LAST HAPPY NEW YEAR

Written by

Cody Brotter

cody@bu.edu
914.439.3652
FADE IN:

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

MONICA NEEDHAM, 12, a redheaded and freckled late bloomer with a mouth full of braces, sits alone in an aisle seat. She looks sadly at a BOY’S HAND as it squeezes a GIRL’S tightly.

We’re on a bus full of rambunctious MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS of all awkward shapes and sizes. Some play with their Game Boys, others with their Tamagachis. An elderly BUS DRIVER looks like he has the desire to crash but lacks the energy.

NOAH NEEDHAM, 14, a redheaded and freckled early bloomer with a face full of acne, sits alone in a window seat. His headphones travel from his CD Walkman to his giant curly mop. In his notebook, he writes the words “NOAH + BRITNEY” inside of a heart.

Noah looks out the window at New York City. On the road, a car with a “Sore/Loserman 2000” bumper sticker HONKS at one with a “Nader” sticker. On the sidewalk, a scary old man with a big beard, THE PROPHET, holds a cardboard sign that reads:

1999: THE LAST HAPPY NEW YEAR

Noah and The Prophet make eye contact. Noah jolts and lets out an involuntary high-pitched SHRIEK. He ducks his head below the window. The bus passes. Noah takes a deep breath.

He looks pensively at the heart he’s drawn in the notebook on his lap. Just as his eyes begin to zone in on the page...

CRUNCH (O.S.)

Whatcha listenin’ to there, Big Needham?

He looks up at a muscular 8th grade bully named CRUNCH. Noah quickly closes his notebook and takes off his headphones.

NOAH

Nothing, Crunch. Can you just leave me alone? It’s like the last day before break.

Crunch turns to his jock cronies, FREEZE and BIG RIP.

CRUNCH

Yo, Freeze! Big Rip! I got Big Needham’s CD Walkman.

BIG RIP

It’s probably the Backstreet Boys.
NOAH
Honestly, guys, just please --

Crunch opens the Walkman.

CRUNCH
No fucking way.

BUS DRIVER
Language.

FREEZE
Holy shit.

BUS DRIVER
Language.

Noah sinks in his seat as if it’s the end of the world.

BIG RIP
What is it?

Crunch displays the open Walkman for the whole bus to see. It’s “...Baby One More Time,” this year’s Britney Spears CD.

BIG RIP (CONT’D)
Britney?! Are you kidding me?!

Freeze, Crunch, and Big Rip explode with laughter. Some middle school CHEERLEADERS giggle with judgment.

FREEZE
You faggot!

NOAH
Yeah, I’m a huge fag, now can I please have my Walkman back?

CRUNCH
No probelmo, Carrot Top.

Crunch hands the Walkman to Noah but hands the Britney CD to Big Rip. The boys SING as they play hot potato with the CD:

FREEZE
My loneliness! Is killing me!

BIG RIP
Killin’ me!

CRUNCH
I must confess! I still believe!
BIG RIP
Still believe!

Big Rip misses the pass. Britney crashes to the floor.

BIG RIP (CONT’D)

Woops.

Some “OOH”s as Noah drops to the ground to pick up the two split pieces of the CD. It looks like a broken heart.

Monica wakes up from staring enviously at some Cheerleaders.

MONICA
Is that my “...Baby One More Time?”

CRUNCH
Well Holy Millennial Day! Big Needham stole a Britney CD from Little Needham!

Students on the bus LAUGH. Noah turns beet red on the floor.

FREEZE
Look at that disgusted face on your baby sister, Big Needham! She looks like she just got her period!

CHEERLEADER
Nah, she hasn’t gotten it yet.

More “OOH”s and laughs. Monica turns beet red in her seat.

A SCREECH. Noah holds the CD pieces as the bus brakes abruptly. It sends him flying into a Cheerleader’s seat.

NOAH
Holy shit.

BUS DRIVER
Language.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Monica storms out. Noah looks humiliated as he follows.

BUS DRIVER
Merry Christmas. And a Happy New Fears!

The bus speeds off. Noah and Monica walk on opposite parts of the sidewalk, making sure to stay clear of each other.
Monica walks into a shabby apartment building. She closes the door before Noah can even reach it.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - EVENING

Nearly empty. Christmas MUSIC and Christmas decorations.

Monica stares miserably at her full plate of food. Noah eats with the anxiety level of a squirrel. ADAM and EVELYN -- middle-aged, middle class, redheaded, and freckled -- eat in total silence. Adam chugs beer. Evelyn gulps wine.

EVELYN
(finishing a sip)
Oh, that reminds me.

