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A Prison Carol
A Holiday Play in Three Acts

Scene I

(The setting: Cellblock of a prison)

Doobey: Hey, Danny Boy!! Where have you been hiding, dude? Haven't seen you 011 the yard in months!
Whatcha doing, pulling'a grizzly and hibernating for the winter?

Danny: Nah, I've just been busy, staying focused on what I'm doing and what I have to do. Trying to get my head straight.

Doobey: I know what you mean bro'. I'm 'bout to get my head straight, right now. What's up?

Danny: Not that kind. I'm talking about thinking. Setting some priorities. Taking a little inventory, sorting out a few things. You know, out with the garbage and in with the good.

Doobey: Thinking? Easy Turbo! Last time you did the thinking I caught 5 years.

Danny: Hey, that wasn't my fault! Who would think a girl that old could develop breasts that big? It must be those cow hormones.

Doobey: Well man, it's Christmas time! Which means P A R T Y Time!!! (Doobey does a little dance)

Danny: Is there ever a time that's not a party to you Doobey? If you're not wasted on pills you're drunker than my fish when I dropped a gallon of Jack Daniels in my mom's aquarium. If I need any good advice, I'll read the A.A. book.

Doobey: Ah, yeah! I heard you transformed into a "Save the world A.A. super hero." Dude, you can't even save yourself! You are a drug addict drunk loser like the rest of us, so don't give me any of that philosophical, self-righteous, A.A. bullshit, o.k'? Don't you think I've heard it my whole life? Training school, the youth spread, court ordered rehab, drug counseling, DART, -man, I can quote the book from cover to cover, and it never helped. Well, not unless you count all those pretty girls I met.
(Doobey winks his eye at Danny)

Danny: You're just going thru the motions. Your problem is, you don't realize you have a problem. Until you do, and admit it to yourself, a thousand self-help recovery books ain't gonna make a difference. I don't care if its A.A., N.A., the Bible or Koran. You got to feel it! Get it in the marrow of your bones.

Doobey: The only thing I want to feel is the numbing sensation when I can't feel my feet!

Danny: Yeah, and waking up with your face glued to the toilet seat with dried up puke! It's gonna catch up with you, man!

Doobey: It already has. I'm in prison ain't I? You can't tell me anything. We used to go all the time to the meetings, just to do our little deals and see how much coffee we could drink, and make fun of the other guy's misery!

Danny: I know, I know. I have different reasons for going now. I have to stay sober. I'm tired of waking up from a comatose black-out and wondering who I crossed the night before. To blazes with living with the fear of someone shoving a shank in our back and not even remembering why. It defeats the whole purpose of drinking to start with.

Doobey: Hey, hey, hey! You want a shoulder to cry on? (said sarcastically). Danny-boy, listen, I don't want to fight. It's Christmas time, dude! Time to ease the seat back and let the top down, put it on cruise control and let your hair fly in the wind. Lighten up!

Danny: Yeah, you're right. I've been sober now for 4 months and the holidays are a big test. I'm a little anxious about my parole hearing.

Doobey: I knew it! (hits on side) Been holding out on me. I knew there was something up with that A.A. thing!

Danny: At first maybe. But after getting in the program and really listening to the members experience, I realized those guys were on to something. Most every problem I had in life, 85% of them, somewhere, somehow, someway, alcohol and drugs were involved. If I'm gonna make it, I gotta stay sober.

Doobey: Why can't you find a balance? Have the best of both worlds?

Danny: Yeah, right! I'm talking to a drunk who sold his radio for a pint of mouth wash! You got it bad man!

Doobey: So what? I got my radio back. You weren't complaining about my breath for 3 days! (laughs)

Danny: It wasn't your breath. But all the gas that got me! You smelled like a candy cane dipped in cow shit!

Doobey: I would truly be honored if you will join me, your pal, your old chum, old friend, to the buck bash tomorrow night. We got over 20 gallons and a packet of pills.

Danny: (Shaking his head) I can't, man. Tomorrow nights a great meeting with a special guest, some doctor from the street. Doobey: Ha! He's probably that Doctor Kavorkien! (laughing)

Prison guard enters the dorm to make mail call

Guard: Mail call!!! Listen up people for your name! GOOD! Phil Good; BUTTS! Seemore Butts! MOSS! Pete Moss! BEACH! Sandy Beach! PLEASE! Danny Please!

Danny anxiously unopens his letter from the Parole Board

Danny: What is it gonna take? (shaking his head with disgust)

Doobey: What does it say man? Danny: Rejected! Do not pass go, do not collect your mule and 20 acres! No get out of jail free card.

Doobey: That sucks man.

Danny: What about that invite to the Great Buck Bash? You still got my ticket?

Doobey: Front row seats, Danny-boy! Good to have you back! (pats pocket simulating tickets are over his heart) I'll see ya after last yard call!

Danny goes in and lays down on his bunk

Danny: (talking aloud to no one) Man, oh man. (he shakes his head)

END OF SCENE I

Scene II

The scene opens in the dorm where Danny lays asleep on his bunk. The Spirit of Christmas Past enters.

