

New Year's Resolution

DE #: 16

Writer #: 1

FADE IN:

INT. ARCHITECT'S CUBICLE-DAY

Rolls of blue prints line the shelves. Half finished drawings are taped to a drawing desk. Incomplete sketches on tracing paper are tacked crookedly to the walls. Clutter lines every inch of the office.

PAULA CORINTH fits in with her messy office. Her clothes rumpled and ill fitting over her frumpy frame. Her hair sits messily in a bun on top of her head.

NARRATOR

Meet Paula Corinth, struggling  
Architect.

Paula stares blankly at her computer. A square box is the only thing on the screen. She adds a door to it. Still boring. Heavy sigh.

NARRATOR

All of her life, Paula has agonized  
about being different...

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. GIRL'S BATHROOM-DAY

YOUNG PAULA, twelve years old, no make-up, walks in. A group of MEAN GIRLS line the mirrors. They all put on heavy make-up and have pony tails on the sides of their heads with a hot pink streak in it. Paula is visibly self-conscious. She slinks by them into a stall and locks the door. She pulls a Zinger snack cake out of her pocket and starts eating it. She watches them through the crack in the stall door.

MEAN GIRL 1

(whispering)

She's getting a little pudgy.

MEAN GIRL 2

(whispering)

Pudgy Paula.

They all giggle. In the stall, Paula's shoulders slump.

NARRATOR

And when she did try to "fit in",  
they despised her even more for  
attempting to change.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA-DAY

Paula approaches the mean girl's table. Paula now has the ponytail with a bright pink highlight and is carrying a tray with a salad on it. The girls stop talking and stare at her.

MEAN GIRL

Pudgy Paula is eating a salad. I didn't know you could get that fat from eating salads.

The other girls all laugh.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. ARCHITECT CUBICLE-DAY

The little girl's laughter still echoes. Paula takes a big bite of a Zinger.

NARRATOR

But the one unchangeable certainty is that nothing is certain or unchangeable.

A knock on her cubicle snaps Paula out of it. She throws her Zinger into the trash and turns to VERN MANZER. Vern blows on his cup of coffee. He's a tall attractive man, but the pinky ring hints at his cheesiness.

PAULA CORINTH

Did you need something, Vern?

He leans sexily on the door jamb-misses and catches himself.

VERN MANZER

Is that your submittal for the Takashimi project?

Vern strolls over. Paula tries to quickly shut off her screen. She's not quick enough. He looks it over.

PAULA CORINTH

I'm not done.

VERN MANZER

Obviously. Very, uh...Frank Lloyd...Wrong!

Vern over-laughs.

VERN MANZER (CONT'D)  
 Finished my design last week. Boss  
 loved it. Said it will blow  
 Takashimi away. But keep working  
 on yours. Any big plans for New  
 Year's Eve tonight? Me, I got  
 Skynryd tickets.

PAULA CORINTH  
 Oh, yeah. Big...party. Big.  
 Gonna be fun...

CUT TO:

INT. GRAMMA CORINTH'S APARTMENT-NIGHT

Loud, open mouthed SNORING. Paula looks over at GRAMMA  
 CORINTH asleep in her recliner. Gramma wears a night shirt,  
 her thick glasses sit crooked on her face.

Paula sits on the couch in a puffy robe eating an ice cream  
 sandwich. A blob falls out and lands on the note pad in her  
 lap. The heading reads:

New Year's Resolutions

She wipes the blob off her list with her finger and licks it.  
 Paula writes at the top of the list:

Get my own place.

She looks up to the TV.

TV  
 The ball will drop shortly...

PAULA CORINTH  
 Gramma! Gramma!

Gramma sits bolt upright in her chair.

GRAMMA  
 (yelling)  
 Happy New Year!

PAULA CORINTH  
 It's not time yet. You wanted me to  
 wake you before the ball dropped.

Gramma gets her bearings and straightens her glasses.

GRAMMA  
 Oh...how's your list coming?

Paula shows it to her. Gramma studies the list.

GRAMMA (CONT'D)  
Your grandfather used to be so good  
at keeping all of his New Year's  
resolutions. In fact...

She gets up and begins rummaging through a bookshelf. She  
finds a thick well worn Bible.

GRAMMA (CONT'D)  
He always kept it in here.