Everyone looks up at her with confusion.

EVELYN (CONT’D)
Because of what happened with Daddy and Dialectric, we can’t really do Hanukkah this year.

Adam goes back to his food and beer.

EVELYN (CONT’D)
But is there something little you each want for the first night?

MONICA
Noah broke my Britney Spears CD, so I need another one.

EVELYN
Noah, why would you steal that CD?

ADAM
Noah, why would you listen to that CD?

MONICA
’Cause he has a demented crush on her.

Noah shoots her a look and angrily grabs his glass of soda.

ADAM
You know she’s gonna be staying at the Millennial this New Year’s? Not even doing the Dick Clark show in Times Square.

Noah spits out his soda at the news. Everyone turns to him.
NOAH

'Scuse me.

Adam and Evelyn go back to their food and drinks.

NOAH (CONT’D)
The... the Hilton in Battery Park?

Monica rolls her eyes.

ADAM
Remember the hotel I stayed at when
Dialectric was installing the new
digital TV antennas in the North
Tower of the Trade Center?

Noah nods enthusiastically. Adam belches.

ADAM (CONT’D)
Yeah. That’s the one.

Adam dives into his absurdly messy spare ribs.

MONICA
Is it true about New Year’s?

Adam looks up. He’s covered in sauce.

ADAM
What, that the two-digit
abbreviation for a four-digit year
is like a ticking time bomb for a
program function to miscalculate
the difference between the 31st of
December and the 1st of January as
negative 100 days instead of just
one day, which will result in a
data storage collapse for digital
and non-digital documentation in
every server, type of electricity,
and form of technology?

A beat.

MONICA
Yeah. That’s the one.

ADAM

EVELYN

Maybe. No.

EVELYN

Probably not.
Possibly.

EVELYN
Don’t be an idiot, honey.

ADAM
Don’t call me an idiot, honey.

EVELYN
Don’t call me honey, idiot.

Adam and Evelyn eat angrily. Noah and Monica look miserable.

EVELYN (CONT’D)
Anyway. We’re going to Mr. and Mrs. Findemundo’s apartment for a New Year’s Eve soirée. So Monica, your older brother is going to baby-sit you for the night.

NOAH
What?

MONICA
Mom, we’re like two years apart.

EVELYN
It’ll bring the two of you closer together. Be your sister’s keeper.

MONICA
I don’t want a keeper.

NOAH
I don’t wanna keep her.

EVELYN
Unless you each have some non-alcoholic party to go to, it’s not okay for either of you to be home alone on the eve of Y2K, okay?

MONICA
This is bullshit!

ADAM
Language.

EVELYN
Language.

Adam and Evelyn resume eating and drinking in silence. Noah chugs soda like it’s one of Adam’s beers. Monica resumes pouting at her untouched food. A WAITRESS walks over with the check and four fortune cookies.
Merry Christmas.

INT. SUPERMARKET AISLE - NIGHT

Noah looks at his fortune. It reads:

TIME IS RUNNING OUT. DO NOT LET LOVE SLIP FROM YOUR GRASP.

He turns it around. Above some lucky numbers:

LEARN CHINESE – DOOMSDAY = 末日 (MÒRÌ)

Noah looks up directly from the fortune to the magazine rack. His eyes lock with those of Britney Spears on the famous *Rolling Stone* magazine cover.

She’s lying on a bed in her bra. She has one hand on the phone and the other on a Teletubbie doll. Below her name:

INSIDE THE HEART, MIND & BEDROOM OF A TEEN DREAM

Noah thinks hard for a beat.

INT. SUPERMARKET CASH REGISTER – MOMENTS LATER

Adam plops canned goods and water bottles onto the counter.

    NOAH
    Wait!

Noah rushes over and slams down a map of New York.

    NOAH (CONT’D)
    Hanukkah?

Adam looks at him strangely.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nickelodeon posters on the wall. Nintendo 64 on the ground. A Furbie on the desk. Noah sits on his tiny bed. He’s drawing lines to the World Trade Center on his new map.

    EVELYN (O.S.)
    Hey, Cain and Abel! We’re going to the Findemundos!
ADAM (O.S.)
And if Armageddon’s tonight, take out those cans and water bottles!

Evelyn and Adam BICKER on their way out. Noah runs over to a drawer. He grabs his fortune, a plastic watch, and the CD case for “...Baby One More Time.” He looks at the schoolgirl on the cover with all the vulnerability in the world.

