

A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT CHRISTMAS SONG

TUNE: "NELL FLAHERTY'S DRAKE" / "BOLD THADY QUILL"

COME LISTEN AWHILE WHILE I TELL YOU A STORY
OF CHRISTMAS, THAT DAY FILLED WITH LOVE AND WITH JOY
I'LL TELL OF A HOLIDAY BACK IN THE FIFTIES
THE DAYS OF MY YOUTH - I WAS ONLY A BOY!
MY PARENTS HAD THOUGHT, FOR WHATEVER THE REASON,
THAT ENOUGH WAS ENOUGH AS THE GREAT DAY DREW NEAR
WE'D CELEBRATE QUIETLY, KEEP A LOW PROFILE
AND AVOID THE INSANITY THAT ENDED EACH YEAR

BUT ESCAPE FROM CONFUSION WOULD PROVE NOT SO EASY
AND THEIR STATED RESOLVE WAS SOON PUT TO THE TEST
IT BEGAN WITH THE CARDS: FOR THIS CHRISTMAS, ASKED MOTHER,
CAN WE SEND OUT A FEW AND FORGET ALL THE REST?
IT SEEMED A GOOD PLAN TILL SHE GOT TO THE DETAILS
OF DECIDING WHAT NAMES WOULD BE DROPPED FROM "THE LIST"
THERE WERE LATE NIGHTS, BAD MEMORIES, AND HEATED DISCUSSIONS
AND THE FINAL RESULT? - OPPORTUNITY MISSED!

UNDAUNTED, THEY SOON FACED THE QUESTION OF PRESENTS
"TOO MUCH MONEY'S BEING SPENT!" THEY BOTH SEEMED TO AGREE
AND SOON 'T WAS DECIDED - WITHOUT JUVENILE INPUT ONE
BIG GIFT, ONE LITTLE, FOR MY BROTHER AND ME
BUT OF THIS FINE SCHEME THEY'D FORGOTTEN TO TELL US
AND OUR SANTA REQUESTS WERE STILL THREE PAGES LONG
...ON THE MORN 'NEATH THE TREE THERE WERE DOZENS OF BOXES
AND TWO TIRED PARENTS WOND'RING WHAT HAD GONE WRONG

THEY HAD PUT OUT THE WORD BACK IN EARLY DECEMBER
AND HOPED IT WOULD SPREAD FAR AND WIDE IN BOTH CLANS
THAT FOR CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR WE'D BE CRUISING THE OCEANS
-NO NEED TO HAVE US IN YOUR VISITING PLANS!
WELL IT WORKED LIKE A CHARM FOR ALMOST A WHOLE HOUR
AS WE GOT DRESSED FOR MASS ON THAT COLD CHRISTMAS DAY
WHAT CAR DID WE SPOT COMING DOWN THE STREET TOWARDS US
BUT THE GREEN OLDSMOBILE OF MY MOM'S COUSIN RAY?

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MY DAD FLASHED A SIGN AND WE FROZE IN OUR PLACES
THE DOORCHIMES AND KNOCKS WE'D BEEN TRAINED TO IGNORE
BUT MY KID BROTHER CRACKED AND HE STARTED TO WHIMPER
WITH HIS FACE IN A PILLOW AS HE LAY ON THE FLOOR
THEN ONE OF RAY'S KIDS SPOTTED US THRU THE WINDOW
AND CALLED HIS TWO SIBLINGS TO COME OVER AND SEE
WE HAD TO PRETEND THAT WE ALL WERE DELIGHTED
IT WAS TEN WHEN THEY SHOWED UP - THEY LEFT ABOUT THREE

NOW MY PARENTS HAD DECIDED WE'D BE GOING OUT FOR DINNER
TO GIVE MOM A REST WAS THE LAUDABLE PLAN
WE'D HEAD FOR OUR FAVORITE, THE NEW HONG KONG GARDENS
AND FEAST ON CHOP SUEY AND MOO GOO GAI PAN
INSTEAD SHE FED RAY AND HIS RAVENOUS COHORT
AND I LEARNED ON THAT CHRISTMAS WHAT "MIRACLE" MEANS
SINCE THAT'S WHAT IT TOOK TO FEED FIVE HUNGRY VISITORS
ON TWO PACKS OF HOT DOGS AND THREE CANS OF BEANS

YOU'VE NOW HEARD THE TALE OF A DIFFERENT CHRISTMAS
YOU'VE HAD A FEW LIKE IT, I'D ALMOST BE SURE
AND IT PROVES THAT IN SPITE OF OUR EFFORTS TO CHANGE IT
THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS WILL ALWAYS ENDURE
THE CARDS AND THE GIFTS AND THE DINNERS AND VISITS
WILL ALWAYS REFLECT THE DAY'S MESSAGE OF JOY:

THAT THE ESSENCE OF LOVE CAME TO DWELL HERE AMONG US
WHEN OUR LORD TOOK THE SHAPE OF A SWEET BABY BOY!

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!