

WHEENK! LA-HA-HA-AUGHS

TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS (AND WE BEING JEWS)

TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS, AND WE BEING JEWS, MY GIRLFRIEND AND ME -- WE HAD NOTHING TO DO. THE GENTILES WERE HOME, HANGING STOCKING WITH CARE, SECURE IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE ST. NICK WOULD BE THERE. BUT FOR US, ONCE THE HANUKKAH CANDLES BURNED DOWN, THERE WAS NOTHING BUT BOREDOM ALL OVER TOWN.

THE MALLS AND THE THEATERS WERE ALL CLOSED UP TIGHT; THERE WEREN'T ANY CONCERTS TO GO TO THAT NIGHT. A DANCE WOULD HAVE SAVED US, SOME BALLROOM OR SWING, BUT WE SEARCHED THROUGH THE PAPERS; THERE WASN'T A THING.

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW SAT TWO FEET OF SNOW; WITH THE WIND-CHILL, THEY SAID IT WAS FIFTEEN BELOW. AND WHILE ALL I COULD DO WAS SIT THERE AND BROOD, MY GIRL SAVED THE NIGHT AND CALLED OUT "CHINESE FOOD!"

SO WE RAN TO THE CLOSET, GRABBED HATS, MITTS AND BOOTS -- TO COVER OUR HEADS, OUR HANDS, AND OUR FEET. WE PULLED ON OUR JACKETS, ALL PUFFY WITH DOWN. AND BOARDED "THE T," BOUND FOR OLD CHINATOWN.

IN SEARCH OF A RESTAURANT: "WHICH ONE? LETS DECIDE!" WE CHOSE "HUNAN CHOZER," AND VENTURED INSIDE. AROUND US SAT OTHER JEWS, THEIR PLATTERS PILED HIGH WITH THE FINEST OF FOODS THEIR MONEY COULD BUY:

THERE WAS ROAST DUCK AND FRIED FAKE SQUID, (SWEET, SOUR AND SPICED,) DRIED KOSHER BEEF AND MIXED VEGGIES, LO MEIN AND FRIED RICE, WHOLE FISH AND MOO SHI AND "SHRIMP" CHOW MEE FOON, AND GENERAL GAUS CHICKEN AND MA PO TOFU....

WHEN AT LAST WE DECIDED, AND THE WAITER DID CALL, WE SAID: "SKIP THE MENU!" AND ORDERED IT ALL. AND WHEN IN DUE TIME THE FOOD WAS ALL MADE, IT CAME TO THE TABLE IN A SORT OF PARADE.

BEFORE US SAT DIM SUM, SPARE RIBS AND EGG ROLLS, AND FOUR DIFFERENT SOUPS, IN FOUR GREAT, HUGE BOWLS. THE COURSES KEPT COMING, FROM SPICY TO MILD, AND HIGHER AND HIGHER TOWARD THE CEILING WERE PILED.

SO MUCH PILED UP, ONE DISH AFTER THE OTHER, MY GIRLFRIEND AND I COULDN'T SEE ONE ANOTHER! NOW WE SAT THERE, WE TWO, WITHOUT PROPER UTENSILS, WHILE THEY HANDED US SOMETHING THAT LOOKED LIKE TWO PENCILS.

WE ATE TILL WE COULDN'T AND DRANK DOWN OUR TEAS AND BARELY HAD ROOM FOR OUR FORTUNE COOKIES. BUT MY FORTUNE WAS PERFECT; IT SUMMED UP THE MOOD WHEN IT SAID: "EVEN IF IT WAS KOSHER, IT WAS STILL CHINESE FOOD!" AND MY GIRLFRIEND--WELL ... SHE GOT A REAL WINNER; HERS SAID: "YOUR COMPANION WILL PAY FOR THE DINNER."

OUR BELLIES WERE FULL AND AT LAST IT WAS TIME TO TRAVEL BACK HOME AND WRITE SOME BAD RHYME OF OUR CHINATOWN TREK (AND TO PRIVATELY SPEAK ABOUT TRYING TO REFINE OUR CHOPSTICK TECHNIQUE).

THE MSG SPUN ROUND AND ROUND IN OUR HEADS, AS WE TRIPPED AND WE LAUGHED AND GAILY WE SAID, AS WE CARRIED OUR LEFTOVERS HOME THROUGH THE NIGHT; "GOOD YOM TOV TO ALL--AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!"

SHARED BY, WHEENK!

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pt.wheenk.com

📧 care@wheenk.com

☎ 1.800.Wheenk.1

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