

# NO YEAR'S EVE

BY

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# No Years Eve

## A One Act Play by Dave Morgan

**Setting:** - Typical living room in the period between Christmas and New Year.

**Props:** - Standard living room plus big working clock with easy to read pointers set for 11:30 at the start of the play (depending upon the timed dress rehearsal). A door, drinks cabinet, glasses, TV a flat screen from a computer or similar, cups, a tray and a lounge suite etc. Christmas tree, crackers and streamers.

### **Cast:**

**Alec Drummond:** Husband (Age 40+)

He is a cool customer who has seen it, done it and bought the tee shirt. He believes it that if happens, it happens. Panic and speculation are not his game. Rarely gets excited.

**Betty Drummond:** Wife (**old enough to have a teenage daughter**)

She is nervous and tries to take comfort from Alec's confidence but sometimes he just annoys her with his lack of concern for anything.

**Alice Drummond:** **Loving daughter (Teens to early 20's)**

She is squeaky clean and everyone loves her, apart from her brother.

**Freddy Drummond:** Thick Son (Early 20's scruffy)

He's a Criminal, with no sense of responsibility.

**Hamilton Crossley:** 1<sup>st</sup> Neighbour (Any age conservative clothing)

Excitable; works at a nuclear research centre and has logical answers for everything.

**Julia Reddy:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Neighbour (**Teens to early 20's**)

A romantic; she works in a flower shop and gets her news from customers

**Father O'Connell:** Priest

A nervous priest, who puts on a brave face; he has lots to hide and is starting to question his faith.

### **Prologue:**

Christmas has gone and everyone was looking forward to the new year until they hear there is not going to be one. The end of the world is nigh and family and friends rock up at the Drummond home; including a nuclear physicist, a flower shop employee, a wayward Priest, their daughter and their dishonest son. What will they do until the time comes?

## Curtain opens

Alec & Betty Drummond sit in stunned silence with their eyes wide open.

### ***There's a Knock at the door***

Betty Drummond gets up and drags herself to the door.

Julia Reddy hysterically rushes in and plops herself down on the sofa crying her eyes out.

Julia: "I don't want to die.....Boo Hoo Hoo"

Betty Drummond sits down beside her and tries to comfort her.

Betty Drummond: "There, there, now, don't cry; it might never happen"

Alec Drummond: "Don't talk rubbish Betty; we ARE ALL going to die"

Julia: "But not yet; I'm too young to die"

Alec Drummond: "It's never a good time, but I suppose now is a good a time as any."

Julia jumps up, throws her arms in the air and runs around the room as if to find somewhere to escape.

Betty Drummond: "Don't be so cold Alec; the girl is terrified and saying that is not going to help her."

Alec Drummond: "Well it's not going to help anyone, but it's a reality. In close on half an hour, we'll all be dead."

Alec Drummond: "Did you have a good Christmas Julia?"

Julia becomes more hysterical

Betty Drummond: "What on earth did you say that for?"

Alec Drummond: "Just making conversation; I just wanted to know if she had."

Julia reduces her tantrums to a whimper takes a deep breath and swallows.

Julia with a big lump in her throat:

"Yes I did, I didn't go out much but enjoyed it just the same. Sob"

"Where is Alice and Freddy? I thought you would all be together at a time like this."

Alec Drummond: "I always said they would be late for their own funerals."

Betty Drummond: "ALEC !!"

Then softly

Betty Drummond: "I don't want to die alone; we should all be together as a family. Julia, Where is your family?"

Julia: "They are in London. I tried to go there but there is no transport; everything is shut down. I so wanted to be with them"

Betty Drummond: "Have you tried calling them?

Julia: "Yes but there is no signal and they don't have a land line."

Julia starts crying again.

Alec. Drummond gets out of his chair and wanders over to the TV.

He presses buttons but only gets a hissing sound.

Alec. Drummond: "You'd think they would have at least put something on the TV."  
Betty Drummond: "Like what?"  
Alec Drummond: "I don't know; anything. They usually have a couple of months of pre-recorded rubbish ready for airing"  
Julia: "But there's no one to operate the stations; we're lucky to have electricity."  
Alec Drummond: "Yes, well I suppose they just put everything on automatic and went home. They should have done the same with the TV. We could have watched a film or a comedy show to cheer us up."  
Betty Drummond: "Well it's a bit late now 'cos you wouldn't have time to see the end."

Alec Drummond sighs

The door burst open and Alice comes rushing in. She's also Crying.  
Her mum goes up to comfort her and instinctively says:

Betty Drummond: "What's wrong Alice, there is no need to cry"  
Alice: "Mom, It's Colin; he's broken up with me"  
Alec Drummond: "Well that's not the end of the world, now is it?"  
Betty Drummond: "ALEC, will you just shut up. You're not making things any easier for any of us. Alice, please don't get upset about it, there's nothing you can do now."  
Alice: "But Mom we were going to go to Spain for our holidays; I've already paid the deposit."  
Alec Drummond: "What, the hell!!!! Is everyone around here nuts. You'll all be dead at 12 o'clock and she's worried that she'll lose her deposit on a holiday."  
Betty Drummond: "Alec I've told you before, will you just shut up. Now Alice, why did Colin break up with you?"  
Alice: "We were sitting on a wall consoling each other and this *whore* of a woman came past and said she had no one to spend her last few hours with and I thought Colin would invite her to join us but, he just jumped up put his arm around her and looked at me and said. *I'm out of here.*"  
Julia: "The pig....The nasty little sod.... Never did like him.... Typical man."  
Alec Drummond: "The little bastard, I'll kill him when I get...."

He then realises what he is saying and how futile his words are.

There is a brief silence while they contemplate the ramifications of his words

Betty Drummond: "Calm down Alec, its history now."  
Julia: "We are all history now, wah!!"

### ***There's a Knock on the door***

Betty Drummond answers it.

Betty Drummond: "Hamilton, nice to see you; come on in."

Hamilton enters

Hamilton as he walks to join to the others:

“Hope you don’t mind me popping round for half an hour, I’m just sitting in my flat and don’t really know what to do with myself”

Alice runs over and gives him a big hug saying:

“Thanks for coming Hamilton; we can always count on you”

Hamilton:

“It’s my pleasure”

Alec Drummond:

“So Hamilton, what’s your take on all of this mess? Do think it will actually happen?”

Hamilton:

“Well Mr Drummond”

Alec. Drummond:

“Just call me Alec. This is hardly the time for formalities”

Hamilton:

“Well.....ALEC. I’m afraid this is very real indeed. An unbridled search for knowledge, indoctrinated hysteria and some fools trying the ridiculous without concentrating on the obvious and the consequences of their actions.”

Alec Drummond:

“Come on Hamilton, I asked a simple question. That jargon isn’t going to go far with Alice and Julia here.”

Hamilton:

“Well I’m sorry but the whole thing is so stupid and it’s not the first time they thought of trying it. A bit of divine intervention saved us the last time but no such luck this time.

Alice:

“Why what happened..... and why divine intervention?”

Hamilton:

“Back in 1970 when they sent Apollo 13 to the moon. They were supposed to set off a bomb in the moon lander after they blasted off from the moon because some joker said they thought the moon was hollow and they wanted to see if it would ring like a bell. They only managed to drop the module and lander on it from the orbit and it rang like a bell for 3 hours. They should have learned something from that.”

Betty Drummond:

“But Apollo never got to the moon and the astronauts were nearly killed.

Hamilton:

“Well that’s my point. They couldn’t land and just when around it. If they didn’t have that incident then they could have done something similar to what they’ve done now and we would have all died then.”

Alice:

“But I wasn’t born then”

Hamilton:

“Exactly”

Julia:

“But I wasn’t born either”

Alec Drummond:

“..... and so you would never have been born, would you.”

Alice:

“I don’t like that”

Julia:

“Neither do I.”

Betty Drummond:

“Well you were both born so there’s no need to worry about it, is there. So what’s all of this got to do with divine intervention?”

Hamilton:

“Well you can say it was all luck that it never came off but if you think about it, first you had the incident that nearly killed them and then you had the almost impossible situation where they all got back to earth safely AND the Moon remained intact. That’s a fair amount of coincidences and you could easily explain this away as divine intervention.”

Alice:

“So I’m the result of Divine intervention”

Julia:

“So am I. That makes us special; we’re here for a purpose”

Alec. Drummond: "Yes.... that's right ... now the pair of you can go and make a cup of coffee for everyone."  
Betty Drummond: "Alec!"

They both trot off to make some coffee.

Betty Drummond: "So Hamilton, why wasn't there divine intervention this time?"

Two heads peer from the kitchen and agree.

Alice and Julia: "Yes Hamilton, Why was there no intervention this time?"  
Hamilton: "I don't know, perhaps He probably considered it a waste of time because someone was bound to do it sometime."  
Betty Drummond: "Maybe we can still be saved by some freak of nature or whatever and it just hasn't happened yet"  
Alec Drummond: "Well its twenty minutes to twelve so there's not much time left"

The girls come back with the drinks and hand them around.

Alice: "What I don't know is how we got into this situation"  
Julia: "..and how we can get out of it"  
Hamilton: "Well it's the old story. How can we save ourselves from asteroids? All of these damned Sci-fi movies about alien invasions and what if we do find life out there and have to fend it off. That's why they invented this doomsday device so they could blast, asteroids, comets and small planets to smithereens ...but how can you test it? Well not here on earth so they set it off a small one on the moon and blasted a great chunk out of it."  
Alice: "...but that doesn't mean we have to die"  
Hamilton: "Well unfortunately it does because the moon has lost its mass, its shape and its orbit meaning it will crash into the earth destroying all life. It's already having a major effect with hurricanes, earthquakes and eruptions happening all over the place.....and the agony and turmoil leading up to this would make life unbearable long before it hit us. That's why they took the decision to end it all for everyone quickly and efficiently in one shot on New Year's Eve at 12 midnight GMT.  
Alec Drummond: "Yes Hamilton, Why 12 midnight GMT? Of all the major time zones in the world why did they pick that particular time and our zone.....and why only 6 hours' notice?"  
Hamilton: "Well it was a general consensus of the powers that be. The bulk of the world would be fast asleep in bed. Australasia would just be waking up and the Americas wanted to watch the big event with carnivals and every nonsensical thing you could think of.  
Alec Drummond: "Typical yanks. Carnivals? I don't think so. More like carnage. Half of them will be dead long before 12. They'll just shoot each other."  
Hamilton: "You must remember that we weren't supposed to know about this at all because it would cause panic around the world but they couldn't hide what was happening plus watching effectively 2 moons was a bit obvious. That's why they brought it forward till today. So people wouldn't have time to absorb what was going to happen."

Alice: "But by bringing it forward the chances of finding a solution is non-existent.  
Hamilton: "Well Alice; I'm afraid that's exactly the problem. There doesn't appear to be any solution and certainly nothing that could be done before we were all wiped out by the moon."  
Betty Drummond: "Well I don't think it's right that they get to say how and when we all die."  
Alec Drummond: "Yes Hamilton, it really screws up anyone contemplating suicide"  
Betty Drummond: "Will you just shut up with your silly comments. It doesn't help anyone, especially the girls."

**There's another knock on the door.**

Alec Drummond shouts: **"Come in"**  
Betty Drummond: "Alec, you can't say that it could be anybody out there."  
Alec Drummond: "Makes no difference"

Father O'Connell pokes his head through the door.

Father O'Connell: "Can I come in?"  
Alec Drummond: "You were right Betty, it could be anyone. Merry Christmas Father and what can we do you? I thought you would be down at the church giving communion or last rights or something like that."  
Alice: "Daddy!!!"

Father O'Connell comes in and greets everyone.

Father O'Connell: "It's no longer Christmas Alec and most of the people are at home with their families or with Father Jacobs who is holding the services. So I came to spend my last minutes with you fine people."  
Alec Drummond: "Well that's put a spanner in the works"  
Betty Drummond: "Forgive him Father. Alec is convinced that nothing is going to happen and is making light of everything we say."  
Father O'Connell: "Well it's nice to be here and it's nice to see you Julia Reddy and you Hamilton Crossly."  
"We've never seen you for quite a while Hamilton. Can we hope to....."  
"Oh no, well never mind."  
"Tell me where's Freddy?"  
Alec Drummond: "He's out and about Father."  
"He says he'll be back by 12 but knowing him he'll be late. Ha.... I've always told him he'll be late for his own funeral and now he probably will be."  
Farther O'Connell: "Now, now, Mr Drummond; you can't say things like that."  
"I'm sure he will be back in time and hopefully not for his own funeral."  
Alec Drummond: "If you say so Father"  
Alice: "Well he does"  
Father O'Connell: "Hamilton, I always remember how clever you were at school. Do you know how we got into this situation?"

Hamilton: "Yes Father, but it's a long story and I don't think we have time for it now."  
Alice: "Would you like a cup of Coffee Father?"  
Father O'Connell: "Tea would be nice Alice."

Alice gets up and takes Julia to the kitchen.

Alec. Hamilton: "You sure that you don't want a touch of the hard stuff Father."  
Father O'Connell: "No thank you, I don't drink, to be sure."  
Betty Drummond: "Alec, stop trying to corrupt the Father"  
Father O'Connell: "Oh that's OK Mrs Drummond I think I'm beyond corruption."  
Alec Drummond: "Well I'm going to have one. LAST chance Father"  
Betty Drummond: "I think I'll have one darling. Could you pour me a Gin"  
Father O'Connell: "Mrs Drummond.... and when did you start drinking Gin?  
Betty Drummond: "About 5 minutes ago."

The girls come back with tea for the Father who looks at it and pulls a face.

Father O'Connell: "On second thoughts, I think you can pour me a large whisky; a very large Whisky."  
Alec Drummond: "Ah...that's my boy Father, but I don't think we'll get through the bottle tonight."  
Hamilton: "Could you make that two please Alec?"  
Alec Drummond: "Coming up Hamilton"  
Alice: "Can we have a drink Mummy?"  
Betty Drummond: "Certainly not!"  
Alec Drummond: "What do you usually drink Alice?"

Alice looks back and forth between her mum and dad in worry and bewilderment.

Alice: "Err, err, Could I have a Gin and Tonic with mum?"  
Betty Drummond: "ALICE!!"  
Alec Drummond: "One Gin and Tonic coming up, and you Julia, what is your poison?"  
Julia: "Do you have any shooters Mr Drummond?"

Alec Drummond freezes then slowly turns around and looks at Julia.

Julia: "Err... I meant I'll also have a Gin and tonic if I may."  
Alec Drummond: "Coming up Julia."

The drinks are handed around whereupon  
Alec Drummond lifts his glass and says:  
"What shall we drink to?"  
Betty Drummond gives him a kick and says:  
"Whatever"  
Hamilton: "Life after death"  
Father O'Connell: "Salvation"  
Alice: "That this whole thing is a terrible mistake and doesn't happen"  
Julia: "Yes"  
Alec Drummond: "Yes what, Julia?"  
Julia looking sheepish: "Yes please? ..... I don't think I understood the question."

Alec Drummond: "What do you want to toast?"  
Julia: "Cheese?? ..... Sorry.... All of them. Everything you all said."  
Alice: "Well done Julia."  
Alec Drummond: "Well I'm going to toast to the hope that we are all not toast after this"  
Alice: "How droll daddy, I wish you'd grow up some time"  
Betty Drummond: "No Alice, I think perhaps for once in his life he may be correct"

They all raise their glasses and say:  
"Toast..... and the lack of it"

Father O'Connell's drink does not touch side as he throws it down his throat.  
Hamilton takes a good drink then shakes his head profusely as it hits the spot.  
The girls take a sip and smile at each other.

Betty Drummond takes a good swig and Sighs:  
"That's better"

Alec Drummond just takes a normal drink and looks around at the others a laughs at their reactions.

Alec Drummond: "Same again everyone?"

Everyone nods in approval as they finish their drink.

Alec Drummond: "So Father, I'm sure that was better than the old communion wine"  
Father O'Connell: "We'll talk about that Mr Drummond after you refill my glass"

Alec Drummond goes around filling the glasses while everyone sits in silence. Father O'Connell downs his almost before Alec can take the bottle away from the glass. Alec is startled and jumps back and stares in bewilderment at the Father's actions. Father O'Connell jumps out of his seat giving everyone a fright then proceeds to wander around the room with his head down and giving it the occasional shake.

Changing the subject, Alec turns to the others.

Alec Drummond: "So" pause  
"You know the crazy thing is that petrol was due to go up at 12 tonight and so I filled the car up this morning"  
Julia: "Shame, you could have saved all of that money"

Alec Drummond squirms his face and says:  
"Yes .... Julia" whilst everyone else just chuckles.

Alec Drummond: "So Julia, how long have you worked in the flower shop?"  
Julia: "Nearly two years now. Jenny Rodgers is retiring soon and I'm hoping that they make me the manager."

Hamilton chuckles while Alice looks on in disgust. Father O'Connell is not even listening. He's got his head down and is miles away.