EXT. APARTMENT KITCHENETTE - MOMENTS LATER

A Windows 95 desktop computer sits next to canned goods and water bottles. Monica stares with terror at a tiny TV. It’s Peter Jennings in the “Millennium Command Center” on “ABC 2000 Today.” Noah runs down the stairs.

NOAH
Happy New Year, sis. Good luck with the apocalypse.

He grabs the keys.

MONICA
Whoa, where are you going?

NOAH

MONICA
But 8th graders are? You’re supposed to watch me, remember?

NOAH
You don’t need me to baby-sit you, remember?

MONICA
I want to go on an adventure! And you heard mom -- I can’t be here alone when the world explodes! Lemme get my bag. B-R-B.

NOAH
Monica, I can’t deal with you right now! Time is running out! And... well I can’t just die without kissing a girl, okay? I can’t just let love just slip from my grasp!

MONICA
Wow, how romantic. You sound like a fortune cookie.
Noah heads for the door.

MONICA (CONT’D)
Noah. Don’t make me call mom and
dad right now.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREETS - NIGHT
Noah walks briskly with his head in his map. Monica tries to
catch up as she shoves the CD case in her bag.

MONICA
Can’t we take a taxi?

NOAH
It’s New Year’s Eve in New York
City. It’ll take too many hours and
too many dollars. We just gotta
make it further Downtown. To the
Financial District.

MONICA
And what’s your big plan then? To
be the middle school boyfriend of
the biggest teen sensation of the
20th century? Seriously, what the
fuck are you expecting?

NOAH
Hey. That’s no language for a
twelve year old. And yes, that’s
exactly what I’m expecting. Or at
least a midnight kiss! I just...
feel like I need to hold her hand
when... the world ends. All right?

He checks his watch and speeds up. Monica catches her breath.

EXT. FINANCIAL DISTRICT - NIGHT
It’s quieter around here. Monica and Noah skirt past the
occasional millionaire and the occasional homeless person.

MONICA
Noah, you’re fourteen years old.

NOAH
Ya. And she’s seventeen. Mom and
dad are like six years apart.
MONICA
Yeah, and that’s worked out wonderfully.

EXT. CHURCH STREET - NIGHT
Noah and Monica swim through the obstacle course of a few drunken PEDESTRIANS.

MONICA
Are you sure it’s supposed to be around here?

Noah scratches his head at the map. He nods.

NOAH
We should be by Wall Street. All we gotta do is look for the two --

Noah looks up. The North and South Tower of the World Trade Center stand tall.

MONICA
Shouldn’t Millennium have two n’s?

Noah turns to Monica. She nods to the beautiful and misspelled Millenium Hilton Hotel.

INT. MILLENIUM HILTON - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER
Noah and Monica slowly enter and take in the beautiful view.

MONICA
Now what, idiot? You wanna ask the Concierge to direct you to her suite?

NOAH
Don’t call me an idiot. Miss Lewinsky.

MONICA
Don’t call me Miss Lewinsky. Idiot.

NOAH
C’mon. Let’s roll.

INT. MILLENIUM HILTON - ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER
Monica follows Noah into the elevator. GUESTS push buttons. Noah starts pressing all of them. Guests look down at him.
NOAH
(quietly)
Sorry.

Monica covers her face. Noah’s finger pushes the top floor. No light. Again. It won’t light up. Noah turns to Monica.

INT. MILLENIUM HILTON - 54TH FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Monica and Noah rush out of the elevator and run to the staircase. Guests shake their heads.

INT. MILLENIUM HILTON - STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER

Monica holds onto her bag as she tries to keep up with Noah.

MONICA
Noah, this is illegal! The elevator won’t get off there for a reason.

NOAH
Illegal? It’s almost eleven, Monica. You heard dad, it’s a ticking time bomb. No time for laws. You’ll understand love once you finally go through puberty.

Noah pushes the door to no avail. The two then try together.

INT. MILLENIUM HILTON - 55TH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Noah and Monica crash onto the floor. Noah gets up quickly.

NOAH
Quick. Get up.

Noah looks down.

NOAH (CONT’D)
Wow... what’s with the blood on the pants? What’d you just fall on?

MONICA
I dunno... nothing, I -- oh. Oh my god. Oh my fucking god.

Noah spots two muscular male GUARDS at the end of the hall.

NOAH
What? Does it hurt?
Monica shakes her head. Her eyes start to swell with tears.

MONICA
It wasn’t supposed to happen like this.

NOAH
What wasn’t?

She looks up at him with a frightful look.

NOAH (CONT’D)
Oh. Oh Jesus.

The Guards spot them. Noah looks up. They’re heading over.

