

SANTA'S COMIN'

Written by

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EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT

Christmas Eve.

Up and down the block multicolored lights and animated blow up characters string together a cheerful, bright atmosphere.

Except for one HOUSE.

Dark as coal in a tattered stocking.

EXT. DARK HOUSE - NIGHT

The neon glow of the houses around make this look like a black hole in space, sucking in all the holiday joy and cheer.

SCREECH!

A beat up PICKUP barrels onto the front lawn.

EXT. FRONT PORCH PICTURE WINDOW - SAME

TWO CHILDREN, a girl, DIAMOND(5) and a boy, CASPER JR.(10) peel back the curtains.

The multi-colored glow that washes their yard kiss their hope filled faces.

INT. PICK UP

The DRIVER, CASPER(30s), shoves open his door. Beer cans scatter out.

He fumbles to get his keys out of the ignition, loses them onto a tattered green and red gown laying on the floor of the passenger side.

Casper stares down at the keys for a moment. He reaches for them, snatches them off the gown. He pauses, allows his hand to fall back on to the dress, caresses it.

Casper sighs, grips the keys, turns towards the open door.

EXT. FRONT LAWN/PICTURE WINDOW

Diamond and Junior press against the window. Their eyes twinkle with anticipation.

After a few agonizing moments, Casper struggles out.

His first step crunches a can. He takes a staggered next step past the door, falls back against it.

The door slams shut, he collapses to the ground in his bed of aluminum fun.

The children's faces drop. They let the curtains fall.

EXT. FRONT LAWN - MOMENTS LATER

Diamond and Junior kneel down next to Casper.

JUNIOR
Told you he don't care nothin'
'bout Christmas.

Junior takes the keys from Casper, tosses them into the back of the pickup.

JUNIOR
Or us.

DIAMOND
Daddy.

Diamond pats her father's arm. Casper stirs, groans.

DIAMOND
Daddy.

JUNIOR
C'mon Dad we got to go in.

Diamond looks to the sky.

DIAMOND
Yeah. Santa's comin'.

Casper grunts out a laugh.

CASPER
Santa.

They drag Casper up. He leans on them, pushes off the truck, staggers forward.

They fight to keep him up as they head towards the house. Beer cans scatter under their feet.

CASPER (SINGS)
Better watch out. Better not pout.

He stops, looks groggily at Diamond.

CASPER
Better not cry. Telling you why.

JUNIOR
C'mon, Dad.

Junior moves them onward. Casper halts. Tries to focus on Junior.

CASPER
Hey. Hey.

Junior turns away from his foul breath. Casper catches it, forces Junior to look at him.

CASPER
Don't turn your face from me boy.
Better show some respect.

Junior yanks away, stomps off.

JUNIOR
Show yourself some respect.

Casper almost tumbles. Diamond does her best to keep him up but they collapse together.

DIAMOND
Daddy!

She gets back up, pulls on her Dad.

DIAMOND
Junior help.

Junior turns around. He slow burns. Doesn't budge.

Casper rolls up on his hands and knees. Buries his head in the grass.

CASPER (SINGS)
Santa *ain't* comin' to town.

DIAMOND
Don't say that, Daddy. He'll hear you.

CASPER (SINGS LOUDER)
Santa *ain't* comin' to town!

Diamond begins to cry. Junior bolts to them.

JUNIOR
Dad. Stop it! You're makin' her
cry.

Junior puts his arm around Diamond and guides her back
towards the house as she weeps.

JUNIOR
He don't know what he's sayin',
Dee. Forget him.

DIAMOND
No!

Diamond spins, runs back, puts her arm around her Daddy.

DIAMOND
C'mon Daddy. It's Christmas.
Santa's comin'.

After a long silent moment Casper's voice cracks in a
whisper.

CASPER
Santa killed her.

Casper sobs.

CASPER
Santa killed her.

DIAMOND
No, Daddy! Santa don't kill.

CASPER
Santa killed your mother.

DIAMOND
No, Daddy!

Diamond wraps her arms around him and cries.

Casper pounds the ground. Presses his head harder into the
grass.

CASPER
Yes, I did!