Gramma flips through the pages as she walks back to Paula. A  
CARD slips out and flutters into Paula's lap. The card is on  
thick paper and has ornate calligraphy writing on it.

TV  
...And the ball is dropping! 10,  
9, 8, 7, 6, 5...

Paula picks up the card.

PAULA CORINTH  
(reading)  
"A Resolve for the New Year...

TV  
...4...

PAULA CORINTH  
...I will this day, try to live a  
simple and serene life...

TV  
...3...

PAULA CORINTH  
...to be content with those things  
given to me...

TV  
...2...

PAULA CORINTH  
...But to strive for change where  
change is needed...

TV  
...1...

PAULA CORINTH  
 ...with a child-like trust that God  
 will show me the difference."

The lights flicker for a moment and the TV cuts out.  
 Blackness.

NARRATOR  
 Walt Whitman called Midnight- the  
 hour of the soul. For it is a time  
 of transition-from one day to the  
 next. A moment of change.

Everything comes back on. Paula glances around.

TV  
 ...Happy New Year!

The song *Auld Lang Syne* plays from the TV.

PAULA CORINTH  
 Happy New Year, Gramma.

She looks over and Gramma is asleep in her chair again.  
 Paula smiles, yawns and leans her head back on the couch.  
 She closes her eyes.

*Auld Lang Syne* echoes into silence.

PAULA'S EYES flicker open. She focuses and looks around.

INT. COOL BEDROOM-MORNING

Paula sits up in a bed. She looks around the clean,  
 contemporary bedroom.

PAULA CORINTH  
 Gramma?

No response. She cautiously gets out of bed. There are  
 pictures of her and friends, architecture books, mail  
 addressed to her, and sketches she drew. It is definitely  
 her place. She is perplexed.

INT. COOL BATHROOM-CONTINUOUS

Paula splashes cold water onto her face. She looks up at  
 herself in the mirror. Taped in the corner is her  
 grandfather's card and her New Year's Resolution list. She  
 pulls it off the mirror.

PAULA CORINTH (CONT'D)  
 My list...

She scans over her resolutions.

PAULA CORINTH (CONT'D)  
 (reading)  
 Get my own place.

She takes another look around the room.

PAULA CORINTH (CONT'D)  
 Really? Seriously?

She reads the next item on the list.

PAULA CORINTH (CONT'D)  
 (reading)  
 Lose twenty pounds.

She backs up and looks at herself. She turns side ways.

PAULA CORINTH (CONT'D)  
 No way!

Paula nervously steps onto a scale. The numbers spin. She closes her eyes. She opens one eye—then both and then squeals with delight. She quickly looks at the list again.

PAULA CORINTH (CONT'D)  
 (reading)  
 Dress nicer.

INT. CLOSET—CONTINUOUS

She opens the closet's double doors—she gasps. Its huge and packed with beautiful clothes and rows and rows of shoes. She touches them all.

PAULA CORINTH (CONT'D)  
 What was next?

She lifts the note up to read.

PAULA CORINTH (CONT'D)  
 (reading)  
 Get organized.

Paula lowers the note and she is looking at her desk in...

PAULA'S CUBICLE—DAY

She inspects her perfectly organized cubicle. Everything in its place and labeled. Sketches complete and colored. Paula smiles and looks at the list.

PAULA CORINTH (CONT'D)  
 (reading)  
 Be more social.

INT. ARCHITECT OFFICE HALL-DAY

Paula walks with confidence down the hall. She is decked out in her new clothes. GUYS lean out of their offices to wave at her. She smiles back. A WOMAN runs up and hugs her for no apparent reason. The JANITOR standing with a plunger gives her the thumbs up. She gives him the thumbs up back.

She looks down at her list at the last item. She reads:

Learn another language.

CRASH! Paula runs right into someone rounding the corner. Papers fly everywhere and she ends up on the floor. She looks over to see a flustered MR. TAKASHIMI, a handsome Asian man sharply dressed.

PAULA CORINTH (CONT'D)  
 Mr. Takashimi! I'm so sorry!

MR. TAKASHIMI  
 It is okay. It was an accident.

PAULA CORINTH  
 I am so clumsy sometimes. I swear all day my head has been in the clouds. I apologize.

Mr. Takashimi helps her up.

MR. TAKASHIMI  
 Apology accepted.

DON CAPERTON, Paula's boss, a distinguished looking Architect, walks over to her with Vern glued to his side.

