

EVE

*A one act play by Andrew Gunn*

## EVE (A CHRISTMAS PLAY)

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### CHARACTERS:

Eve, female, late 20s, a barmaid  
Barry, male, early 30s, an actor dressed as Santa Claus  
Dan, male, mid 30s, an actor dressed as Jesus Christ

### SCENE:

The snug of a bar on the night before Christmas. At least three chairs (one an easy chair), two tables and a sideboard, surfaces littered with used glasses and other post-party items.

### PROPS:

1x phone (Eve)  
1x shoulder bag (Barry)  
1x bowl of nuts on a table  
1x gift in wrapping paper (in Barry's shoulder bag)  
1x glass of whisky  
1x small jug of water  
1x pint of ale  
1x bottle of tequila  
1x salt shaker on table  
1x slice of lemon in a used glass

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*EVE enters, phone tucked under her ear. Collects glasses and other barroom detritus.*

EVE

*(into phone)*

Sean. Sean pet, listen. Sean . . . Sean, it's like a deal. It's like an agreement. He *will* come, but only if you're *asleep*.

*(beat)*

But you *will* sleep, pet. Maybe you're trying too hard. Don't *try* to sleep. Don't try. Just lie there and close your eyes and think about nothing and you *will* sleep, I promise.

*(beat)*

Of course he'll find you. Santa's got . . . Sean, your first Christmas, pet, we were down in London. Auntie Pam and Unc . . . yes, in London, a little red brick house, the whole street was these red brick houses, all looked the same. And in the morning we all went downstairs, and Big, Big Ted was . . . yes, Big Ted was sitting there waiting in Uncle John's armchair, and you pulled him down and you had a big cuddle on the floor. So if Santa can find you in a little red brick terraced house in London, I *know* he can find you at daddy's flat.

*(beat)*

No no, "terraced", pet. Not . . . "terrorist". *Terraced*, it's a row of . . . Sean pet, listen . . . go back to bed now . . . it's time to go to sleep now . . .

*Eve leaves via the far door. BARRY comes through the near door, looks around. Finds a stray glass of whisky, gives it a sniff.*

BARRY

Hm.

*Barry drains the glass, sinks into an easy chair, dumps his shoulder bag. Spies a bowl of nuts on the table, rummages—*

BARRY

Brazil, Brazil . . . Brazil . . . walnut, jog on, you look like brains.

*Eve returns—*

EVE

*(into phone)*

. . . you can't say that, David. You can't say the fireplace isn't real. He doesn't . . . Well, just tell him Santa's got a spare key.

*Eve sees Barry, hesitates. Barry gives her a polite wave. Eve waves back.*

EVE (*continued*)

He doesn't know what a skeleton key is eith . . . Oh, really? Is he snoring? That was fast. Listen, David—David, don't take him to mass tomorrow. He's too wee for that stuff.

(*beat*)

No, this is my *veto*. We agreed on . . . David . . . yes, it does apply to church. It's a parental fucking decree, not a search warrant. David. Don't *take* him.

*Eve storms out.*

*Barry pops a nut, opens his bag, takes out a small package inexpertly covered in wrapping paper. Smooths the creases, adjusts the sticky bow, replaces the gift in his bag.*

*Eve returns with a glass of whisky and a small jar of water. Sets them down on the table. Sits across from Barry.*

EVE

Mind if I sit here?

BARRY

No, no.

EVE

'cause I can, ah . . .

BARRY

No, really. Snack?

(*offers Eve the bowl of nuts*)

EVE

Covered in piss. So—that's you finished, then.

BARRY

Yeah, that's a long couple of days at the end there. But. Job done, orders taken. Handed over to the big man himself.

EVE

When I brought my wee boy last week. What did he ask for?

BARRY

Mm, sorry. Client confidentiality.

EVE

Sorry, course you wouldn't remember. How many kids *have* you seen?

BARRY

Six or seven thousand. I reckon three or four hundred today. One of the elves tried to keep count with, you know, one of those clicky things, but this ADHD kid got hold of it . . . went mental, skewed the numbers.

EVE

I know what he told *me* he wanted. But that's what he wants from his *mum*, not from . . . well, from the man with the toy factory.

