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HOLIDAY LOCKDOWN

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

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HOLIDAY LOCKDOWN - A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

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Synopsis

It’s Christmas Eve, and Todd is working another long shift with his hard-nosed boss, Mr. Roberts. A special delivery arrives, bringing with it an array of unique customers and the threat of a dangerous Canadian art thief. Once everyone is locked down in the tiny bookstore, Todd and Trixie must work together to protect not only an extremely valuable artifact, but each other.

Cast of Characters

TODD	An earnest employee at Roberts's Book Emporium.
MR. ROBERTS	The strict owner of Mr. Roberts's Book Emporium.
TRIXIE	A cop that isn't so bright. Tries her best.
LAYTON	A rich British boy that is bullied by his sister.
PERLA	A rich British girl that collects rare books.
CEDRIC	Layton and Perla's silent butler.
HENRY	A delivery man who ends up in bad situations.
HARVARD	A slightly unfocused but well-meaning secret agent.
PINEHURST	Harvard's hard working and overbearing assistant.
SHERBERT	The most dangerous art thief in Canada.

Place

Roberts's Book Emporium

Time

Evening. Christmas Eve. Current Day.

Director Notes

STAGE DIRECTION NOTE

All directions are from the view of the stage, facing the audience.

AUTHOR NOTE

Holiday Lockdown is a comedy that thrives off of timing; in order for many of these jokes to come across, the cast and crew of this production will need to have as much chemistry as a well-knit improv troupe. My suggestion is to lock your actors in a room for a weekend. Maybe a bookstore. Goodluck with your production of *Holiday Lockdown*!

ACT I

Scene 1

Setting: A single room bookstore with a back storage room to the right and employee lounge to the left. In the middle of the store is a counter and register, along with an old-fashioned cord phone.

At Rise: Fade in on Roberts's Book Emporium. TODD sits behind the register, stacking up a large pile of books. A warmly-dressed MR. ROBERTS enters, pushing a wheelbarrow on.

MR. ROBERTS

Todd, you'll never believe what I just found on the side of the road.

TODD

A wheelbarrow?

(MR. ROBERTS regards the wheelbarrow, suddenly underwhelmed.)

MR. ROBERTS

Yeah.

(The phone rings.)

MR. ROBERTS

Get the phone, Todd.

TODD *(encouraging)*

It's a nice wheelbarrow.

MR. ROBERTS

Just get the phone.

(MR. ROBERTS rolls the wheelbarrow into the storage room.)

TODD

Hello and Merry Christmas Eve, this is Roberts's Book Emporium, I'm Todd. Yeah?… I don't think we have that… Go check? I would, but I'm almost thirty percent sure we don't have it. Forty percent. I'm almost half certain.

(MR. ROBERTS returns from the storage room, taking off his jacket.)

TODD

…Sir, is this book really worth sitting on hold for five to ten minutes for? I didn't think so. You could always just watch the movie. Oop-

(TODD checks the phone. They hung up.)

Hello? Hello-? Huh.

(TODD hangs up and goes back to his book tower.)

MR. ROBERTS

What was that?!

TODD

Customer. Wanted a book. We probably don't have it.

MR. ROBERTS

Probably? Why didn't you check?

TODD

I didn't want to leave him on hold! I hate being left on hold. Besides, our hold music is awful. It sounds like a goose getting run over.

MR. ROBERTS

Bagpipes, Todd. Those are bagpipes. And your job is to sell books, not critique my taste in music.

(Ding! PERLA and LAYTON enter, looking around the bookstore. PERLA carries a parasol.)

MR. ROBERTS

Can I trust you to help these two?

TODD

Probably?

MR. ROBERTS

Less 'probably's, Todd, and more 'certainly's. You know what they say, assurance is the key to success.

(MR. ROBERTS exits to the employee lounge.)

TODD

I hate it when he speaks in fortune cookie.

(LAYTON runs up to TODD.)

LAYTON

Excuse me, how rare are the antique books that you sell here?

TODD

I dunno. Pretty rare.

LAYTON

Pretty rare? As in more than usual, or not as significantly so? Here, let's try this. On a rarity scale of one to ten, would you say you specialize in more threes, fives, or eights?

TODD

I've been up since six this morning dude, I don't know what you want from me.

PERLA

Step aside, brother.

(PERLA hits LAYTON with her parasol and stares down TODD.)

I was told this bookstore is the resting place of a very rare piece of literature. I would like to purchase it.

TODD

You're in the right place.

PERLA

Do not patronize me. I know you know what book I am referring to. Fetch it for me, and I will be on my way. Layton, give him the payment.

(LAYTON takes out a wad of cash and puts it down on the counter. TODD is in awe.)

TODD

Are those hundreds?! How did you get all this-?! You look like you're twelve!

LAYTON

Is it not enough? I apologize, I am not very familiar with exchange rates.

(The phone rings.)

TODD

Uh-don't go anywhere.

(TODD runs to the landline.)

Hello and Merry Christmas Eve, Roberts's Book Emporium, this is Todd… Yes, it's me again. It hasn't even been five minutes! I told you, just watch the movie or something. Look, I'm dealing with a preteen Jessie James over here, I don't have time to check the back for your book. I'll save you some time. The dog dies.

(They hang up.)

TODD

Hello? Hello-?

PERLA

I don't like being kept waiting.

TODD

Yeah, alright, you have my full attention. Where'd you get that money?

PERLA

I'm rich.

LAYTON

Our family is.

PERLA *(bragging)*

Father sells oil. Sometimes illegally.

TODD

And what, you're just dropping this kind of cash on reading material for the next twenty years?

PERLA

One book. It should have been delivered this morning- unless it is running late. In which case, I will simply wait here until it arrives. Layton, retrieve my currency.

(LAYTON takes the money back.)

LAYTON

Is there a cooking section? I quite enjoy looking at recipes.

(TODD points at the cooking section. LAYTON eagerly runs off as PERLA sits on a pile of books and begins filing her nails.)

TODD

Who are these kids-?

(Ding! TRIXIE enters, spinning a gun on her finger.)

TODD

Uh- hello. Welcome to Roberts's Book Emporium.

(TRIXIE continues spinning her gun on her finger.)

TRIXIE

This is the place, then, huh? It's hard to find.

TODD

Yeah, we're a little out of the way. Is that a gun-?

(TRIXIE drops the gun. TODD yelps and jumps back.)

TRIXIE

Oops. That's why I always keep the safety on.

(TRIXIE picks up the gun, turning on the safety.)

Starting now. What's your name, buddy?

TODD

Todd?

TRIXIE

Todd. Shouldn't scream like that, Todd. Makes you sound like a little girl. Is the package here yet?

(Pause. TODD is slightly infatuated with TRIXIE.)

TRIXIE

I'll take that as a no. You got a bathroom?

TODD

Probably?

(Pause. TRIXIE stares at TODD.)

TRIXIE

You're not very helpful, Todd. I'll just find it myself.

(TRIXIE goes into the back storage room as MR. ROBERTS enters with two cups of coffee.)

MR. ROBERTS

Your choice, Todd. Black or black?

TODD

Are we out of cream?

MR. ROBERTS

Ran out yesterday. I'll get some more after the holidays.

TODD

I can't really drink coffee black.

MR. ROBERTS

And I am not wasting a cup of coffee. I brewed for two, you will drink this black coffee and enjoy it.

TODD

Not if there's no cream. Can't you drink it?

MR. ROBERTS

Todd, I am sixty-eight. If I drink more than one cup of

MR. ROBERTS (CONT)
coffee at a time my heart will explode and cream will be forever out of the question. You also won't have a job. Drink.

(TODD takes the coffee.)

MR. ROBERTS
How are sales-?

TODD
There's a cop in our storage room.

MR. ROBERTS
What?

(Ding! CEDRIC enters, silent and focused.)

PERLA
There you are, Cedric. Took you long enough.

LAYTON
Cedric! I must have these cookbooks! Did you know there is such a thing as 'vegan ice cream'? It is unnatural, yet intriguing!

MR. ROBERTS
Did you say there's a cop in our storage room?

LAYTON
It comes in vanilla, chocolate, and pistachio!

(TRIXIE enters from the storage room.)

TRIXIE
Whole lotta books back there. And a wheelbarrow, what's up with that? The bathroom must be this way.

(TRIXIE enters the employee lounge.)

TODD

Well, now the cop's in the employee lounge.

MR. ROBERTS

Excuse me, ma'am-?

(MR. ROBERTS chases after TRIXIE.)

PERLA

Cedric, my shoulders are sore.

(CEDRIC gives PERLA a shoulder massage.)

TODD

Would one of you tell me what package you're waiting for?

(CEDRIC shushes TODD.)

PERLA

Pardon my butler. Cedric prefers silence. You'll have to wait until after my massage.

(CEDRIC shushes TODD again. LAYTON approaches TODD.)

LAYTON

Excuse me, I believe I have finished reading all of your cookbooks. Are there any more in the back?

TODD

Probably. Go help yourself.

(TODD points LAYTON to the storage room.)

You've got a weird brother.

(CEDRIC shushes TODD. The phone rings.)

TODD

This guy again.

(TODD goes behind the counter and picks up the phone.)

Listen, pal, you're really starting to get on my nerves. WE DON'T HAVE THE BOOK.

(Lights rise on HARVARD and PINEHURST, sitting at a communications board in the depths of a top-secret government facility.)

HARVARD

You don't? Pinehurst, did you hear that? The book hasn't gotten there! They might still have a chance to make it out of this alive!

TODD

…Excuse me? Who is this?

HARVARD

Special Agent James Harvard at your service.

PINEHURST

We shouldn't be giving them our names-!

HARVARD

Andthe worrywart next to me is my Assistant Agent, Terrence Pinehurst. Our job is to protect helpless citizens such as yourself from the dangers of crime, villainy, and untamed evil.

TODD

I'm Todd. Todd Schwartz. I work at this bookstore.

HARVARD

Well, Todd, did you know you are in extreme danger and likely won't live through the night?

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TODD

What do I say again?

SHERBERT

(rising up)

Just give them their cocoa and tell them to come in. I put enough tranquilizer to kill a horse in those drinks. Once they're asleep, the rest of you know what to do.

(Everyone holds up baseball bats.)

SHERBERT

Good.

LAYTON

I'm surprised a bookstore had so many baseball bats.

(CEDRIC shushes LAYTON. SHERBERT lowers back down. TODD gulps and goes to the door, knocking.)

TODD

Harvard? I've got your cocoa!

HARVARD

(through the door)

Is it hot?

(TODD turns to SHERBERT, who rises and nods.)

TODD

Yes!

(HARVARD and PINEHURST enter, PINEHURST visibly shivering.)

HARVARD

Ah! Ah. Oh. You're Todd?

TODD

Yeah?

HARVARD

Huh. I was hoping the voice wouldn't match the… well… it's not your fault. Let's see that cocoa!

(HARVARD takes the drink and sniffs it. PINEHURST gingerly takes the cup.)

HARVARD

Now THAT'S some cocoa! See, Pinehurst? Wasn't that worth it?

PINEHURST

No.

(HARVARD turns to TODD.)

HARVARD

Ignore him. It's past his bedtime.

(noticing TODD shaking)

Yikes, Todd. You're shaking as much as Pinehurst. Is it really that cold in here? Where are my manners, you should be the one with the cocoa. Here, drink up.

(HARVARD gives TODD his cocoa.)

TODD

Oh, no, I really couldn't-!

HARVARD

You're right. One cup isn't enough.

(HARVARD takes PINEHURST's cocoa and gives it to TODD.)

We'll have the next round, won't we, Pinehurst? Now drink up!

TODD

But-! I-! Uh…

(TODD looks around helplessly, then downs both cups of cocoa.)

HARVARD

There you are! You look better already!

(TODD leans back into PERLA, practically collapsing on her.)

HARVARD

Must've been a long night. Is there a bathroom around here?

MR. ROBERTS

Yes- through the lounge, that way.

(MR. ROBERTS directs HARVARD.)

HARVARD

Thank you! We'll be right back. Let's go, Pinehurst.

(HARVARD and PINEHURST exit to the lounge. SHERBERT rises up from behind the counter.)

SHERBERT

What happened?! Did they drink the tranquilizer, eh?!

(PERLA pushes TODD of of her, who then collapses onto the floor, asleep.)

PERLA

No.

(SHERBERT lets out an annoyed grunt.)

SHERBERT

You! And you!

(SHERBERT points at PERLA and LAYTON.)

When they come back, knock them out, won'tcha?

LAYTON

How should we knock them out?

(PERLA hits LAYTON with her baseball bat.)

LAYTON

Ow! Oh.

SHERBERT

Get over there! And old man! Distract them, please!

(SHERBERT ducks back down as PERLA and LAYTON take their positions. MR. ROBERTS sighs.)

MR. ROBERTS

Old man…

(HARVARD and PINEHURST begin to enter, returning from the bathroom.)

HARVARD

I told you, Pinehurst, it goes twice as fast if we go together. It's called efficiency. Oh, look! A penny!

(HARVARD and PINEHURST bend over to pick up the coin, causing PERLA and LAYTON to swing their bats over them and hit each other, knocking each other down. HARVARD and PINEHURST stand back up with the coin.)

HARVARD

Would you look at that! We are now a cent richer, Pinehurst.

PINEHURST

Goodie.

(HARVARD and PINEHURST approach MR. ROBERTS, oblivious to PERLA and LAYTON recovering on the floor. SHERBERT rises, unseen, angrily gesturing at PERLA and LAYTON. PINEHURST turns towards him, but SHERBERT ducks down.)

HARVARD

So, about that Bible-

(HENRY sits up from under his blanket.)

HARVARD

Woah there.

HENRY

Did you say you found a penny?

HARVARD

Yeah, I did. Were you just napping down there, or-?

HENRY

I need that penny. Give it to me.

HARVARD

Ever heard of ‘finders, keepers’, mailman? Besides, ninety-nine more of these, and I’ve got myself a honey-glazed donut.

PINEHURST

Don’t forget tax.

HARVARD

One-hundred and six more of these, and I’ve got myself a honey-glazed donut.

HARVARD (CONT)

(to MR. ROBERTS)

Where did you say that Bible was again?

MR. ROBERTS

Oh, it's in the back room. Here, I'll show you.

(MR. ROBERTS waves HARVARD and PINEHURST towards the room. SHERBERT rises up, waving at HENRY to hit HARVARD. HENRY raises his bat, heading towards HARVARD, but slips on the Gutenberg Bible pages on the ground while swinging, hitting MR. ROBERTS instead and then himself on the recoil. MR. ROBERTS and HENRY collapse as HARVARD and PINEHURST enter the storage room. SHERBERT stares incredulously at the two now-unconscious men.)

TRIXIE

Wow. I don't even know what to say to all of this.

SHERBERT

Then please, quiet down there and GET THEM!

TRIXIE

Alright, geez, calm down.

(TRIXIE readies her bat and walks towards the room. Suddenly, HARVARD runs on, whooping and pushing PINEHURST in the wheelbarrow. HARVARD accidentally hits TRIXIE with the wheelbarrow, causing her to hit her head on the counter and collapse, unconscious. SHERBERT is in disbelief.)

HARVARD

She'll be fine. Wasn't that fun, Pinehurst? Who would've thought there'd be a wheelbarrow back there?

(PINEHURST gets out of the wheelbarrow.)

PINEHURST

But no Bible. Where's the Bible?

HARVARD

That's right, I keep forgetting about that- you heard the assistant, no more fun and games.

(to SHERBERT)

Where's the Bible?

SHERBERT

What Bible?

PINEHURST

The Gutenberg Bible.

HARVARD

Real old, real expensive. Probably about yay big.

PINEHURST

We know it was here. Either tell us or we'll have to arrest you.

SHERBERT

Oh, that Bible! I hid it in the refrigerator, in the lounge back there.

HARVARD *(suspicious)*

The refrigerator, eh?

(oblivious)

…Genius! Nobody would think about looking for it there! Come on, Pinehurst, let's just turn our backs to this fine gentleman here and retrieve that Bible!

(HARVARD and PINEHURST turn toward the lounge, beginning to exit. SHERBERT takes out his gun and points it at HARVARD and PINEHURST.)

SHERBERT

Eh, it's been a pleasure, Agent Harvard.

(HARVARD pauses, then turns. SHERBERT hides his gun.)

HARVARD

What did you just say?

SHERBERT

I put the Bible in the refrigerator. Just back there.

HARVARD

No, after that. I'm getting a strange feeling about all of this, Pinehurst.

(turning to SHERBERT)

Why did you hide the Bible in the first place? What's with all this paper on the floor? And why is everyone so gosh dang sleepy?

(HARVARD approaches SHERBERT.)

Something fishy is going on, and I'm beginning to think that you, sir, are behind it-

(Pause. HARVARD looks down.)

Ugh. The floor's all sticky… And you're behind it. I'm gonna need your license and registration.

(SHERBERT pulls out his gun and points it at HARVARD.)

HARVARD

No, I said I need your license and registration- wait.

(SHERBERT pushes HARVARD back with his gun.)

SHERBERT

Fine. You've caught me. The cat's out of the bag, eh? That's right, I'm the murderous, bloodthirsty, no-good art thief. But it looks like you figured it out too late, Harvard.

HARVARD

I should have known. It's always the Canadians, isn't it, Pinehurst?

SHERBERT

I'm Canadian.

HARVARD

Was this your plan all along, art thief? Take Pinehurst and I down and escape with the Bible?

SHERBERT

That was the plan, before these not-so-smart individuals went and made a mess of everything. Look around you, Harvard. This is what's left of the Bible.

(HARVARD and PINEHURST look at the paper and realize.)

HARVARD

Pinehurst, does this make our job easier or harder?

PINEHURST

This is the Gutenberg Bible?!

SHERBERT

It wasn't me! It was those hosers! I would've been blackmailing over fifty museums by now if they hadn't gone and ripped it to shreds!

HARVARD

Like we're gonna believe a murderous, bloodthirsty, no-good art thief.

SHERBERT

Soon enough, it's not gonna matter what you believe, eh?

PINEHURST

So what, you did this to everyone?

(PINEHURST gestures around.)

Took down six innocent people, just because they were in your way?

SHERBERT

Oh, they did that to themselves. And hold on a minute there- did you say six people?

(SHERBERT pauses, counting TODD, MR. ROBERTS, TRIXIE, PERLA, LAYTON, and HENRY.)

Eh, that's strange- I could've sworn there were seven…

(CEDRIC has risen up behind SHERBERT, still adorned in his lampshade and menacingly holding his baseball bat. CEDRIC shushes HARVARD and PINEHURST, unbeknownst to SHERBERT, who is counting again, oblivious.)

SHERBERT

One, two, three-four… yeah, six. Very odd.

(noticing)

Ugh, this floor is sticky-

(CEDRIC cracks SHERBERT over the head with the bat. SHERBERT collapses.)

HARVARD

Are you sure he's down?

(CEDRIC hits SHERBERT three more times, then nods.)

HARVARD

Sir, you have just assisted in catching an extremely dangerous, murderous, bloodthirsty-

PINEHURST

We get it. We owe you a debt of gratitude, sir.

(CEDRIC nods. An alarm goes off.)

HARVARD

Would you look at that!

(HARVARD takes out his cellular phone.)

It's midnight, Pinehurst! Merry Christmas!

PINEHURST

If we hurry up and arrest him now, we might make it back in time for the holiday eggnog and fruitcake party.

HARVARD

You're right. Throw him in the wheelbarrow.

(PINEHURST shoves the unconscious SHERBERT into the wheelbarrow as HARVARD begins to wheel him off.)

HARVARD

Thanks again, sir! You're a true American hero! Pinehurst, gather as much of the Bible as you can, we can just glue it back together or something. Gonna get me some eggnog!

(HARVARD runs of with SHERBERT in the wheelbarrow as PINEHURST grabs a handful of papers and dashes after him.

(CEDRIC waves after them, then looks around the room, viewing the unconscious TODD, MR. ROBERTS, TRIXIE, PERLA, LAYTON, and HENRY.)

(The lights dim. CEDRIC claps, and the single spotlight shines down on CEDRIC, still wearing a lampshade.)

CEDRIC

And so, with the world deprived of yet another priceless and irreplaceable artifact, the secret agents ran off to their party, only stopping to throw Sherbert into a prison cell at a random, unregistered detention center. Sherbert would escape the following weekend. Everyone woke up hours later on Christmas Day with pounding headaches, and a general agreement never to discuss the previous night's events ever again. Henry quit being a mailman and finally enjoyed spending time with his family, along with mediocre unemployment checks. Perla gave up on collecting antique books and entered the world of modeling. She was a moderate success. Layton received a cooking scholarship for his new specialty, blue razzberry sherbert. It was a great success. Trixie, having learned nothing, continued looking for police work through Craig's List. And finally, Mr. Roberts retired, as he decided it was time to pass his bookstore along to his well-trusted employee, Todd. Todd, wildly unqualified for the position, drove the shop into bankruptcy by the second week. As for me, I finally got what I wanted all along: some temporary peace and quiet. Merry Christmas.

(CEDRIC tips his lampshade hat and softly shushes the audience. Blackout.)

(The End)



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