NOAH (CONT’D)
Stay, just -- stay there. It’s going to be a-okay, okay? I’m gonna go get help and --

MONICA
Ugh, just do it quickly! Quick!

Noah spastically looks around and moves around before running back down the staircase. Monica breathes heavily.

GUARD
Excuse me, ma’am, what in the universe are you doing up here?

Monica looks overwhelmed.

BRITNEY (O.S.)
Guys, what’s going on? We ready?

Monica looks up at the silky smooth LEGS of BRITNEY SPEARS.

MONICA
No. Way.

EXT. CHURCH STREET - NIGHT

Noah is on the run. He hops around garbage cans and beer bottles. He checks the watch in his pocket.

NOAH
C’mon. Gimme a sign...

Suddenly, The Prophet stops Noah in his path. He’s holding a cardboard sign with the handwritten words:

IT ALL ENDS @ MIDNIGHT 1.1.00
Noah jolts and lets out an involuntary high-pitched SHRIEK.

NOAH (CONT’D)
You again. How’d you get here?

THE PROPHET
Century Date Change. Faulty Date Logic. Why! Two! ‘Kay!

Noah’s eyes bug.

THE PROPHET (CONT’D)
So drops the ball. So drops the earth.

Noah spots a convenience store. He runs around The Prophet.

THE PROPHET (CONT’D)
You can run from the millennium bug, young man! But you cannot hide from the end of days!

INT. MILLENIUM HILTON - 55TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Britney’s LEGS kneel down to the floor. Monica looks like she’s about to pass out.

MONICA
This is humiliating. This is -- it’s. This is my first.

BRITNEY
You poor thing! And there’s not a single girl around. Follow me to the suite real quick. I got you.

MONICA
Can you -- I just -- this is gonna sound weird, okay? But can you please just wait for my big brother? He’s a huge fan. I mean I am too but like not in the way he is. See, he like love loves you --

Britney laughs.

BRITNEY
C’mon, silly. Let’s get you some pads. Welcome to womanhood.

Britney’s HAND grabs Monica’s.
INT. MILLENIUM HILTON - LOBBY - NIGHT
Noah breaks through the doors. He’s waving a box of tampons in the air. Hotel Guests and EMPLOYEES turn with concern.

NOAH
Hold it!
Noah slides through the elevator doors. A deep breath. Guests look down at him. This is awkward. The doors close.

INT. MILLENIUM HILTON - STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER
Noah pants up the stairs holding the tampons like a torch.

NOAH
I’m coming, Monica! Just stay where you are!

INT. MILLENIUM HILTON - 55TH FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER
Noah forcefully breaks through the doors. He waves the box.

NOAH
I got ‘em! I got --

Monica’s standing in the hallway, surrounded by the Guards. She’s smiling and wearing Britney’s clothes. Noah stops.

NOAH (CONT’D)
What are you... wearing?

MONICA
Um.

Monica gulps.

MONICA (CONT’D)
Britney Spears’ underwear?

Noah drops the box.

EXT. MILLENIUM HILTON - ROOFTOP - NIGHT
Noah sits with Monica on the roof. They face the Twin Towers.

NOAH
I don’t know which is more unbelievable.
(MORE)
NOAH (CONT'D)
That by mere seconds I missed the
love of my life or that Britney
Spears just helped you survive your
first period.

MONICA
Well thank God! I can’t believe you
bought tampons. You don’t use
tampons for your first period.

NOAH
How was I supposed to know?

Noah puts his head down as Monica chuckles.

MONICA (CONT’D)
I’m sorry, Noah, I tried to get her
to stay! She was late for her
little sister. They’re gonna watch
the ball drop. Oh!

Monica digs into her bag and pulls out the CD case.

MY DEAREST NOAH, SEE YOU IN THE NEXT CENTURY :)

Britney’s classic signature -- a heart, her name in cursive,
and a lipstick kiss -- glistens on the other half.

Noah starts to smile. He looks around the skycrapers. Monica
looks down below.

MONICA (CONT’D)
Noah. It’s happening.

Noah opens up “...Baby One More Time.” The two halves of the
CD are inside. On one side of the crack, a handwritten note:

Noah gulps. He checks his watch. Monica breathes deeply.
Below, Pedestrians CHANT the countdown to the apocalypse.

PEDESTRIANS
Ten! Nine! Eight!

Noah tries to breathe slowly. He turns to Monica. She’s
staring into the World Trade Center with fear. Noah reaches
over and grabs her HAND. She squeezes back tightly.

PEDESTRIANS (CONT’D)
Five! Four! Three! Two! One!

CUT TO BLACK.