BARRY

(*beat*)

The Brazil is the king of nuts.

EVE

. . . yeah?

BARRY

Well, we can agree that peanuts are the baseline. Lowest common denominator. In America, they're a sandwich spread. Hazelnuts are good—also a spread, but *French*. The pecan's a pretentious little devil—lucrative line in pastries, but not a patch on the almond. Cashews are all right if they're roasted—well, isn't everything?—but they look a bit . . . foetal. But the Brazil, he's a big lad, always makes his way to the top of the pile. Granular convection. Plus, cover him in chocolate and you can still savour the nut.

EVE

I like pistachios.

BARRY

Always one shell you can't open.

EVE

Yeah—you try though, and you end up breaking a nail.

BARRY

Unless you're one of those, you go for the pre-shelled . . .

EVE

No, you should *never* go pre-shelled. Heathens.

BARRY

Pagans.

EVE

You wouldn't buy an unpeeled fucking apple. Or an orange pre-fucking . . . segmented. Sorry. I've had an absolute pig of a day.

BARRY

Heard worse from the kids. And the bloody parents.

EVE

I said they should put out, you know, chestnuts, but the chef said they don't fill you up enough.

BARRY

There's a fellow at the market selling . . . I think they're all still out there, have you been?

EVE

I should clean up all the mess . . .  
(stands)

BARRY

How'd you land this shift, then?

EVE

Asked for it.

BARRY

Oh, you get a cheeky bonus?

EVE

Bottle of something from the cellar. My choice.

BARRY

Not bad.

*DAN enters theatrically, startling Eve—*

EVE

Jesus Christ!

DAN

Aye, very good. You still serving, pet?

EVE

. . . Till I lock the door. Are . . . what, are you an actor?

DAN

No, I'm the real thing. It's the Second Coming, you know? The Christ returns, and he's a fuckin' Scotsman. Freedom! . . . from your sins. Yeah, came along with the Four Horsemen, they're outside kicking shit out of a bunch of reindeer.

EVE

. . . all right, you know—you might be dressed up like Jesus and you're *not* an actor.

DAN

Who the fuck's—who's gonna dress up like Jesus and he's not an actor?

EVE

I don't . . . a homeless guy, or . . .

DAN

*Homeless . . . ?*

EVE

I don't know. I was just making convers . . . so you're an *actor*. Apparently you're playing *Jesus*. That's *interesting*. What were you in, like a nativity thing?

DAN

No. Nativity Jesus is a wean, isn't he? I'm Easter Jesus.

*(mimes hanging on the cross)*

Any chance of a beverage, pet? Haven't quite mastered the water-into-wine thing. If I had, the streets'd be runnin' red like a fuckin' pub car park on Old Firm day.

EVE

What would you like?

DAN

I'll have a pint of your darkest ale. The messiah thirsts!

*Eve leaves via the far door. Dan paces the room, nods at Barry.*

DAN

Awright, mate?

BARRY

How do.

DAN

Dan White.

BARRY  
 . . . thespian.

DAN  
 That's it.

BARRY  
 Barry O'Donnell. That's Eve.

DAN  
 Who?

BARRY  
 Eve.

DAN  
 Oh. Am I in the way? Are you, ah . . .

BARRY  
 Oh, no, no, no. No, just . . . in for my nightly dram. I'm up at the Galleries. Spent the day with bloodthirsty nippers on my knee. Grab a pew, sir. What are you in?

DAN  
*(sits)*  
 What am I *in*? Oh, it's a wee film. Avant-gardy kinda thing. Wee boy has visions of his heroes and they help him make it through the hard times.

*(beat)*  
 D'you hear the one about the dyslexic kid who sent his Christmas list to Satan?

BARRY  
 Yeah, that's a good one.

DAN  
 So . . . Galleries . . . d'you have any saucy elves up there?

BARRY  
 Ha! What happens in the grotto stays in the grotto.

DAN  
 I could do with a grotty wee elf. An elf-ette. Pigtails, wee hat with a tinkly bell. Laplander accent. Tits like Christmas puddings.

BARRY  
 Well, if you've been a good boy all year round . . .