Junior runs back to him.

CASPER
Yes I did! I killed her. Oh God, I
killed her.

Junior throws his arms around his crying father in a bear hug.

JUNIOR
Stop saying that. It was an accident.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TWISTING ROAD (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT

CHRISTMAS MUSIC plays from a radio.

A CAR swerves a couple of times almost running off the road.

FIONA (O.S.)
You better stop texting. Wind up in a ditch.

INT. CAR (MOVING)

Casper, dressed as SANTA, has his cell propped up on the steering wheel.

The Christmas song continues to play.

Fiona(30s), his WIFE, dressed in the same green and red gown that was on Casper's passenger floor. An ELF costume.

CASPER
Ho ho ho. Let's take an *elfie*, Fiona.

He chuckles, leans towards her. She pushes him back.

FIONA
No. Eyes on the road, Santa.

He leans over again to kiss her while he points the phone at them.

CASPER
Look. A Dasher Cam.

Casper laughs.

HOOONNNKKKK!!!!

A HORN blares. BRIGHT LIGHTS blind them through the windshield.

Fiona shrieks.

Horror freezes Casper's face. He drops his cell, loses control of the steering wheel.

BACK TO:

EXT. FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

The three are huddled together sobbing.

JUNIOR

It's not your fault, Dad. Stop blaming yourself.

Casper looks into his son's eyes.

CASPER

I'm so sorry, Junior. So sorry. Please forgive me.

Casper looks into Diamonds teary eyes.

CASPER

Please forgive Daddy, Diamond, for taking mommy away.

Diamond ekes out.

DIAMOND

Santa didn't kill mommy.

CASPER

I need you guys forgiveness.

Junior wraps his arms around his dad's neck. Diamond follows.

The SONG "Silent Night, Holy Night" drifts into the yard.

JUNIOR

We forgive you, Daddy. We forgive you.

DIAMOND

We want Daddy back.

A large group of CAROLERS with candles and Christmas light NECKLACES make their way around Casper's truck.

Their song washes over Casper, Junior, and Diamond, then dies out.

The large group stand staring at them. A woman, MARJORIE, takes a step towards them.

MARJORIE

Casper?

No one else moves.

MARJORIE

Casper. It's Marjorie.

Casper looks up with tears streaming down his face. An elderly man, LORNE(80's) calls out.

LORNE

Everything alright, Casper?

Casper barely nods, wipes his tears. Marjorie takes another step towards them.

MARJORIE

We know this year has been awful hard on you all, so we decided to get together and share our Christmas with you.

Casper looks at Junior, then Diamond.

DIAMOND

See, Daddy. Told you Santa's comin' to town.

Casper kisses her forehead.

CASPER

You were right, honey.

He wipes away her tears. Casper looks over at Junior who he has wrapped in a neck embrace.

CASPER

(whispers to them)
Daddy's back. I promise.

Casper kisses Junior on the top of his head.

Junior bear hugs him like he's never going to let go.

Casper looks up at his neighbors.

CASPER

We'd be honored to share Christmas with you all.

Then Casper looks back at his depressing dark house.

CASPER

Didn't exactly get fixed up for
folks.

The neighbors break towards the house. Some with wrapped gifts. One with a Christmas tree. Others with ladders and Christmas lights and lawn decorations. More with loads of food.

Marjorie comes up to him.

MARJORIE

Don't worry about that, Casper.
Told you, we're the ones doing the
sharing.

Singing comes up. "Santa Claus is Coming to Town"

EXT. FRONT LAWN - LATER

The house has joined the rest of the neighborhood in festive Christmas lights and blow up lawn ornaments. The beer cans cleaned up, the pickup parked in the driveway.

INT. TRUCK

Swept clean. The tattered dress hangs from the passenger side hook.

INT. HOUSE

A Christmas Party in full swing. The neighbors surround the Christmas tree, sip eggnog, sing arm in arm and watch Casper lift Diamond to place the STAR on top.

The Santa Claus Song continues. Diamond smiles, gives her Daddy a big hug. Junior joins them.

The Christmas cheer spills out of the house into the clear night sky.

FADE OUT.