Spirit: (singing) Oh Danny Boy, your past, your past is calling. (Spirit now begins to rap his lines) Get up, get up you sleepy head, haul your butt out of bed.

Danny: (startled awake) Who on God's green and blue earth are you?

Spirit: I'm the Ghost of Christmas Past. A blast from your past, and we must dash and move fast 'cause the night won't last. So get up, get out, jump your feet about, Danny Boy!

Danny: Okay, okay. I get it. How much did Doobey pay you to do this? The jokes over Doobey, and not in the mood. (Danny yells and looks under the bunk) Come on out Doobey, where are you?

Spirit: I'm not blowing smoke, this ain't no joke. Let me begin again my friend. I'm the Spirit of Way Back When. People in heavenly places with big shining faces sent me. Don't mean to be coy, Danny Boy, but my brothers and me gonna help you find peace and joy. Before the drinking turned to sadness and drugs into full blown madness. Pay attention from the start, look sharp, my friend cause I'm the ghostest with the mostest and gonna show you Christmas from way back when.

They walk over to a table with a Christmas dinner and Danny's dad and brother about to eat.

Danny: Hey, it's Pops and Justin, my little brother! Hey Pops! Jus! It's me your big bro! Hey! (Danny waves his hand in front of his brother's face)

Spirit: You, they can't hear or see. Just watch, listen, learn years back Christmas Eve.
Justin: Dad, Danny was supposed to be here hours ago! We're supposed to open presents.
Dad: He said he'd be here, but you know your brother. You can't depend on him. Just like he left you ill the cold when he was supposed to pick you up after school. Or the time, when he forgot to feed and water the dog when we went on vacation. Damn near killed it.
Justin: Maybe he was busy. (looking sad)
Dad: Yeah, too busy running the street getting high and drunk! Too busy to give a damn about his family. Only thing to do is pray. Pass the peas, boy. I quit worrying about your brother a long time ago.

Phone rings

Dad: Hello? ... Danny? ... You what?!? ... Danny, what the hell were you thinking?!? ... A \$100,000 bond?!? ... Danny, where am I gonna get that kind of money?!?... No!!! I'm not going into your brothers trust fund! I've told you, the next time you screw up, you are on your own!.. Do you know how much you've put this family through? ... No, I don't think you do! You gave your poor mother a nervous breakdown... You killed her, Danny!!! And you don't even care, do you?!?! No more! I'm thru with you, Danny!!! Until you stop drinking and drugging for good, you're no longer a part of this family!!! Don't call here, don't write!!! Let someone else baby-sit your sorry butt for awhile!!! Thank you Danny, for ruining yet another Christmas. God have mercy on you! (Dad slams the phone down and sits)

Danny: I was young and stupid. (Looks at Spirit) I didn't know how much I put them all through living with the disease of my addiction. They just started talking to me again.

Danny goes back to his bunk, Spirit exits stage

Scene III

The scene opens with Danny lying down, mumbling in his sleep.

Danny: I'm sorry Mama. Mama, please don't cry! Don't be sad mama, please. I'm sorry!

The Spirit of Christmas Present enters, giggling and strutting over to where Danny now lays quietly in his bunk.

Spirit: Oh my! He's a big one!

The Spirit" takes out a hand-held mirror and pretends to fix his make-up, making faces in the mirror. He then fluffs his hair and "breasts."

Spirit: Yoo hoot Danny-Boy! Wakey, wakey!

Danny: (Wakes up suddenly) Who ... What...What or who are you???

Spirit: I'm the Spirit of Christmas Present, or better known to my friends as the Christmas Queen.

Danny: Oh God! First, the parole gets nixed, then the ghost of the past, and now, I've died and gone to Fairy Land. This has got to me a nightmare!!!

Spirit: (Looking slightly offended) Look stud! You're no Brad Pitt yourself!

Danny: Do I get 3 wishes or are you gonna wave that wand and grant me parole? If not, then just make mine a bourbon on the rocks, cause I've had a very bad day!

Spirit: Danny, I've been sent to make your holidays happy, jolly and gay. (Spirit says this and does the "Z-snap")

Danny: Gay!!! No thanks! I'll stick with sad, depressed and alone! Now if you'll excuse me I think I'll go back ta sleep? Spirit: Oh well, as you wish. Let's go!

Danny: Go? Where?

Spirit: Why, to Las Vegas darling! Silly boy, to the dorm party of course!

Danny and the Spirit walk over to where Doobey and other inmates have gathered to get high and are drinking and smoking.

Inmate: Doobey, this buck is the bomb! Ain't no Santa Claus ever had egg nog this bad!

Doobey: If he had, he'd have wrecked his sled!

Inmate: Hey, where's Danny? Ain't he comin'?

Doobey: Yeah, yeah, he'll be here. Once a drunk, always a drunk. He won't be able to pass this one by, even if he's an "A.A. hero."

Inmate: Speaking of passing, how 'bout lettin' me get a hit off that? Doobey pass the joint that you're smoking.