DAN

I am *the* fuckin' role model for good behaviour. I am the poster child. Ghandi takes a long hard look at himself in the mirror, wishes he was me. Yeah, the Christ deserves an elf. Might have a wee tour of the clubs after this. Think the outfit'll help.

BARRY

Probably will.

DAN

You should come along, we'll be like a double act. But you get the frumpy friends.

BARRY

Thanks, I'm off home after this one.

DAN

Well, maybe I'll take that, what's her name . . . is she changing the keg or what?

BARRY

Having a bad day, methinks. She's a bit . . .

DAN

Oh? Well, then let's impart some fucking seasonal spirit forthwith. I'm not stoppin' here with a cryin' bird. Nowt against emotions, you know?, that's my *métier*. But if she brings in a bowl of ice cream and starts talkin' about gettin' a tattoo, I'm fucking off. I don't need that shite.

BARRY

You could tell her your Satan joke.

*Eve returns with Dan's pint.*

DAN

Thankyee much, handmaiden.

EVE

No problem.

*(resumes clearing up)*

BARRY

Dan's—this is Dan—you know, he's in a film.

EVE

Oh. That's good.

DAN

Well. You look a bit tense, pet. You ever tried yoga?

EVE

Yoga?

DAN

Lotus position. Padmasana, you know? Here, let's get flexible.

*Dan hops off his chair, takes Eve's hand—*

EVE

No, I've . . . thanks, no, I've got loads to do yet.

DAN

Exactly, let's have a wee break. Come on, trust me. What Would Jesus Do? Come on, legs crossed, pretend you're in school. Assembly time. Up here.

*Dan perches on a table. Eve sits on another.*

EVE

Right . . .

DAN

Like this. Get those feet up. It's, honestly. Re-energise the fuck out of you. It's like a double espresso with four sugars and a kick up the arse.

*(to Barry)*

Come on and join us, big man.

BARRY

Not my cup of coffee.

DAN

Suit yourself.

*(to Eve)*

Yeah?

EVE

Yeah. Um. Don't feel very energised, but . . .

DAN

Nah, you have to relax first. Like a battery, you're s'posed to drain all the juice out before you recharge the fucker.

BARRY

*(rises)*

Talking of draining juice, I'm just, ah . . .

EVE

Barry, would you mind . . .

DAN

Relax, missus!

EVE

Just . . . the kitchen, in the kitchen, could you just check there's nothing lying out, should be in the fridge? I think I left the sausage rolls. God, I haven't cleaned these tables.

DAN

Would you *relax*, woman?

BARRY

I'll take care of the sausage rolls.

*As Barry leaves—*

DAN

Thanks, Barry.

*(to Eve)*

Breathe in, right? All the way in . . . and out. Right? Clears your head, doesn't it?

EVE

. . . you're wearing sandals.

DAN

See? That's good. Observe, let your thoughts turn outward. Get the fucking feng shui circulating. That's good.

EVE

All right. So . . . you're playing Jesus.

DAN

Actually it's Hey-zoos.

EVE

In a film.

DAN

Correct.

EVE

What is it? When's it coming out?

DAN

Well, it's a short film. So, never. I mean, yeah, festival circuit, go and see it in Edinburgh in May or whenever. Give us an "aum".

EVE

What?

DAN

An "aum". You know. Aaaaauuuuuummmm . . .

EVE

Aaaauum . . .

DAN

No, just sounds indecisive. Come on, a proper . . . from the bottom of the chakra, aaaaaauuuuuummmm . . .  
(*closes his eyes*)

EVE

Aaaaaaaaaauuuuuuuuuuuuuummmmm . . .

DAN

Aaaauuummmmm . . . it's good, isn't it?

EVE

Aaaauuummmmm . . .

DAN

(*opens his eyes*)

Aye, enough of that, maybe.

EVE

So . . . did you, like, read the Bible? To prepare?

DAN

No. Thing about research, it blunts your instincts. Naw, the way to play the Son of God is this: you're a fuckin' mirror. I mean, everybody's got a preconceived notion of Christ. Your average actor would fight against that. Your great actor's gonna *use* it. Everybody wants to be good. Everybody wants to be like Jesus. So you play it blank. People watch and they see themselves. They project *themselves* onto me.

EVE

Do you believe in . . . God and all that stuff?

DAN

Nah. Nah, you don't need to believe in Lawrence of Arabia to play Lawrence of Arabia.

EVE

He was real, though.

DAN

*Relax*, woman. What about you, have you read the Bible?

EVE

Made a point of it. When I was twelve or something. Cover to cover. Just so I could say I'd done it.

DAN

. . . any good?

EVE

It's fairy tales. It's like philosophy. Well-intentioned. You read about "suffer the little children" and you think, fair enough, but then "if a man lies with another man," that's a bit . . . and Abraham with his first born—Christ, what were you *thinking*?

*(beat)*

But, you know, I was clearing out Sean's, my wee boy's, his old books . . . make some room for his new, uh . . . and I found all these books that I'd had when *I* was wee, like The Three Billy Goats Gruff and Chicken Licken and . . .

DAN

. . . aye, the sky falling in.

EVE

. . . and Rapunzel. They're so violent. Chicken Licken's a bloodbath. These cute wee animals you meet one by one, on their quest to go and see the king, and on the last page they get conned by a fox and he eats them all. It's horrific. And I was brought up on that.

DAN

Relax, relax.

*Barry returns.*

EVE

The Bible's just as bad. The one I read was the Good News Bible—ends with the Apocalypse. That's fucking inspiring, isn't it?

DAN

Starts with nobody alive, ends with everybody dead. That's cosmic equilibrium.

EVE

At least Santa . . . right, Barry? Santa's all right for children. Nobody nails him to a cross. There's no reindeer genocide.

BARRY

Rudolph's undervalued by his peers.

EVE

They make fun of him and then he saves the day. That's the worst thing that happens in Lapland.

DAN

Well, but you've got other endemic problems. Seasonal employment for one—an actor can sympathise. And the whole thing's based on this idea, objective morality. Has he been a good boy? Give him a toy. If he's been bad, he gets fuck all.

BARRY

Yeah, the naughty list. I throw a dead pigeon down those chimneys.

DAN

But who's judging all this good or bad shit?

BARRY

I go by the robins' reports and hope they haven't sexed-up the evidence.

DAN

Plus it's a very western, isn't it?, commercial myth. His costume's a corporate logo. And these presents, they're supposed to reward, but their value's not based on merit. Poor kids get the cheap shite and the rich kids get the fucking Lego Hogwarts or the ski lessons in the Pyrenees or a fuckin' second pony. Strictly within the class system, eh?

BARRY

Ah, but I give 'em the same thing you do, Mr Christ. I give 'em hope.

DAN

Aye, hope for a nice pair of trainers versus hope for *eternal life*.

BARRY

Small, achievable goals.

DAN

And this Santa thing, sounds innocent to a child, but it was made up by an *adult*. So let's consider the myth as *adults*. He hires a lot of wee robins to spy on folk. He's got a sweatshop full of midgets. Abuses reindeer. He's got a list of every fucking child on earth, their address, reports on their behaviour. Big Data. He breaks into their houses . . . You tell this story to anyone over the age of twelve, they'd think the guy's a fuckin' corporate industrialist paedo super-villain. And this is the lie we came up with to make the weans *happy*.

BARRY

I'm not locking anybody in a cellar. It *is* all innocent. Not like the two thousand years of carnage and blood spilt because of you.

DAN

Aye, blame the messenger. I was just a fuckin' hippie, it's those other guys you want to . . . that Keanu Reeves, what's his name that he played . . . ?

EVE

Neo.

DAN

Naw, the religious one.

EVE

That was kind of religious.

DAN

*(mimes machine-gunning in Bullet Time)*  
 . . . was it fuck.

BARRY

Devil's Advocate.

DAN  
No.

BARRY  
Man of Tai Chi.

DAN  
—? No.

EVE  
The Little Buddha?

DAN  
No, no. Guy who signed off on the Bible.

BARRY  
Constantine.

DAN  
Him. It's not me, it's the hacks, all the fuckin' paperazzi making a big story out of it, and then you've got the church and the state exploiting it for their own nefarious . . . you know, but it's not *me*. All I did was bum around doing Babylonian TED talks and solving catering problems with the bread and fishes. Tuna sandwiches for the five thousand.

BARRY  
You kicked off in a church one time.

EVE  
I read this thing.  
*(gets to her feet)*  
Sorry Jesus—making my legs numb. I read this thing, you know the quote about “it's easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle . . .”

BARRY  
Yes, “than a rich man to get into Heaven.”

EVE  
And I read this thing, said there was a gate in Jerusalem, an oval shape called the Eye of the Needle—so actually the Bible was saying it's *easy* for a rich man to get into Heaven.

BARRY  
Think I read that, too.

EVE

I mean, fuck off. But that's what happens when you write in metaphors. They get twisted.

BARRY

I think it's a simile.

EVE

If that's even the original thing. Let's not forget the whole book's been translated from bloody . . . Aramaic word-of-mouth to Hebrew to Latin to Ye Olde English by the guy who wrote the instructions for my washing machine. God, I feel better. Not better, but . . . I feel like a lock-in. Any objections?

BARRY

Not from me.

DAN

Sounds good, pet. Aye, shut the fucking doors before Darth Vader and Ebenezer Scrooge pitch up.

*Eve hurries out the near door, taking keys from her pocket. Dan grins at Barry.*

BARRY

As one professional to another . . .

DAN

Hang on, hang on. Let's not put ourselves on the same platform there, pal. Let's be honest. Department store Santa is the fuckin' lollipop man of acting jobs.

BARRY

. . . I was going to say, there's a danger of transference.

DAN

Nae danger, pal.

BARRY

Like Stockholm Syndrome. We're held hostage by the character.

DAN

Aye, well rather me than you, mate.

BARRY

Son of God Complex, is it?

DAN

Better some misunderstood mystic than the fuckin' symbol of capitalist decadence . . . a fuckin' *lie*, for a start, and a corporate . . . you are the diametric *opposite* of Christ. You're the *anti*-Christ.

BARRY

Don't give me that. You can dangle eternal life in front of people like a carrot, but it's not a carrot, it's just a guess. If it turns out to be utter pigswill, they can't complain, can they? I might promise a child something trivial like a remote control car, but then they actually *get* the bloody thing.

DAN

Ach . . .

*(tries to uncross his legs, winces)*

Shit, fuckin' . . . fuckin' dead-legged maself.

BARRY

Mm?

DAN

My legs've . . . Cannae feel anything below the tadger. Fuck! Hey, big man, gonna help us down, eh?

*Barry gets up from his chair . . . and starts flicking nuts at Dan. Dan squirms—*

DAN

Aye—fuck you too, Santa Claus. Fuckin', that's the spirit, eh? Merry fuckin' holidays. I hope you get fuckin' . . . a tax audit for Christmas, and a fuckin' elf union rep up the arse.

*Dan hauls himself down off the table and collapses on the floor—*

DAN

God sake man!

BARRY

Ah, Jesus . . .

*Barry helps Dan into a chair.*

DAN

Aye. Awright. Aye, thanks big man. Fuckin' sandals on too tight, maybe.

*Dan takes a sip of ale. Eve returns via the near door, bottle of tequila under her arm.*

EVE

Right—who wants to get fucked up?

*Eve grabs a stray salt-shaker, takes a hit. Plucks a slice of lemon from a glass, bites.*

DAN

Fuckin' brilliant idea. I was gonna head out to the clubs.

BARRY

Oh, yeah? Give us a dance then, Jesus.

DAN

All in good time, big man. Let's tan these jars first. Calm before the storm.

EVE

I don't want to go out. I want to stay here. See in Christmas Day. Open up for the first lonely sad sack in the morning. *Second* sad sack.

BARRY

Call it the third.

DAN

. . . aye, third. What's the fuckin' trauma, anyhow? It's like I walked in five minutes after you got the black hole on the X-ray.

EVE

It's nothing. Just . . . I should be *with* someone tomorrow and I won't be, and I know he wants me there with him . . . and I should have fought . . . harder, but it's too late now. What's done is done.