DON CAPERTON  
 Since when do you speak fluent Japanese?

PAULA CORINTH  
 Huh?  
 (in Japanese)  
 I don't speak Japanese?

MR. TAKASHIMI  
 (in Japanese)  
 No. You are too critical. Your pronunciation is superb!  
 (MORE)



MR. TAKASHIMI (cont'd)  
 Will you be submitting a design for  
 my building tomorrow?

PAULA CORINTH  
 (in Japanese)  
 I am...I am working on one, I  
 should say.

MR. TAKASHIMI  
 (in Japanese)  
 I look forward to seeing it then.  
 Until tomorrow.

He bows to her. Don Caperton smiles at Paula and shows Mr. Takashimi and his entourage out. Vern stares at her with his mouth open.

Paula does a little dance and smiles at Vern. He glares.

VERN MANZER  
 That skirt kinda makes your butt  
 look big.

Vern walks off-damage done. YOUNG PAULA stands alone with her pig tailed hair and salad tray in hand.

NARRATOR  
 Words are funny things. They can  
 touch hearts, inspire greatness,  
 and even end wars. But sometimes,  
 they can cut right through you.

INT. PAULA'S CUBICLE-DAY

Paula stares at her open drawer full of Zingers. She holds her grandfather's card in her hand. Paula glares at it-it did not solve everything. She looks back at the Zingers. She throws her Grandfather's card face down on her desk and reaches for a Zinger. Her eyes narrow. Hand written on the back of the card is a Bible verse:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 2 Corinthians 5:17

Paula looks back at the Zingers.

NARRATOR  
 It was in that instant, staring at  
 those partially hydrogenated  
 soybean, corn syrup and bleached  
 wheat flour cakes- she realized  
 that as much as she had changed on  
 the outside-she was still just that  
 goeey, sugary cream in the center.  
 (MORE)

NARRATOR (cont'd)

If she was going to change, really change, change for herself and not others-it had to begin on the inside.

Paula dumps the drawer of Zingers into the trash. She looks at the finished drawings of the Takashimi project. Paula glances back at the verse. Two words stand out:

New Creation

She dumps all the drawings in the trash too.

She sits down at her drawing desk. Before her, a clean, white sheet of paper. She begins drawing. Her hand quickly traces across the paper, filling in details.

Time passes quickly. Lights go out around her in the office. It grows dark outside, her light is the only one still on.

She leans back to look at the finished rendering. Mr. Takashimi's head leans in- examining her drawing in the...

INT. BOARDROOM-DAY

Mr. Takashimi studies it. He then moves to Vern's. Vern stands by his, Paula by hers. Mr. Takashimi seems to be studying Vern's very carefully. Mr. Takashimi points at Vern's design.

MR. TAKASHIMI

This one, this one...

Vern's chest swells and he begins rocking on his heels. He raises his eyebrows at Paula and winks at her.

MR. TAKASHIMI (CONT'D)

... doesn't seem to follow any of the design specs I had sent to you. It is like you ignored all the elements that were important to me.

Vern's shoulder's slump. He drops into a chair in defeat.

MR. TAKASHIMI (CONT'D)

Ms. Corinth's plan is unique in design and quite breath taking. She seemed to put a lot of thought into this project.

Mr. Takashimi shoots a disapproving look at Vern. Paula smiles. She looks at Vern. Where Vern was sitting is a YOUNG VERN. A pudgy little boy eating a corny dog. Paula recognizes the look on his face.

PAULA CORINTH

Mr. Takashimi, there are several elements of Vern's design I like. The interior courtyard and radius roof are very functional. Perhaps we could blend some of those elements into my design?

Older Vern looks at her, confused.

MR. TAKASHIMI

As Project Manager, I will leave that to your discretion. I trust you, Ms. Corinth.

PAULA CORINTH

*Domo ari gato.*

Mr. Takashimi looks over her drawings one more time.

MR. TAKASHIMI

On a refurbish like this one, it is difficult to maintain the integrity of the original exterior shell without sacrificing on the inside. You managed to completely redesign the interior and make it more efficient and contemporary. It must have been very difficult. Well done.

Her eyes tear up. She bows to him. Speechless.

NARRATOR

Meet the new Paula Corinth, up and coming architect. An architect of days yet to come.

FADE TO BLACK.