Spirit: So, this is your idea of Christmas, Danny-boy? You're right, it is sad, depressing and lonely.

Danny: Look, who asked you Christmas Fairy?

Spirit: That's Christmas Queen buster!

Inmate: Whoa! This room is spinning! I gotta lay down, man. Hey, you alright. Doobey? You don't look so good, dude. You're 'bout three shades of green, man!

Doobey: (groans) I think maybe it was the chow.

Inmate: Ha! Ha! Yeah. I know what you mean!

Doobey: I don't feel so good, man. Maybe all those pills wasn't such a good idea with the buck. What were they anyways?

Inmate: How the hell, do I know! I got 'em from a guy off lock-up. They say he's on some real chronic shit from the shrinks. Says they relax him.

Doobey tries to stand and take a step, then collapse and twitches until he's still.

Inmate: Whoa! Radical man! Hey, Doobey? Doobey? You alright? Say somethin' man!

Danny: Don't just stand there you idiot! Go get him some help!

Spirit: They can't hear or see you Danny-boy.

The inmate leans Doobey up, checks his pockets, takes his wallet and leaves.

Danny: Hey, he just yoked Doobey! Hey, look *Miss Thing* get some help!

Danny rushes over to where Doobey is laying.

Danny: Hey, Doobey, it's gonna be alright buddy. I'll get you some help, okay? Just hang in there, man.

Spirit: Danny, he can't hear you!

Danny: Oh yeah, right! This is just a dream! Whoa!

Spirit: No Danny, your friend is dead.

End of Scene III

Scene IV

The scene opens with the Ghost of Christmas Future entering and kicks Danny's bed. Danny comes instantly awake and crosses himself.

Danny: Holy Mary, Mother of God! Please tell me you're the Spirit of Christmas yet to some and not the angel of death? You're probably his distant cousin, huh?

The Spirit shakes his head and points. Danny shivers.

Danny: Who turned off the heat in this place? It's like the arctic in here!

The Spirit points again.

Danny: Okay, okay, I'm going. Just don't touch me, huh? (**Danny moves over to a table where a body lays under ~ sheet and where two morgue workers are talking.**)

Danny: Man it stinks in here! Smells like my old school biology lab. Where are we anyway?

The spirit points to the table.

Morgue worker 1: Well, as you can see by his deteriorating liver, our subject was a chronic alcoholic.

Morgue worker 2: Look at the lining of this guy's stomach, would you! It's like something's been chewing on him from the inside out!

Morgue worker 1: And those clogged arteries. This is a classic case of intravenous drug abuse. His heart wouldn't have lasted another 6 months.

Morgue worker 2: The cause of death is listed as severe head trauma from an auto accident. What a shame. Too bad his drinking and driving killed that family of five along with this creep. Wiped out a whole family!

Morgue worker 1: Um. Well, this one's headed for the crematorium. Let's get a bite to eat, I'm starving.

The two morgue workers exit.

Danny: Did you hear them? This idiot was drinking and driving and killed 5 people! I bet he's one of my old drinking buddies. Another con who doesn't care about no one but himself.

Danny walks over to the end of the table.

Danny: I have got to see who this moron is. (Danny reads the toe. tag). What kinda sick joke is this, Spirit?

The Spirit pulls the sheet back towards the audience -audience cannot see the body lying on the table, but Danny gasps loudly.

Danny: No!!! It's not true!!! It can't be me!!! This is just a dream!!!

Danny falls on the floor pulling on the Spirit's robe.

Danny: Say this isn't true, Spirit! You have to change it! Change it Spirit! I don't want to go out J/ke this! Say it Spirit! God please!!

Danny is back in his bunk and mumbling in his sleep.

Danny: Change it Spirit. Change it I say.

Doobey: Hey Danny! Danny! You're bugging out, man! Wake up! What are you tripping on?

Danny: Oh man! Whew! You wouldn't believe it if I told you. It's settled. I'm NEVER gonna drink again! I've put my family, myself and God knows how many others thru the nightmare of my addiction. No more!

Doobey: Calm down, dude. You're letting your emotions get your head all screwed up. Just take a few of these pills, they'll help your nerves.

Danny grabs the pills and throws them down, stomping them.

Doobey: Man, are you out of your mind?

Danny: No, but you are if you think I'm going to take those! I'm trying to save you Doobey! You don't even know what those pills are, do you? Do you?

Doobey: So? What's the difference, man? Hey, you still coming tonight to the buck bash?

Danny: (Shaking his head) Not in this or any lifetime! I don't care how long I might be stuck here. Whether I'm in prison or on the street, I'm not gonna let drugs and booze rule my life again.

Officer enters the dorm.

Officer: Danny Please?!?

Danny: Yea? What's up? More bad news? Give it to me, man, I can take it.

Officer: We just got this fax from Raleigh. Seems that a clerical error was made and the Parole board sent you the wrong letter yesterday. Pack your bags, Danny-boy, you're going home! Merry Christmas!

Officer walks off whistling "Jingle Bells" Danny smiles as he and Doobey embrace.

The End