

HOLIDAY ISLAND

a British holiday comedy-drama

by P. Symonloe

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HOLIDAY ISLAND

ACT I

SCENE 1

HOTEL RECEPTION - NEW ARRIVALS

All of the above characters are gathered at the Reception of the "Sol Beach" 4 Star luxury Hotel, all marble and deep sofas. It is a better kind of low-rise hotel complex with two pools (one for smaller children and attendant parents and the other for everyone else) At present all the above-named guests are checking in and give off an air of cheerful anticipation that stems from having the whole of their holiday before them.

Tony and Tina are at the desk with Ryan and Britney talking to Luis about their "pool-view". The guests have all arrived on the same coach and thus have developed a superficial acquaintance with each other, certainly enough to pass comment on the décor and the staff. Reggie and Vera are the only couple who have been to the hotel before which gives them a little perceived extra status with the others for their extra knowledge. Luis is checking people in.

LUIS

Mr and Mrs Gitting, two kiddies (pron. Kiddiz) Yes?

(Pron. Jes)

TINA

Yes that's us, family room.

TINA AND TONY

(As one)

With a pool view!

LUIS

(A little surprised)

A pull biew?"

TINA

(very emphatically and a little
concerned)

Yes, definitely with a pool-view and a telly weren't it
Tone?

TONY

That's it Tine. Pool-view for definite and a telly

Tony cranes his head to see the booking register
We booked through Sunsoakers does it say Sunsoakers on
the form?

LUIS

Jes it says e-Sun-e-soakers, but does not say a pull
biew."

TINA AND TONY

(Gasping but still friendly)

No pool view?!

LUIS

No pull biew but... ah... Yes, you have a television.

(he says this Spanish-style with
emphasis on the last syllable)

TONY

Well there must be a mistake there 'coz we booked a
pool-view for definite. We don't go nowhere without
one, not on 'oliday. We always 'ave a pool-view don't
we Tine?

TINA

Yes Tone. We 'ave pool-view every time, and a telly and
extra pillows for me bad back, don't we Tone? Does it
say extra pillows?

LUIS

No, it does not say that about the extra peelows but
is no problem about that. I will tell the chambermaid

for those.

TONY

But what about the pool-view? We will get our
pool-view?!

LUIS

Mr and Mrs Gitting don't worry about that at the moment
I will look into it and come and see you when we have
check-in the other guests. Perhaps you will wait here
in the foyer and I will come and see you again in a few
moments?

Tina and Tony seem a little put out but not so
much as to make a fuss and it is the start of
their holiday after all. So they sit in the very
deep sofas in the foyer with their children Ryan
and Britney and wait to be seen again.

Tina looks over to relate the state of affairs to
Reggie and Vera who have already checked in and
seem familiar with their surroundings

TINA

We always have a pool-view when we go away. Tone says
we've earned it don't you Tone?

TONY

I 'ave earned it Tine. Flogging secondary windows 24/7
says I've earned it Tine!

REGGIE

(Reading. He grunts abruptly)

Hmm?

TONY

(Warming to his theme with Vera, who is
actually listening)

We're in a new four bed Persimmons home a minimum of
200 metres away from the M25 with a sound-deflecting
fence courtesy of the council, double garage with
automatic doors, and 80 metres of garden, end plot. I
made sure of that didn't I Tine?

TINA

You did Tone

TONY

(Luxuriating)

It's triple-glazed. Did it all meself made- sure of
that didn't I Tine?

TINA

You did Tone

VERA

It sounds very nice. You've got just the two children?

TINA

(Maternally)

Yeeees. My two little angels on Earth I always say
Don't I Tone? This is Ryan and Britney

Tina signals them to say hello which they do with
a grudging sense of duty towards the adult world,
running off again immediately

VERA

Our children, Laura and Giles, are grown up and off our
hands now. Laura's a vet and Giles is a solicitor.
Reggie and I are on our own. That's why we can get away
like this more or less whenever we want. No ties really
except the dog, and he's in kennels for the week.

TINA

(High-pitched)

Ooooooh lucky you I suppose you can go away several
times a year if you want to?!

VERA

Well we can do, but we have a great number of other
commitments in the village of course so we don't come
away too often...

Having just confessed to having no ties, Vera is nonetheless anxious to prove they are needed in the local community

Tina seems to be waiting for Vera to elaborate Reggie has the bowls club and I'm secretary of local women's group. Then there's the Rotarians and the Church of course.

We pan back to Reception where Brian and Joan are the next to check-in.

LUIS

Reading painstakingly from an envelope in front of him, which has been pinned to the other paperwork
Mr and Mrs Brian Fair-e-fax Esq?

(Puzzled by the title says it again
tentatively)

Err. Es-es-choir?

Brian looks on irritably

LUIS

Ah sorry no is correct. Is just es-choir!

BRIAN

(speaking as though he is reciting from

a written text and addressing an
imaginary audience)

Mr and Mrs Brian A. W. Fairfax, Waverley, Crooked
Corner, Ripley Nr. Poole in Dorset. What you have there
is the letter I wrote to your establishment. It was
sent by Royal Mail...

(he emphasises Royal as if to suggest
British quality and reliability by
contrast with some other -foreign-
countries)

...October 5th of the current year, giving instructions
concerning the transfer of myself and my wife to this
four-star luxury hotel the Sol-Beach, located
conveniently on the Playa Soliada. We have 3 suit
cases, one travel bag of smaller size, and a
wheelchair. My wife is wheelchair-bound as you can see,
having lost the use of her legs. For this reason we
have requested a room on the first floor close to the
lifts because it is more accessible for my handicapped
wife.

Joan looks disconsolate at this description, and
starts to wheel herself off towards Vera and
Reggie.

LUIS

Yes Mr Fair-e-fax I have a room with a bath and special
grip for your wife is that correct?

BRIAN

Yes, that is as requested in paragraph two, second line of my letter, namely a handgrip on the bath and wheelchair access to the balcony.

LUIS

You can get out on to the balcony from your room very easy Mr Fair-e-fax, and the maid will assist you if you wish.

BRIAN

(Looking faintly offended)

That will certainly not be necessary. The clearance on the chair is 26 mm, and I shall be capable of making the manoeuvre unaided thank you very much.

LUIS

Very well Mr Fair-e-fax. I will ask to have your cases to be taken up.

Brian moves away to join Joan over with the other couples. Luis comes out from behind Reception to talk to Tony and Tina.

LUIS

Ah, Mr and Mrs Gittings. I jave, I am plis to report, a pull-biew for you now.

Tina and Tony smile effusively and go off to their room happy.

TINA

(to Tony)

I bet it says it on the form and 'e just missed it Tone

TONY

That'll be it Tine. 'E just don't speak English proper innit?!

Luis returns to Reception where Lena and Mark are waiting and Light is throwing small pieces of paper onto the floor. Lena looks harassed and Mark looks pleased with himself, even a little smug.

LUIS

Yes can I help you, Mr and Mrs...?.

Mark comes forward while Lena goes to sit down with the other new arrivals

MARK

Actually we're Mr Mark Turnbull and Ms Lena Graham. We aren't constrained by the outmoded convention of marriage

LUIS

(Mark's point is lost on him)

Err e-sorry?

(Rolling his Rs)

MARK

Never mind, don't worry I booked us in under my name

Mark Turnbull two adults and one child, Light

(Thinking that everyone will be

interested in their special child's

special name)

LUIS

(Misunderstanding)

Sorry, she is light?

MARK

Yes Light. She's just there recuperating poor darling

she's exhausted after the long journey

In fact she is pulling long strands of chewing gum

out of her mouth. She looks in fact quite

pugnacious in type, and plump.

MARK

Poor, poor darling.

LUIS

(Still missing the point)

So she does not eat?

MARK

(Also puzzled)

Sorry?

Luis looks at the large, ferocious child before
him

LUIS

Well, you say she is light. So she does not eat
sufficient food?

MARK

(Laughs)

No, noooooooooo (exaggerated). Her name is Light. Like
light and dark!

The light dawns on Luis as he studies the child
carefully, and after a moment's pause

LUIS

Ah yes I can see it is just her name!

MARK

Anyway I booked us in for one week and I think you
should have a special order there for Soya Milk to be

sent to our room daily, and because we are vegetarians,
I have asked for the restaurant to supply vegetarian
meals, do you have a note of that?

LUIS

Err jes. Mr Turn-e-bull we have e-special vegetarian
meals for you and your err "partner" and your light
child, excuse me, for your child.

Luis looks at her again with curiosity
Light (said a little ironically). Here is jour key.

MARK

Great! We're all done then! Lena angel we can go to the
room now darling. Light come along sweetest one, "light
of our lives" we can go to the room!

LENA

(Lethargically)
Yes I'm coming, bring Light will you? I feel
spiritually drained. I shall need my crystals to rise
above the drabness!

Light snaps the chewing gum back into her mouth
pettishly

LIGHT

Are we going to the dumb room now or what?!

MARK

Light you are distraught please don't talk that way-
come, come.

They go off towards the lift. Mark wafts along,
Lena pulls herself along painfully, and Light
stomps.

We pan back to the other guests who have been
within earshot of this dialogue and who now smile
ironically at each other, at the two alternative
parents and their really quite standard issue
child.

TONY

(To everyone)

That nipper's got them wrapped round 'er little finger
and no mistake!

TINA

We don't stand for none of that kind of thing do we
Tone?

VERA

What she needs is a dose of healthy neglect I'd say.
Parents have too much time and money these days, its
sends the wrong signals

Reggie looks up from his paper and looks at his watch.

REGGIE

What did you say dear?

VERA

I was just saying to this lady and her husband...

(she looks at them questioningly)

I'm so sorry I don't even know your names?

TINA AND TONY

(Together)

Tina and Tony how do you do?

They all shake hands

TONY

It's Tina and Tony Gittings, but people call us "Tine and Tone" don't they Tine?

TINA

They do Tone, they do, "Tine and Tone" unless its "Tone and Tine" some people like to do it backwards don't they Tone!

Tina finds funny and squeals with laughter.

VERA

(Smiling kindly)

Very nice to meet you, I'm Vera Benedict and this is Reggie. Anyhow I was just remarking, Reggie, to Tina and Tony (she clearly decides that the even more vulgar version of already vulgar names would be going too far) that the child in Reception just now needs a dose of healthy neglect and that too much neurotic focus these days on children denies them the chance to grow up making their own mistakes and forming natural relationships with others. Did you know that 83% of children in Britain have both a TV and a PC in their bedrooms?!!

Tina and Tony look at each other a little guiltily as if to suggest that their children are among this number. Britney pulls at her mother's sleeve to say that this is indeed the case but Tina silences her before she can speak.

Reggie looks at his watch, not really listening.

REGGIE

Yes dear I think we'll go up now.

He turns to Tina and Tony as an explanation.

You see they start the "Welcome Talk" soon so we need to unpack and get back down for 11 in Reception.

TINA

Oooh do they? Tone did you hear that? There's a welcome talk and a welcome drink too I shouldn't wonder, so we need to be back in Reception by 11!

Turning to the older couple

Vera and Reggie must have been here before.

Vera and Reggie nod indulgently in assent

TONY

Welcome Talk is it? Well I'll be here if there's any booze involved won't I Tine?

TINA

Oooh yes you'll be here alright Tone. You should see 'im put it away. 'E's like a drinking machine is Tone, 'e could drink for England couldn't you Tone?

TONY

Sure could lover-girl. Anyway see you all here at 11.

VERA

Yes see you soon.

They say goodbye and drift off towards the lift.
We pan back to Reception again

Enter Chas and Dick, both very evidently gay and
colourfully dressed in Hawaiian shirts are
checking in.

Luis looks at them with amusement.

LUIS

Hello, can I take your names please?

CHAS

(The more extroverted of the two)

Well you can take anything you want, as far as I'm
concerned!

DICK

(With mock sternness)

Do excuse my friend he's not feeling himself today! Are
you Chas love?

Luis continues to look on with mild amusement
these two make a refreshing change from the
run-of-the-mill guests at least.

CHAS

No I'd rather be feeling someone else to be frank and I

think I know who!

He looks seductively at Luis and then with a
pantomime sneer at Dick

DICK

(Looking in explanation at Dick)

You see, he really is an outrageous tart! However, to
be sensible for a second, the names are Chas Chancy and
Dick Rigor.

LUIS

(With a note of discovery)

Ah yes I will have you on the second floor. Is okay!?

At this Chas and Dick both fall about to some
extent

CHAS

Ooh promises, promises. He's going to have us on the
second floor!

DICK

(Still amused)

What number room are we in?

LUIS

I'll give you 68, is that okay?

CHAS

(Shrieks)

Oooh 68! Are you sure we can't have the room next door?

LUIS

(Earnestly)

Ah, sorry no that one is taken

CHAS

No really 68 will be heavenly, thank you!

Dick pulls Chas away from the desk

DICK

Come on you old tart, its time to get out of this young man's way.

CHAS

(To Luis)

Okay. Oh I do like it when he's masterful, I think that's why I fell for him you know!

LUIS

(Mystified but amused)

Fell-e- for?

CHAS

Never mind handsome, catch you later!

Luis smiles indulgently since he is well used to having all manner of holiday "types" at Reception. Chas and Dick drift off towards the lift with Chas mincing rather outrageously.

SCENE 2

THE WELCOME DRINK

All the above-mentioned guests are gathered in Reception once again but now have changed in to shorts and gaudily coloured clothes and are grasping equally gaudy cocktails while the children have soft drinks of well known brands, except for "Light" who has a glass of Soya milk which she is not drinking and in addition is looking even grumpier than before. There is present a holiday "Rep" who is off stage left but whose voice we can hear giving the usual rather vacuously cheerful and mechanical (from endless repetition) holiday "Welcome Talk" about the weather, the "culture", the water and the sights and the hotel in-house events. We can hear her voice and we can both see the guests and hear their questions and responses.

The Rep's speech is all conveyed in a "shiny" continuous monologue until the points where she is interrupted:

HALEY (O.S)

Well hello there ladies and gentlemen and children, my name is Haley and I'm your Sunsoakers Rep here at the luxury 4 star Solbeach Hotel situated on this gorgeously sunny Spanish paradise island. This is not mainland Spain but it is still Spain and the locals still speak Spanish and we still use Spanish currency, which used to be pes-ate-ah (she pronounces all the Spanish words in idiot-proof syllable by syllable fashion) but which is now the Euro (she pronounces it "you-row"). You may have heard of it? It's really easy to understand.

BRIAN

(Undertone, to Reggie and Vera)

If you're a bloody foreigner that is!

Reggie and Vera chuckle

HALEY (O.S)

The people are friendly here on the paradise island.
(Paradise again delivered as though it were synonymous with north or south - a statement of fact devoid of any further significance)

At this point Tony puts his hand up and the voice stops, waiting for him to speak.

TONY

Yes, Tony Gittings, Tone to me friends! Well, I was just going to ask... is it okay to drink the water?

HALEY (O.S)

(Laughing)

Yes, yes of course Mr Gittings. The water here is de-sal-in-ate-ed, and then purified and then brought in container lorries to the 4- star luxury paradise hotel for your con-sump-tion.

Tony looks satisfied with this and looks round at Tina with an impressed raising of the eyebrows.

HALEY (O.S)

On the paradise island you will find the people friendly and welcoming towards your children...

Mark looks over indulgently towards Light ...and they will be able to go into all the same res-ter-ronts that you go into, and the waiters and others will be delighted to have them around.

(Her delivery makes it sound like a law of nature.)

BRIAN

(Undertone)

Which is more than I will...

HALEY (O.S)

And in the evening there will be kiddies entertainment led by Lew-ees who you have probably already bumped into at Reception.

CHAS

Not as much as I would like to bump into him I can...

Dick nudges him to interrupt.

HALEY (O.S)

Now, as I was saying, here on the paradise island there are loads and loads of things to visit, you can see the aquarium, the dolphinarium, the solarium, the beach, you can take the boat-trip go diving, snorkelling, see the parrots the chimps the camels the mini-golf go paragliding, parascending, absailing, bungy-jumping rock-climbing, hill-walking and mountaineering. You can go to the banana plantations and the tomato growing greenhouses and then go on to visit the wild cactuses in the hills. You can go by four-wheel drive or open-top vehicle or family saloon to the other side of the island or you can take a bus or a taxi or a private

hire car to the town and see the botanical gardens.
When you've done all that and you're tired out and
hungry you can try the "Cliff-top sea-food grotto" or
the "Palm-tree Hamburger Palace" or the "Paradise Pizza
Parlour" or the "Vision of India" which is In-di-an
quiz-eeen. Does anyone have any questions?

CHAS

Cooeee yes, rather than spending half our time in
free-fall (he gestures heaven-ward) can we simply pose
round the rec-re-a-tion area and the swim-ing- poo-il?

HALEY (O.S)

(Laughing uncertainly)

Oh well yes I suppose you can.

REGGIE

(Condescending tone)

For the benefit of the err... others, Vera and I having
been here on a number of occasions, could you outline
the facilities of the hotel?

HALEY (O.S)

(Regaining poise)

Yes, yes of course. Here at the luxury 4 star Sol-Beach
Hotel situated at the south end of the paradise island
you will enjoy the very latest in comfort and luxury.

CHAS

(Sarcastically)

Oooh, oooh, luxury in a luxury hotel whatever next!

Dick again shuts him up with a sharp nudge

HALEY (O.S)

In the hotel complex you have three res-tor-rants, one is al-ah-kart. (Reggie nods gently at this making it clear that this is the one which they frequent). That's where you all have your breakfast all together in the morning. (she adds after a pause as though in explanation). Then there's the canteen style "buff-et" where you serve yourselves and where you can pick up your special meals (she says this as though it were more a case of special needs). Finally there's Jungle-Jims where you can take the kiddies. They do "kiddie burgers", "kiddie pizza", "kiddie nug-its", "kiddie-squash" and "kiddie-cola", everything that ...eer (she seems to feel the need for a different word as though even she is sensible of the overuse of kiddies)

CHAS

...Kiddies?

HALEY (O.S)

Err well yes. Thank you everything that kiddies could

possibly want! (She finishes with a flourish, pleased with herself and eager to move on)

REGGIE

Perhaps we could touch on the bathing facilities?

HALEY (O.S)

Err yes, thank you. Here at the Sol-Beach...

CHAS

(Parodying Haley's tone)

Luxury 4 star hotel on the paradise island..

HALEY (O.S)

We have two luxury swimming pools...

CHAS

(In mock astonishment)

Not more luxury!

He is stopped again by a sharp jab in the ribs

HALEY (O.S)

One pool, down the steps directly from Jungle-Jims is for the kid... (She stops herself) err... children accompanied by parents or an attendant adult. It has a water-splash slide and an area for Tiny Tots only. Children of 9 and over should not really be using this

pool so if you have a 9 year old or an older than 9 year old please remind them of this.

TINA

(with a degree of maternal assertiveness, although there is clearly no reason for her to speak, since the pre-nine's position has just been explained. She's really just making her maternal instinct generally known)

Excuse me, but I have a 7 year old boy

HALEY (O.S)

Well that's fine, Mrs Gittings, he can go into the Tiny Tots pool no problem...

TINA

Yes but it's a problem 'coz you see my girl is 9

HALEY (O.S)

Yes then there's a big pool for her to go into on the other side under the al-ah-kart res-tor-rant.

TINA

Yes but you see that's no good for us because you see Britney looks after Ryan that's how we do it. Ryan's too little to look after himself isn't 'e Tone?

TONY

E is Tine. Britney looks after Ryan that's how we always do it on holiday. Pool-view, plenty of booze (he winks at the others) Ryan with Britney, me and the missus has a great time lazing round the pool.

HALEY (O.S)

(losing just a little of her sunny
delivery)

Well, I'll just have to talk to my supervisor on that one Mr and Mrs Gitt...(pauses without explanation)

CHAS

(Helpfully)

...ings.

HALEY (O.S)

Sorry I was just looking at my sheet. I have to inform you all that as of this week 7th July I think it is, there will be a little bit of work going on at the hotel on renovation and upkeep.

The guests look round at each other meaningfully.

BRIAN

You mean we will be disturbed morning noon and night by drills and hammering!?

HALEY (O.S)

Oh nooooooooo, of course not. It just means there will be occasional work going on at times that inconveniences guests the least.

BRIAN

(Becoming pedantic)

And what times inconvenience us the least in the opinion of the Hotel and the tour operator?

HALEY (O.S)

(A little defensively)

Well probably at about midday when you are eating rather than round the pool Mr...?

BRIAN

Fairfax, Brian Fairfax, Waverley, Crooked Corner, Ripley, Near Poole in Dorset.

HALEY (O.S)

Yes, of course, Mr Fairfax. Anyway I'm sure that the works will go almost unnoticed

BRIAN

Unnoticed? I will make a note of that.. "go almost unnoticed." (He repeats it as though it were a police statement). I shall of course, note the time and place that I heard you make this statement. Please bear that

strongly in mind that I have a number of witnesses!

The others look a bit shocked at this breaking of
the Law of Seamless Enjoyment whilst on holiday

Joan, who has said nothing 'till now to anyone,
wheels herself closer to the rest of the group,
and says in a loud whisper

JOAN

Small but dogged ...once he gets his teeth in to a thing
he never lets go, never! Small....but dogged!

(She places almost violent emphasis on
this last part and then goes quiet
again)

HALEY (O.S)

(Even more imperviously cheerful as if
to restore the holiday spirit)

And there is a gym by the big pool for you to work off
all that delicious food. Lewees will be there to help
you work-out and Maria (one of our waitresses) will be
there to help all you ladies with beauty treatments and
tips in the Golden Brown Tanning Studio which is right
next to Muscular Jerks Gymnasium!

MARK

I wonder ah...sorry Mark Turnbull and Lena Graham (Lena

gives a tired nod of greeting) and our little girl
"Light" (laughs) the light of our lives! (Light
flounces off at the mention of her name as if to make
it very clear she is there under protest) Err well I... I
mean we were wondering...ahhh... is there a space dedicated
to meditation?

This throws the Rep completely, as she has never
had such a request and there are a few muffled
sniggers from the others

HALEY (O.S)

Well we have never actually had any meditation here
before Mr Turnbull.

MARK

Err... well we only need a space in which to do it,
though it has to be the right kind of space of course.

HALEY (O.S)

(A little tetchy)

I see

MARK

Err also ...with the right vibrations!

CHAS

Ooh... hello! ...I can arrange those!

Nudge from Dick

HALEY (O.S)

I will look into that one Mr Turnbull and get back to you.

MARK

Oh okay thanks awfully I need to arrange it ASAP as Lena has to work on her Chakras and Light will get very nervous if she goes without meditation for long don't you (sickly smile) light of our lives. (He looks round). Oh, she seems to have gone off.

At this all the others look at each other with a degree of open amusement and a hint of contempt at the idea of the "nervous" Light.

HALEY (O.S)

Yes certainly Mr Turnbull I'll have a word with the hotel management about it. Maybe on the tennis courts before they open officially would be a good place.

MARK

Nowhere with any vibrations of violence though, it must be serene!

HALEY (O.S)

(Decidedly tetchy)

No, no violence Mr Turnbull

CHAS

(To Dick)

Not yet anyway!

TONY

(To all)

Not the tennis court then, my overhead smash." (... He gets up and mimes a violent downward movement)

The others smile and laugh. Suddenly Light comes back in looking belligerently at the adult group and throws her Soya Milk down and storms off stage again. The adults look shocked at first then their faces fill with amusement. Vera's develops a knowing look. Tony laughs out loud as do Dick and Chas while Lena looks pained

Mark rushes out after his child

MARK

(Shouting)

Light, Light don't. Where are you going? What's the matter Light darling what's up!?

TONY

(To Tina)

What that girl needs is to be taught a lesson Tina!

TINA

You're not wrong, Tone you're not wrong!

VERA

(To Brian and Joan)

What the poor child needs is a bit of normality in her life that's what she needs.

BRIAN

(To Reggie and Vera)

We've been here for precisely two hours and ten minutes and already the peace has been disturbed. If that Rep had been doing her job we'd have had all the required information and be out enjoying the sunshine by now. Instead what do we get? Histrionics!

REGGIE

Well there are ways of counteracting this kind of thing if you simply have the right techniques. A Child is simply a working model for the adult world but without the fine-tuning. Our children were both shown how to tackle things as adults from the start. We didn't mess around with all that playing nonsense. No profit in play!

VERA

(In an undertone now to Tina showing her
true feelings for Reggie's viewpoint)

Yes that's what he always said to them when they were
growing up. There's no profit in playing at cowboys my
boy. And, you won't make your fortune by looking in the
mirror my girl. Get yourself a good job, or go and get
yourself a well-off husband. That's what they did, but
he never played games with them!

Tina acknowledges these confidences with an
open-mouthed look

HALEY (O.S)

(Relieved to have reached the end of a
tricky and unusual presentation says a
final few words)

Well ladies and gentlemen and children, thank you for
listening. I hope that you really, really enjoy the
rest of your holiday here at the luxury 4 star
Sol-Beach hotel on the paradise island. If you need me
you know where to find me. That is down here in
Reception by the Sun-Soakers stand between 3 and 4 pm.
every afternoon. I'll make a final check to see that
you are still all with us for the return journey to the
airport on Sunday.

CHAS

(Undertone to the group in general)

I wouldn't count on it if I were you love, looks like a right can of worms to me.

Jab in the ribs.

Mark comes back in with a slightly placated Light who has something in her mouth which looks suspiciously like a sweet she looks a little furtively at Lena. Lena in her turn looks accusingly at Mark

LENA

Mark I hope you haven't been filling her up with white death?!"

MARK

Oh Lenie pet its only one. I didn't allow her more than that!

LENA

Oh Mark!

Gets up and storms out.

SCENE 3

TINY TOTS POOL (DOWNSTAGE)/ADULTS

POOL (UPSTAGE)

Tina and Tony are at the Tiny Tots Pool, lounging in chairs while Ryan and Britney are playing together and Light is sitting with her legs dangling over the side essentially doing nothing. Mark and Lena are there but out of the sun and Lena is covered over with a black shawl looking like death warmed up. Mark is reading a book on macrobiotic food -you can clearly see the title. Also there are Chas and Dick who are highly oiled and reading womens' magazines and sporting colourful sunglasses and very tight trunks

CHAS

(To Dick with a girlish squeal)

Oooh look at this Dicky, I've found a woman who doesn't own a mirror

DICK

What are you going on about?

CHAS

Look, look!

He thrusts the magazine in front of the other

Dick looks at it and bursts out laughing

DICK

Oooh yes you're right for once. She looks as though she put her face on with a spade. Do you think she's drunk or just partially sighted?

CHAS

Sartorially impaired love, taste-dead from the neck up!

DICK

Oooh look, and from the waist down too!

CHAS

Oh my god you'd think she'd at least have the sense not to wear someone's living room curtains!

CHAS AND DICK

(Unison)

Oooh horrible!

They leave off with one accord like someone turning off a tap and carry on reading separately again.

Tina signals Britney with her hand to play with Light who is looking bored. Britney looks over at the plump girl and signals with her eyes heavenward to her mother that she would rather

not, but Tina motions her again more insistently. Britney goes over to Light and starts a shy conversation though we are not privy to it.

Upstage, Brian, Reggie and Vera are sitting on upright chairs at a table with a parasol and Joan is sitting next to them but slightly separated because of her chair. They all have long drinks and are carrying on a quiet observant conversation about the hotel and the arrangements

BRIAN

I chose here for Joan really. We looked at a number of hotels and this seemed to offer the best facilities for the handicapped.

(He does not spare Joan's feelings and elaborates)

We have to be meticulous about these things given her condition.

Vera looks sympathetic and Reggie looks over at Joan enquiringly

REGGIE

I don't like to pry but usually there are things one can do for someone in Joan's condition err ...I mean if indeed she has something eer treatable?

There is a slight embarrassed air developing as Joan herself does not appear to be part of the dialogue and seems more an object of pitying debate rather than a human-being in her own right. She simply looks down-caste

BRIAN

Well actually the doctors are baffled by it to be honest. They say that she hasn't anything they can really put there finger on. Still we soldier on!

VERA

(Beginning to get a hint of surmise in her face)

Really?! No obvious cause?

BRIAN

No, no nothing that they can pinpoint. We saw, if I remember precisely, thirteen specialists in all. It's cost me a fortune I can tell you. I've got all the bills with me actually just in case anything happened, well you know, (conspiratorially) in a foreign country.

Reggie and Vera nod with understanding

BRIAN

(Conspiratorially)

Personally I don't think they have the facilities here

if you know what I mean? It's a small island and the natives are friendly enough but a bit a little backward on health and what have you.

VERA

I always wonder in cases like this if it doesn't have some other cause, I mean not physical if you know what I mean?

BRIAN

I'm not sure what you mean.

VERA

Well what I mean is what lies behind it?

BRIAN

(Flustered and defensive)

Not walking is what lies behind it.

VERA

(Treading carefully)

No what I mean is how did it all start, what was the cause?

Brian just looks mystified and doesn't answer this one

REGGIE

(Rambling)

Well now,... err... what I mean is... is there not some technique, some apparatus perhaps a harness of some sort which could err...?

VERA

(Interrupting)

Reggie you don't know anything about this kind of thing. Keep quiet for a bit. What I meant was that there could be a very good and straightforward reason why poor Joan here can't walk.

BRIAN

(With feeling)

Well I wish you'd tell the whole of Harley Street then maybe I could get a refund!

VERA

(Placatory)

Yes, yes of course they must have looked at everything I'm sure. They just haven't hit on what it is yet, as you say.

REGGIE

Well Brian this is the hotel for you anyway. Good food, in the al a carte anyway, and very comfortable

VERA

And quite decent entertainment too if its anything like last year. That Luis is quite a charmer I can tell you. Ooh look here he is now.

Luis, In very tight trunks, strolls along the very extreme edge of the pool as if he is on a tightrope. He comes over to the group with a large grin on his face by way of greeting

LUIS

Mr and Mrs e-Fair-e-fax (sounds like "fairy fax") and Mr and Mrs Benedict how are you all!?

They all signal there satisfaction with various noises, the men grunting in an old fashioned way the women cooing, "ooh fines.")

LUIS

Mr e-Fair-e-fax and Mr Benedict I first thought that it was your lovely daughters that have brought with you until you tell me the truth!

He does a "stage" wag of the finger while the ladies even Joan look enchanted

BRIAN

(Prosaically)

Yes well all the make-up and expensive clothes should

count for something I suppose but it would test the powers of Billy Graham to sweep away the effects of the last thirty years!

(He says this facetiously and it is not attractive).

VERA

(Jumping to Joan's defence)

Thirty years of being married to you, you mean Brian?!

BRIAN

(Flushes)

Steady on there I was only joking!

VERA

Many a true word said in jest...

REGGIE

(Taking the other man's side)

Oh take no notice Brian, Vera is like a Pitt Bull when it comes to defending the underdog aren't you my dear?

VERA

Well I've had to defend everyone against you at one time or another over the years Reggie so you're right!

(Luis with a cheery smile averts an atmosphere)

LUIS

Are either of you ladies coming over to see Maria to become even more be-oo-ti-fool?

VERA

Sorry?

LUIS

Maria is waiting for you and Mrs e-Fair-e-fax at the "Golden Brown Salon" for the tips for your make-up and hair! You must go now because it close one hour okay?

Vera turns to Joan enquiringly

JOAN

Oh I don't know (she is embarrassed but something in her manner suggests that she would like to go)

VERA

Oh come on Joan lets leave these two old fogies to it and enjoy ourselves! (she gets up to encourage the other woman). Let's run up some bills!

JOAN

Well.... (and consents tacitly by moving slowly away with Vera across the paved area in the direction of the salon)

BRIAN

(A little surprised)

Oh okay then but remember its lunch at 12.30 Joan that's 72 minutes by my watch. Joan, Joan? (He seems a little ruffled by her taking independent steps). Be careful will you? You know you can't get around without help.

VERA

Don't worry Brian I'll take good care of her for you

Vera and Joan exit.

We go back to the tots pool

Luis goes up to Tina -Tony is not in evidence- silently from behind to where she is standing fairly close to the pool's edge and catches her round the waist in a mock saving-her-from falling-in manoeuvre and grins broadly when she catches her breath and turns round breaking in to a sunny and rather flirtatious smile in return.

TINA

Oooh yooou. I nearly fell in!

LUIS

If you fall in your husband he will have to save your

life!

TINA

(Flirting)

Oooh I'd rather you did!

LUIS

(Laughing)

Weell I save your life very slowly and very tenderly
later when I have more time okay?!

TINA

Oooh okay tonight at the entertainment. I'll hold you
to that Lueez!

LUIS

You will hold me very tight I hope!

With a radiant smile to Tina, Luis turns his
attention to Mark and Lena and Light.

LUIS

Hello Mr and Mrs, sorry (rolled Spanish "r") Mr
Turn-e-bull and Miss e-Graham (he says the gra part as
in grass)

MARK

(With unnatural gusto)

Hello there!

LENA

(Weakly from where she is huddling
beneath her shawl)

Oh yes, hello

LUIS

(To the child, displaying the natural
Spanish gift for relating to children)

And this is Light no?

LIGHT

(Clearly liking the look of this
handsome foreigner condescends to speak)

Yeah dumb name isn't it?

LUIS

Not at all Miss Light. I think it is very like the
poetry like the music. It is a name that really says
something in here! (He bangs the left side of his
chest)

LIGHT

Do you really think so?! My friends hate it and just
tease me about it because they say that "Heavy" would
suit me better.

LUIS

Your friends they don't know nothing! They have not the poetry in their souls. I look at your distinguished father and your be-oo-ti-fool mother and I say to myself this girl e-Light she will one day be how you say be transformed (he says the "ed" as in "said") from what is it in Englishh? El little duckling feo into the Be-oo-ti-fool e-swan no?!

Light smiles timidly going back to her play but looks quite cheered by the exchange. Lena in the meantime has slipped the shawl off her shoulders and is looking more interested and attentive than at any previous point in the action

MARK

My gosh you are an old charmer Luis. Do they teach that at Hotel College or something?

LUIS

No is entirely natural Mr e-Turn-e-bull, entirely natural. In my country we just do, we don't think before, we just do!

LENA

(Tentatively)

Err ...tell me... err... they say that you do the entertainment in the evenings is that so?

LUIS

(Winking at Lena)

Yes it is true but come prepared to be shocked because when the children have go to their own show I have the special adult content for the you okay!?

They all stare after him wonderingly as he strides off without further explanation leaving a frisson of excitement as always where he has passed

MARK

(To Lena, experimentally)

I don't suppose we'll go though do you darling, not our sort of thing?

LENA

(With an overly-absent tone)

Oh no shouldn't think so". (But we can tell that she definitely wants to).

LIGHT

(Coming up and for the first time in a bright tone.)

"Will we see Luis again?"

MARK

I expect so darling round the pool you know? I see you have struck up a friendship with that other little girl

what's her name?

LIGHT

Britney.

MARK

Well that's lovely I hope you have a great time
together. Remember sweet we have meditation this
afternoon!

LIGHT

(Exasperate sigh)

Oh do we have to?

LENA

(Also brighter than she has been)

Yes sweetness 3 o'clock at the tennis court (she shoos
her away gently)

MARK

See you in a while light of our lives.

Enter Tony

TONY

Hello! Seen the sexy Spaniard then?!

MARK

I beg your ...(penny drops) Oh yes I see what you mean
yes he's quite a charmer!

TONY

No, no not him. Maria the waitress form the cafeteria.
Maria

He signals "lads style" to the womanly curves in
question

MARK

(Laughingly drawn in to the male
connection for a second)

No I haven't seen (joking) them I mean her yet but I'll
keep my eyes peeled, sounds like a sight worth seeing!
(Remembers Lena too late) I, I mean (flattening the
tone of his delivery) she sounds very nice Tony. "I'll
say!... if I wasn't a married man I'd be all over her
like a rash!"

LENA

(Drily)

With a rash more likely

(But she is beginning to join in and
this comment is not snidely put)

TONY

Between you me and the gatepost, I might do it anyway

if she keeps giving me the eye!

He laughs a dirty laugh and makes off round the pool

Enter Chas and Dick who have been elsewhere come back to their chairs and sit down next to Mark and Lena.

CHAS

Well!

