

REINDEER TROUBLE

By Jeff Dunne

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jeff@bearcreations.org

CHARACTERS

DWINKY	A desperate elf who is very behind schedule because his reindeer has broken down.
PINKLE	A laid-back but basically incompetent reindeer mechanic.
SUSIE	A sweet little girl.

Note: Dwinky and Pinkle are written as male, but could be cast female if desired.

SETTING

Susie's backyard late on Christmas Eve.

SCENE

(Pinkle and Dwinky, two elves, are standing in front of a small sleigh. Dwinky is festively dressed, while Pinkle is wearing overalls with a nametag. Harnessed to the sleigh is a comatose reindeer lying on its back, the only evidence of which are the animal's belly and four stiff legs sticking straight up out of the snow. They are considering the poor animal like two people with no mechanical aptitude but a lot of optimism might stare into the open hood of a car that has broken down on the side of the road.)

PINKLE

Huh.

DWINKY

So? Do you think you can do anything?

PINKLE

Huh.

DWINKY

'Cause I'm in kind of a rush.

PINKLE

Huh.

DWINKY

I was hoping for more than just *huh* here. I've got a huge bag of presents that need to get delivered tonight, and I'm already way behind schedule on account of waiting for you to get out here.

PINKLE

(Still staring at the reindeer...)

Huh.

DWINKY

Honestly, it says right here on my triple R card that you'll have someone out to help within thirty minutes. Thirty minutes. It took over an hour!

PINKLE

(Suddenly realizing that Dwinky has been speaking, and asking what he said...)

Huh?

DWINKY

An hour! What am I goi—

PINKLE

Yeah, sorry about that. I had to stop and get a sa— *(He reconsiders.)* Never mind. Anyway, I'm here now.

DWINKY

A what? You were going to say a *sandwich*, weren't you?

PINKLE

(Indignant, and totally lying...)

No.

DWINKY

Then what? A sand blaster? A santa hat? A salmon?

PINKLE

I think we should focus on the problem at hand.

DWINKY

Whatever.

PINKLE

You say you can't get it to turn over?

(Dwinky looks at Pinkle in disbelief, then motions to the animal with its legs in the air.)

So that's a no? In weather like this, you really want to keep it running while you pop down the chimney. This kind of thing can really throw off your schedule.

DWINKY

You think?!?

PINKLE

Alright, let me see what I can do.

(Pinkle tries to roll the reindeer over, but can't budge it.)

Nope. Looks like it's really seized up there. Have you got the reins?

DWINKY

They're in the sleigh.

(Pinkle goes to the sleigh, takes hold of the reins, and gives them a little 'giddyup' shake. Unsurprisingly nothing happens. Then...)

PINKLE

(Like encouraging a horse, but unenthusiastically:) Hyah. *(Beat.)* Wow. Nothing.

DWINKY

I know 'nothing'. Don't you think I already tried that?!

PINKLE

Oh, before I forget, can I see your triple R card?

DWINKY

Here. Honestly, you'd think Rudolph's Reindeer Repair would have a few more tricks up their sleeve than this.

PINKLE

When was the last time you had this reindeer serviced?

DWINKY

Don't try to weasel out of this. Look, I've got thirty-seven more houses to visit before dawn, and its already...

(He looks at his wrist, but isn't wearing a watch. Dwinky grabs Pinkle's wrist, but he isn't wearing one either. He looks up.)

...really dark. Come on. If you can't fix it, do you have some kind of loaner I can use?

PINKLE

A spare reindeer? Tonight? Ha! You're not serious, are you?

DWINKY

Hey, I have an idea. Something that will work really well for some of the both of us. I'll just use yours.

PINKLE

No way, pal. We have strict rules about letting non-employees drive company reindeer. I could lose my job.

DWINKY

Then you drive. What are you riding?

PINKLE

Impala.

DWINKY

Chevy?

PINKLE

The other kind, and young, so it's just a single seater right now.

DWINKY

Look... (*he checks a nametag on Pinkle's uniform...*) Pinkle, this is important stuff. Do you have any idea what kind of trouble I'll get in if I don't get these presents delivered? There's a reason we all call him mister *claws* (*making a clawing gesture*).

PINKLE

Sorry... (*looks down at Dwinky's RRR card...*) mister Dwinky—

DWINKY

That's Senior Yuletide Assistant Dwinky to you, mister Pinkle. And don't think I don't know what you're trying to pull here!

PINKLE

Hey, I'm sorry you're in a bind, but getting angry at me won't speed this up. Now let me think. Have you checked the plugs?

DWINKY

It's a reindeer! It doesn't have spark plugs!!

PINKLE

Not spark plugs. Earplugs. If it's wearing earplugs, could be it just can't hear us.

DWINKY

He doesn't have earplugs. Or noseplugs. Or hair plugs. It's—

PINKLE

Could be a gas problem.

DWINKY

What?

PINKLE

You know, gas? Was he farting a lot before this happened?

DWINKY

No!

PINKLE

So maybe the piping's clogged.

DWINKY

The piping's...

PINKLE

Backed up a bit, if you know what I mean. A little discomfort can interfere with—

DWINKY

Look at him! This is not a reindeer that's *backed up* a little. Honestly, if I could *get* him to back up a little, that would be a vast improvement.

PINKLE

Oh! Oh! Wait! I have an idea! This is a little trick they teach us first week on the job.

(Pinkle goes over to the reindeer, and suddenly tickles it on the belly while saying...)

Koochy koochy coo!!

(He steps back, eying the animal clinically, and a bit surprised.)

Huh. Nothing.

DWINKY

I don't believe this. I do *not* believe this.

PINKLE

Say, did you try making that tck sound?

(Dwinky stares at him in disbelief, and Pinkle starts to make a palatal clicking like calling a horse...)

Tck tck. Come on! Tck tck. *(Beat.)* Nope. Huh. Well, there is one other thing that could cause a condition like this. Battery.

DWINKY

He's a reindeer. They don't have—

PINKLE

Could definitely be a battery problem. Have you been hitting him? Assault and battery can sometimes cause—

DWINKY

I HAVE NOT BEEN HITTING MY REINDEER! Are you out of your mind?!?

PINKLE

Whoa, buddy. Time to switch to decaf. I was just asking a ques—

DWINKY

Now look, I have to get the rest of these presents delivered OSGB, and—

PINKLE

OSGB?

DWINKY

Or Santa Goes Ballistic. O S G B. Now, do you have any animals to borrow?

PINKLE

I've got a pet hamster named Snuggles.

DWINKY

Is it part mammoth?

PINKLE

No—

DWINKY

Then how is it going to pull my sleigh!?!?

PINKLE

It can't. It's a *hamster*, Dwinky.

DWINKY

Why do *think* I want to borrow it?!

PINKLE

Borrow! I thought you said you wanted an animal to *burrow*.

DWINKY

Why would I want that?

PINKLE

I don't know, but the customer's always right, you know? So if you want something to burrow, then—

DWINKY

I don't want something to burrow! I want an animal that can pull my sleigh so I can deliver these gifts!

PINKLE

Oh, hey, what about a horse? I bet a horse could pull that sleigh—

DWINKY

Yes! Yes!! Now we're talking!

PINKLE

Okay, well, glad I could help. Have a good night.

DWINKY

Wait wait wait wait wait! Where are you going?

PINKLE

Oh, right. Here's your card back.

DWINKY

No...

PINKLE

What?

DWINKY

Where's my horse?

PINKLE

How should I know?

DWINKY

You just said you were going to loan me a horse.

PINKLE

No. I just said that a horse could definitely pull that sleigh.

DWINKY

But—

PINKLE

I didn't say I had one.

DWINKY

I hate you.

PINKLE

Wow. Pretty nasty attitude for an elf on Christmas Eve.

DWINKY

Why are you doing this to me!?!

PINKLE

You should stop yelling. It's not good for—

DWINKY

I'll stop yelling when you start doing your job!!

PINKLE

I am—

DWINKY

I pay my triple R dues all year long, and *THE ONE TIME I NEED*—

*(There's a bustling sound from offstage, a child
fumbling to the door.)*

DWINKY AND PINKLE

Uh oh.

DWINKY

Quick! Hide... *(He suddenly remembers the reindeer...)* Uh... Come here. Here. Here here here. Stand here!

(Dwinky positions Pinkle next to the front pair of legs, and he stands by the back pair to obscure them just as Susie comes out, yawning. When she speaks, she has a little trouble with her R's and L's.)

SUSIE

Hewwo?

DWINKY

(Sing-songy cheerful.)

Hello!

(Dwinky nudges Pinkle.)

PINKLE

(Apathetically...)

Hey.

SUSIE

Aw you ewves?

DWINKY

Yes. Yes we are.

(Susie squeals in delight, and then shouts.)

SUSIE

Santa Cwaus!!

(Dwinky goes into a "I'm so dead" panic.)

DWINKY

Where!?! Where!?! *(Finally understanding...)* Oh. Right. Yeah, right. I work for Santa Claus.

SUSIE

Santa's wondewfuw!

DWINKY

Ehh, he's not as great as... *(Suddenly remembering that he's talking to a little kid...)*
Yes. Yes he is. Very wonderful.

(Pinkle leaves his post obscuring the upright legs of the reindeer, and goes to the back end of the beast.)

SUSIE

My mommy says that if I'm a good girw awl yeaw wong then Santa wiwl bwing me a *(don't pause here, but do change tone)* what's that? *(She points at the reindeer's front legs.)*

DWINKY

(Freaking out, to Pinkle...)

What are you *doing*?!?

PINKLE

I never checked the exhaust system.

(He starts crouching down but Dwinky frantically stops him.)

DWINKY

Are you trying to traumatize little Susie here?

SUSIE

How do you know my name?

(Dwinky turns back to Susie, and behind him Pinkle starts leaning idly on the stiff, upright reindeer legs.)

DWINKY

What? Well, you know that Santa has a list, and...

(In these next lines, Susie is cheerful, innocent, and very proud that she can explain all this to someone...)

SUSIE

My daddy says that Santa's wist is a bweach of pwicavy.

DWINKY

Well, that's not exactly—

SUSIE

He says that the hippos work to protect our privacy.

DWINKY

He says... what?

SUSIE

The hippos have wags about sharing data.

DWINKY

Hippos? Like...

SUSIE

Uh huh. Hippo wags.

(Right about now, Pinkle's curiosity has grown, and he starts trying, slowly and innocuously, to get check out the reindeer's "exhaust system" again.)

DWINKY

Hippo... HIPAA! HIPAA! Right. Right. Hippo Laws. Sure, sure. Well, you don't need to worry. Santa wouldn't do anything to hurt—

SUSIE

Is that a weindeew?

DWINKY

(Big sigh...)

Yeah. Yeah, that's... that's a reindeer.

SUSIE

What's he doing to the—

DWINKY

Whoa, Pinkle! Pinkle Pinkle. Pinkle just, uh... dropped some candy canes, and was going to pick them up, but...

(Dwinky stomps on the ground like he's crushing them.)

We don't need them. Got plenty. Really.

SUSIE

Can I have one?

DWINKY

Later.

(At this point, Pinkle comes up with the brilliant idea to make the scene a little less gruesome. He gets some Christmas lights and starts stringing them between/upon the reindeer's hooves.)

SUSIE

What's wong with youw weindeew?

DWINKY

Well, you see... What we have here... This reindeer is... well... what's the technical term?

PINKLE

(Over his shoulder while continuing to decorate...)

Kaput.

SUSIE

What?

PINKLE

Kaput. You know, deceased, demised, defunct...

DWINKY

Do you mind?!

SUSIE

Defunct?

PINKLE

Dead.

SUSIE

Ooohhhh.

DWINKY

Oh, God...

PINKLE

(Stopping with the lights...)

Oh hey. I just had an idea.

DWINKY

What?

PINKLE

Susie, do you have a defibrillator in your house, by any chance?

(Dwinky starts to sputter incoherently...)

Or maybe just a car battery? Anything that would generate a huge electrical—

DWINKY

Okay, that's enough of that!

SUSIE

Maybe he's just sweeping.

DWINKY

You know what? That's right! He's just taking a nap. All tired out.

SUSIE

But... if he's asleep, how will you deliver all the presents?

DWINKY

Yeah. Yeah, that's a great question.

SUSIE

You could use my bicycle...

DWINKY

If only... W-what was that?

SUSIE

My bicycle. It's in the garage.

DWINKY

You... you don't mind?

SUSIE

Come on. I'll show you.

DWINKY

That's great! Let me just grab...

(Dwinky grabs a big bag of presents from the sled. As he and Susie start to head off, Pinkle calls out...)

PINKLE

Hey! What do you want me to do with...

DWINKY

Just give it a tow.

SUSIE

Weindeew don't have toes, siwwy...

(Dwinky and Susie exit. Pinkle takes a hard look at the reindeer, grabs a leg, and tries to pull it. It doesn't budge. Lights out.)