*Eve takes another drink from the bottle, passes it around.*

EVE

Used to have a piano in here. I'd come in and sing, Friday nights after work. I was in a law office—admin. Quit when I had Sean. Then I came back behind the bar. By that time they'd put the piano away. Anyway, I have this dream. Recurring. I'm stood behind the bar, pulling a pint. Except it's my voice coming out the tap, coming and coming and coming. Then it's blood.

DAN

*(squirms)*

Fuck sake . . .

EVE

And there's the noise of the place all around me, but when I look up . . . nobody there. But I don't think "nobody there", I think "*Sean's* not there".

DAN

*(beat)*

I'd a dream last night—you know, I dream in character sometimes. This one would've made a good, one of those art films. I was in the cave. Golgotha or wherever, with that boulder rolled across. And I'm good, but I'm no Indiana Jones, so I'm just stuck there in the dark.

BARRY

*(shivers)*

Oooh. Spiders.

DAN

Right, what's a fuckin' spider gonna . . . I've just come down off the *cross*, mate, with nine inch nails through me and splinters and a fuckin' Centurion poking me up the diaphragm with a spear. Anything smaller than a fuckin' Stegosaurus is gonna have to work pretty fuckin' hard to make me wet these glorious pants.

EVE

*(to Barry)*

I don't like them, either.

DAN

The point of the thing is, I make this connection. These synapses fuckin' fuse. Three days in a cave. Sensory deprivation. Pure thought. What's going on? Resurrection. Regeneration, rebirth, reboot. The wizard comes back and he's wearing white and he's quit the pipeweed. From thought, from contemplation. Basically, from a dream.

BARRY

I had an odd one, too, last night.

DAN

Wait . . . are we not gonna let that sit for a minute?

EVE

Yes, Barry.

BARRY

A patron of some kind . . . charges me with building some kind of sculpture—not a sculpture—a tower, a work of art, in the middle of an old amphitheatre. And I have to build it with millions and millions of Gideon Bibles. So I pile them up, these books, identical, with the red plastic covers and the thin pages, and it's huge, it's Babylonian, this great . . . tower of Bibles. Stretches up to the sky—burnished, overcast. And the crowds come and admire it. But I just stand there, looking up, unsatisfied. The audience leave. The patron leaves. And I set the thing on fire.

*(beat)*

I sit down in this empty theatre and let it burn, and watch the paper curl up and turn black and twist into these beautiful shapes and . . . they look familiar somehow, these shapes, just before they turn to ash and disappear.

DAN

. . . you're a fuckin' nazi, mate.

EVE

Jesus Christ, Jesus.

DAN

A heretical fuckin' pyro. He's—that's national socialism! He's burning Bibles, what more do you . . . ?

EVE

*(to Barry)*

Who was the patron?

BARRY

The patron? Don't really know. A woman. It was dark.

EVE

A woman.

DAN

There you go then, mystery solved. It's a wet dream. What you built was a hard-on, mate. A Biblical stauner. Then it blew, and the wee familiar shapes were your tadpole Navy SEALS fuckin' dashed upon the rocks.

BARRY

I didn't . . . you know, I don't think I, ah . . .

DAN

Spunked.

EVE

It's not that. What about the Bible? What's that got to do with spunking?

DAN

The *Gideon* Bible: bedside cabinet, every hotel room in Christendom.

EVE

I think it's about acting. The amphitheatre, that's where the Greeks put on all their plays, isn't it? And probably the first real stories we learn, they come from the Bible.

BARRY

And the first morality. Yes, and I built with that.

EVE

And the audience came in and they liked it, but you didn't.

BARRY

No. It was a crowd-pleaser, but . . .

EVE

You gave them what they wanted. But once they left you burned it down, for *you*. Nobody saw it but you. And *you* were pleased.

BARRY

I was.

EVE

It's about acting. Your instinct versus what's required for the piece. Acting, to act . . . "to be or not to be". All philosophy basically comes down to that. To be or not to be.

DAN

I played Hamlet.

EVE

*(stands)*

Let's go and get Sean. Right? The three of us, we'll just go and get him. Let's just fucking do it.

BARRY

What do you mean—kidnap him?

EVE

He's at his dad's. I know the place. One man against three, he's probably had a drink . . . and the fucking costumes, he'll think he's lost his mind.

*(beat)*

It's easy, I've got keys to the close. I'll knock on his door. He'll step outside, and Santa, you twat him with something. A fire extinguisher. And Jesus, we'll nip inside, you handle any stragglers—his parents are pretty God-fearing, they'll probably try to give you some money. I'll grab Sean. Santa, you're already downstairs calling a cab . . .

*(beat)*

We can iron out the details. But we get Sean home for Christmas. We just do it.

BARRY

Eve, that's kidnapping.

EVE

I'm his mother.

BARRY

But if this is some custody, uh . . .

DAN

I'm up for it.

BARRY

You can't just . . . it's kidnapping.

EVE

It's only "kidnapping" in the legal sense.

BARRY

But they prosecute in the legal sense.

EVE

*(to Dan)*

You're up for it?

DAN

*(stands)*

Fuck, yeah. It's morally sound. Boy should be with his ma. Who's gonna argue?

BARRY

It's not morally sound. Three people attack a man in his home and take away his son, the night before Christmas . . . and take him where? A non-extradition country? Or are we bunking down in my student flat?

EVE

David won't press charges.

BARRY

No, he'll be too delighted with the whole thing.

EVE

He won't.

BARRY

Of course he will. Eve. Of course he will.

EVE

Sean didn't want to *go*. He doesn't want to be there. He wants *me*. He wants to be with *me*. That's my fault. It's up to me to . . . act, it's up to *me* to make it right.

*Barry stands. Dan puts up a hand to stop him. Dan puts an arm around Eve, guides her to one side—*

DAN

Listen, pet. Sounds like you got shafted, eh?

EVE

No, *I* shafted *him*. I don't care about me. I did wrong to *him*.

DAN

Well, I'm gonna forgive you, pet.

EVE

It's not up to you, though, is it?

DAN

Aye, only God forgives, eh? Well, how's he gonna do that, come on down from Heaven and chap on your door? If he's gonna do it, he's gonna use a medium, and how d'you know that's not me? If the crown fits.

*(puts his hand on Eve's forehead)*

I fuckin' absolve you, pet. I forgive you. Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis. In nomine patris et filli et spiritus fucking sancti. You are forgiven.

*Eve looks at Dan. Dan meets her gaze. Barry digs the present out of his shoulder bag, brings it over.*

BARRY

Here.

EVE

Barry . . .

BARRY

Santa.

EVE

Santa, then. No, you shouldn't have. And this isn't . . .

BARRY

Not from me. It's from your boy. Go on. Go on.

*Eve frowns, takes the present, tears off the paper. Inside is a snowglobe.*

BARRY

I said "what's your name, young fella?" and he said "Sean" and I said "and what would you like for Christmas, Sean?" and he said this would be his first Christmas away from his mum. Knew he'd have one of those from you, under his dad's tree. What he really wanted was for you to have the same thing under yours.

EVE

Oh, my God. The wee soul.

*(beat)*

Who paid for this?

BARRY

No, no, no. An adult's question in a child's world.

EVE

What does that mean?

DAN

It means you can't have a lock-in without a sing-along.

EVE

A sing-along . . . ?

*Barry finds a guitar, slings it over his shoulder.*

DAN

Aye, what is this, a Gulag? Come on, Deck the Halls. You fuckin' know it.

*(to the audience)*

Deck the Halls, come on. Let's brighten this shit up, all right? Get some positive karma flowing. Come on.

ALL

Deck the halls with boughs of holly,  
Fa la la la la, la la la la.  
'Tis the season to be jolly,  
Fa la la la la, la la la la.

EVE

Nobody remembers the rest.

BARRY

Don we now our gay apparel,  
Fa la la-la-la, la la la,

DAN

Troll the ancient Yuletide carol,  
Fa la la la la, la la la la.

EVE

. . . the fuck does that mean?

*Dan and Barry work the audience for another round—*

DAN

Come on, same thing again now:

ALL

Deck the halls with boughs of holly,  
Fa la la la la, la la la la.  
'Tis the season to be jolly,  
Fa la la la la, la la la la.

*The sing-along continues until it reaches a natural conclusion. Eve, Barry and Dan lead the applause.*

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