounces back up and pulls open one of the dryer doors.

DINO

We did it! We did it!

He scoops out his clothes and throws them into the air.

Nula and Maria do the same. Fling. Toss. Full delight.

Nula adds some of her items to the airborne mix: a nightshirt, some jeans, socks...

Everything moves in slow motion.

Socks fall through the air. Sweatshirts. T-shirts. Even a few pairs of rumpled boxer shorts.

Maria's bubbles are in the air too--fluttering, floating, drifting amid the socks and shorts. Slow. Beautiful. Happy.

Before long, the entire laundromat floor is covered with clothing.

Dino grabs a pair of polka dot boxers and pulls it on top of his head.

He kisses Maria on the cheek. He kisses Nula on the cheek.

Then he spreads his arms like a great sasquatch of the Sasquatch Mountains and bellows. He thumps his chest. A wild man on a wild night.

The party grows. Through the door come a half dozen PATRONS OF GOOFY'S BAR.

They shout and pop open champagne bottles. They throw more clothing into the air.

Someone plays techno music from their cell phone. Oots. Oots.

Nula sways along with them for awhile. A happy celebration.

Eventually she makes her way back to her journal. She scoots into the corner and scrawls with her pen.

Written beautifully on the paper is a final message for the night:

"It's going to be a great year--as told from the Rinse-O-Rama, New Year's Eve."

Dino punctuates that thought by blurting out the beat--

DINO
Oots. Oots. Oots.

FADE OUT: