

A NOTE OF EXPLANATION:

Long ago, before the days of mass communication, people entertained themselves at Christmas. Originally they made up little Mummer's Plays which they performed for their neighbors; going from door to door the way carolers do now. Later on, families gathered in the parlour to sing together or recite or read aloud. This piece is meant for those who miss the old days, and who might enjoy a little drama to put together at home.

A

MUMMER'S PLAY

A MERRIE INTERLUDE
FOR YOUR FAMILY TO DO AT CHRISTMAS

WORDS
by
Tom Jones

MUSIC
by
Harvey Schmidt

CAST

Oldest Child	Mother Christmas
Father Christmas	Youngest Child

SETTING

BY YOUR OWN CHRISTMAS TREE

TIME

SOMETIME WHEN THE TELEVISION IS TURNED OFF

Gather, Friends, around the room -
Accept our humble greeting!
And since we have no blazing yule,
Turn up the central heating!
Sing Fa la la la la, LA LA; WASSAIL:

Since Christmas Day's not far away -
For many blocks around us,
Our neighbors daily carols play
And Stereophonic sound us!
Sing Fa la la la la, LA LA; WASSAIL:

All up and down our busy town,
Cash registers are ringing!
On every television set, the net-
Work stars are singing!
Sing Fa la la la la la, LA LA:
Sing Fa la la la la la, LA LA:
SING FAA LAAA LAAAA
WAAAAA*****SSAIL

MOTHER CHRISTMAS

Here comes I, Old Mother Christmas!
I do hope you'll let me in.
In one hand I carries my little black book;
In the other, my fountain pen.

ALL

Step in, Mother Christmas!

MOTHER CHRISTMAS

It gives you a very strange sensation
When everyone in this great wide nation;
At least, everyone that you ever knew;
(And this actually includes parts of Europe too);
When every person you've ever met
Manages somehow NOT to forget
When holiday time is falling due,
To send a Christmas card to you.

On they come, like snowflakes falling,
In number that are quite appalling.
I see them in my nightmares, dreaming:
Photographs of families, beaming,
With inscriptions scrawled on postcard, glossy:
"From Maybeth, Junior, Dan and Flossie."
And I'm struck by a thought that chills me through:
Maybeth, Junior, Dan and Flossie WHO?

MOTHER CHRISTMAS (cont.)

They start when Christmas is months away.
(I once got one on Labor Day,
And believe me, it gives you a funny feeling
To get Christmas cards when your back is peeling!)
But generally speaking, around mid-November,
Everyone manages somehow to remember,
Or they hire detectives, like Peter Gunn,
To get the addresses of everyone.
They track you down, no matter how distant,
With a greeting that is most insistent
That their thoughts today are only of you,
Signed - "Minnie and I"; Question: Minne and you - WHO?

So deck the hall with Hallmark labels.
Deck the fireplace and the tables.
Deck the mirrors and bookcases,
AND the mantles, AND the vases,
And should you keep receiving more -
Why, deck the ceiling - and the floor!
And when it seems too much to bear,
Remember that someone in the great somewhere
Has just received a card from you;
Has opened it up and read it through;
Has read the inscription: "Merry Xmas from me";
Looked at the mark inquiringly,
And that someone is thinking - exactly like you - - -
"Merry Christmas from YOU" ? ? ?
You WHO ? ? ? Too.

FATHER CHRISTMAS

Here comes I, Old Father Christmas,
As weary as weary can be.
I went to a Christmas Party,
And I didn't come home till three.

ALL

Step in, Father Christmas!

FATHER CHRISTMAS

At the first Christmas party, my hostess gave to me:
A snifter full of brandy.

At the second Christmas party, my hostess gave to me:
Two buttered rums, and a snifter full of brandy.

At the third Christmas party, my hostess gave to me:
Three egg nogs, two buttered rums, and a snifter full of brandy.

At the fourth Christmas party, my hostess gave to me:
Four small liquors, three egg nogs, two buttered rums,
And a snifter full of brandy.

At the fifth Christmas party, my hostess gave to me:
Five mulled wines --- , four small liquors, three egg nogs,
Two buttered rums, and a snifter full of brandy.

