

The Millennium

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I woke up around 8AM Christmas morning and darted into our family room where our Christmas tree stood, decorated with what seemed like hundreds and hundreds of lights, ornaments, and candy canes. Underneath the base of the tree lay what seemed to be millions of packages wrapped in shiny, glittery paper of all different shapes and sizes. As I peered over to my right, something new seized my attention. It looked like a square box with a screen. Walking closer and closer, I saw there was a message that scrolled across that screen that read, “Merry Christmas, Kristin and Melissa! – Love, Santa.” It was really a computer! I have never seen one up close before, and I only wish I knew how to work it.

My sister and I finished tearing through the rest of the glittery-covered presents after about an hour. We received plenty of toys and clothes, but nothing that even came close to that computer—I wanted nothing more than to play games on that brand new contraption all day long. My dad finally hooked it up in my sister’s room, where we planted our butts firmly on two chairs in front of that screen until it was time for Christmas dinner.

About a week later, my mom and I went to the mall and were shopping for some last-minute New Year’s Eve decorations. Usually there are hundreds of people running around the mall doing the same. However, this year it seemed significantly different. Instead of hundreds of shopping bags piled up with plates, hats, glasses, and those really cool noisemakers that you blow into that make loud sounds, their bags were stuffed with electronics. I noticed the disorganized chaos of customers running to return things at the electronic store. Tons of people had huge boxes which looked to me like computers. “Who would want to return their brand new computer?” I thought to myself.

Mom and I purchased our banners, streamers, and shimmering hats and glasses and went immediately home to set up. Unlike my sister, I was always “Mommy’s Little Helper” when it came to making the house look festive. I stacked the paper plates, helped Mom hang the streamers, and placed bottles of soda on the table. When everything was all finally in place, I took a step back to admire all my hard work. I thought it looked even better than all the past years combined! It only took us a couple of hours to turn our house into the world’s best New Year’s Eve party palace. This was sure to be the greatest turn of the century that there ever was.

I headed back upstairs to find Dad sitting on the couch watching the news on TV. Since it wasn’t *Little Bear*, I didn’t care to watch and walked right past to go to my sister’s room when I heard a newscaster announcing, “All computers are due to crash at the exact time of 12 o’clock midnight tonight. This is soon to be the end of life as we know it.” Confused, I sat down at my brand new computer and began playing games with my sister.

Later that night, our family and friends started arriving one by one. It was my job to give everyone their party hat and glasses that had the “00” of “2000” as the lenses. We were having a great time until my neighbors showed up. They had a worried look on their faces, but I couldn’t figure out why. I ignored it so it wouldn’t ruin my perfect, party mood. Besides, their kids had brought pots and pans for us to bang together as soon as the New Year began. I thought it was a wonderful addition to the five bags of confetti I had hidden in my room.

Everyone was dancing, drinking, and having fun all night. Mom even let me drink some sparkling cider with the rest of the older kids. The entire night was going great until about five minutes to midnight. At that point, a lot of the adults looked as if they turned numb. My neighbors’ expressions began to intensify from earlier. I thought that was a little bizarre,

considering New Year's Eve was the one day of the year where everyone celebrated and had a good time. At least I was enjoying myself!

The countdown began at 11:59. "59...58...57..." Everyone completely stopped what they were doing and watched the giant, luminous ball filled with confetti at Time Square in New York City slowly lower to the ground. "48...47...46..." It was at that moment I remembered my confetti and ran back upstairs so I could hand some out to everyone while I still had time. "43...42...41..." As I passed my sister's room, I saw the computer sitting on her desk and remembered hearing that new reporter forecast doom. "All computers are due to crash at the exact time of 12 o'clock midnight..." I replayed in my head. "35...34...33..." I didn't want to lose my new computer. I loved it more than anything else I ever had in my life, especially because it came from Santa! Reality checked back in when I heard the crowd on TV yelling, "30, 29, 28.." and I grabbed my confetti and ran back downstairs.

Everyone joined hands around our little TV, but no one looked as thrilled as I did for some reason. Every year we all joined hands the last thirty seconds, but there was something different about it this time. "15...14...13..." Mom held my hand tightly as if she was desperately afraid to lose me. I saw my neighbors' eyes start to tear up, and my aunt was shaking quite a bit. The countdown went to "4, 3, 2..." and Mom's grasp got even tighter. Some of the people in New York seemed a little uneasy, as well. The newscaster hollered, "Happy New Year!" and I threw up my confetti. All of the kids banged pots and pans while running around and blew as hard as we could on those really fun noisemakers as my confetti slowly sprinkled downwards. All of the adults then collectively sighed. They all started hugging and kissing each other as if they were thankful to be alive.

That's when I remembered my computer.

I ran the two flights of stairs faster than I ever have in my entire life and headed straight into my sister's room. There it was: my most prized possession. The computer was still sitting in the same spot where I left it, looking just as it had before. I clicked the mouse, and everything was still perfectly in order. It had been one big hoax. It was Saturday, January 1st, 2000, and as I stared admirably at the Christmas present of my dreams, I was the most joyful girl in the world.