And then all the Christmas parties just somehow seem to blur.
As well as I remember, though, they got much merrier.
They got so very merry that they started whizzing past
Like a nightmare, or a vision,
Or the Ghost of Christmas Past:
I seem to recall a popcorn ball
Which had been painted puce:
And lots and lots of cranberry sauce;
And a great big Christmas goose!
And peanut butter cookies
Made in every shape and size;
And lots of flaming puddings;
And lots of flaming pies;
And mincemeat brazed with raisins,
And fruitcake six feet tall,
Ten thousand pounds of ice cream!
- - - And I tried to eat it all!

And on the Twelfth Day of Christmas, my sweet wife gave
to me:
Twelve BROMO SELTZERS - eleven castor oils, ten ANACIN,
nine BUFFERIN -
Eight aspirin, seven vitamin, six VAPO-RUB, five tiny TUMS,
Four mouthwash, three ice packs, two doctor bills, - - -
And a huge pharmaceutical fee!

OLDEST CHILD

Here comes I, who hasn't been yet,
With a program schedule so I won't forget,
The radio listing is at my side,
And in my hand there's a TV Guide.

ALL

Step in, Oldest Child!

OLDEST CHILD

I wonder what children used to do
When there was no TV to tune in to.
How did they get through their vacations
Before the world had TV stations:
And how in the world did they entertain
Before they could tune in WAGON TRAIN?

It must have been strange, no panel quizzes;
No commercial where a bromo fizzes;
No Palladin; no Dinah Shore,
No Loretta Young whirling through the door;
No child on the screen to scream in glee:
"Look, Mom - no cavities in me!"
No lady in the ocean green
Feeling, "for the first time, REALLY CLEAN!"

Sometimes I think I'll never see
Anything except TV.
Unless of course a tube may blow out,
In which case I guess I'll go out -
Side and take a look around
To see if there's snow upon the ground.
As a matter of fact, that might be fun -
To go outside and laugh and run.
To cut and trim a Christmas tree.
To ice skate or to sleigh or ski.
To venture forth outside my door
All bundled up like an explorer.
To get a group for carol singing,
Or maybe do some doorbell ringing.

OLDEST CHILD (cont.)

As a matter of fact, that sounds okay!
I think I'll do those things someday.
I'd like to now - I really would,
But there's a program on that's really good.
So excuse me please; it's getting late - - -
Hey, somebody switch it to channel 8!

YOUNGEST CHILD

Here comes I, and since I'm small,
I am the very last of all.

ALL

Step in, Youngest Child!

YOUNGEST CHILD

There was a little baby born
Early Christmas Day.
And people came to see him
From miles and miles away.

The night was very cold outside,
And everyone felt bad;
But when they gave him presents
They suddenly felt glad.

Which teaches us a secret
About the way to live:
It's nice to get a present -
But it's nicer yet to give.

(THE YOUNGEST CHILD STEPS BACK. AND MOTHER
AND FATHER CHRISTMAS - WHO HAVE LISTENED
CAREFULLY TO THE YOUNG CHILD'S SPEECH -
STEP FORWARD NOW AND TAKE EACH OTHER BY THE
HAND.)

MOTHER CHRISTMAS

It's very easy to forget what Christmas is about.
You bind it up with tinsel, and let the spirit out.

FATHER CHRISTMAS

You get involved with parties;
You really don't know why.

MOTHER CHRISTMAS

You concentrate on Christmas cards,
And let the star go by.

FATHER CHRISTMAS

But Christmas has a mystery that cannot be defiled:
It's the time when wise men listen
To the wisdom of a child.

(AND - SOFTLY - THE PARENTS SING)

Come sit beside me while I wish you
Merry Christmas, Dear -
And thank you for your love.

The nicest gift that you could give
You gave to me all year.
So thank you for your love.

No bright surprise
Beneath the tree
Could mean so much
to me ---

That's why I want to say it now
So only you can hear
I thank you for you love.
I thank you for - - - your love.

(NOW ALL JOIN HANDS AND SING)

We thank you, God, that all of us
Can be together here
To thank you for your love.

We thank you, God, for telling us
That Spring is very near.
We thank you for your love.

ALL (cont.)

No bright surprise
Beneath the tree
Could mean so much
To me - - -

And that is why I say it now
So only you can hear:
I thank you for your love.
I thank you for - - - your love.

YOUNGEST CHILD

We've finished with our little play.
We hope that everybody may
Have a very merry Christmas Day.
God bless you all!
Amen.

ALL

Sing Fa la la la, LA LA!
Sing Fa la la la, LA LA!
Sing Fa la la la, la la, LA LA!
Sing Fa la la - - -
Wa - - - - - sail!