Mark and Lena look over enquiringly

CHAS

That woman!

LENA

(Beginning to come out of herself more and more)

What woman?

DICK

Oh don't mind him he's just been injured socially and he's still in pain!"

CHAS

Shut it love or I'll tell them about your problem!

DICK

Ah nice! You do come out with choice comments when you sober up!

CHAS

Funny ha ha!

LENA

But what happened?

CHAS

That geriatric twin set and pearls type at the hair and nails place!

MARK

Why what?

DICK

(Explaining)

Chas here was telling everyone about the salon he uses in London and this lady, Mrs Benedict, passed comment that she had tried that one and had found it to be substandard or words to that effect.

CHAS

As if she would know. She's got hair like a Brillo Pad and a face to match!

MARK

(Sagely)

Probably too much unsaturated fat in her diet..

CHAS

No, just not enough strychnine!

DICK

Calm down, you'll do yourself a mischief!

LENA

Anyway (a touch cheekily) you'll beat her in the ladies
heat of the "unusual gifts competition" that's the
entertainment tonight I understand.

CHAS

Oooh yes you're right! Are we going Dicky?

DICK

Well if we must I suppose but if you make a scene I
shall leave immediately, understand?!

CHAS

Hark at his master's voice, yes oh great one I hear and
obey

DICK

Quiet and get going. We've got to get over to the paella-cooking demo on at the other pool. (To Lena and Mark) We'll see you at the show later.

MARK

We'll not sure about that eer... we'll have to see (though he clearly has started to think of it as a possibility)

LENA

Yes see you later (she seems to have made up their minds for them)

Chas and Dick exit.

By the adult pool, upstage.

TINA

Do you think they'll be all right on their own, Tone?

TONY

What d'you mean, Tine?

TINA

Well you know Britney looking after Ryan with us over here?

TONY

Oh don't worry about it love, what's the worst that could happen?"

Tina stares and thinks for a second and she reveals herself as a somewhat paranoid mother.

TINA

Well since you mention it Tone, I suppose one of them could get in to difficulties and drown since there's no life-guard anywhere, or they could both drown if Britney went in trying to help Ryan and he pulled her under in a panic. Or Ryan could break his head open on the side of the pool, have you seen how jagged it is? Or Britney could break her leg by coming down that slide and crashing in to another child at the bottom who hasn't got out of the way in time. Or one of them could get some of those tiny pieces of fluff that fall from the trees in their throat and choke. Or...

TONY

Tine! Tine stop it will you?! You can't spend your life thinking like that you'll never be able to leave them to do anything for themselves and in the end you'll smother them by trying to save them from harm and what will that do to them!?

TINA

Oh I know Tone but they seem so well...so little and

defenceless!

TONY

So were you at that age, come to that so was I!

TINA

(Giggling)

You were never defenceless you big ape!

TONY

(Beating his chest making tarzan noise)

Well look out later Jane I've got a large banana on me
and I know how to use it!

He play wrestles her as she makes the customary
girlish shrieks

TINA

Get off, get off Tone you'll squash me soft fruit! The
girls warned me about you!

TONY

Not soon enough though did they!?

TINA

Listen I've got an admirer you know!

TONY

(Bristling slightly)

Oh yeah?!

TINA

(Teasing)

Yes and he's very handsome!

TONY

Oh I get it you mean that Don Joan called Lueez?!

TINA

It's not Don Joan you fool it's Don Juan (she pronounces it "Jew-Anne")

TONY

I thought he was Spanish not Jewish!

TINA

(Laughing)

He is Spanish

TONY

Then why did you say he was a Jew called Anne?! It's the wrong sex for starters!

TINA

Ooh you're hopeless Tone! Anyway he's got "the hots" for yours truly and he says he'll do a special

performance at the entertainment tonight, (punctuates it delightedly and provocatively) just-for-me!

TONY

(Only half joking)

I'll knock his block off!

TINA

(Obviously the kind of girl who likes to stimulate this kind of bravado in her men-folk smiles indulgently)

Oh would you Tone, would you?"

TONY

Yes I bloody-well would, holiday or no holiday! Bloody Gig-a-loo

TINA

(Shrieks with laughter)

Oh Tone you mean Gig-o-lo!

TONY

Never you mind what I mean. What I mean doesn't matter its what he means that I'm talking about!

TINA

(Realises that the children may have been left for too long)

Oh Tone what about Ryan and Britney? Go and see what they're up too there's a love.

TONY

Yeah okay but just keep yourself to yourself for five minutes okay?!

TINA

(Coquettishly)

Yes I will - for five minutes anyway!

He exits with a mock warning look

Almost at the same moment Lena comes past and smiling shyly

TINA

Oh hello

LENA

Hello

TINA

How are you getting on? You've got the, err... little girl with the pigtails haven't you?

LENA

Yes, Light

TINA

What an unusual name! What made you choose that?

LENA

(Sitting a little hesitantly at the side
of the pool rather than in one of the
chairs)

Well names choose you rather than the other way round
don't you find?

TINA

Umm well no, not really. I mean we chose Britney
because Tone fancied some singer called Britney and
that was that really.

LENA

Yes I see, well we all have our different approaches.
We settled on Light because the night that Mark and I
discovered I was with child we were standing together
looking up in to the black and immeasurable vastness of
the night sky and all we could see were pinpoints of
beautiful light. So the choice you see was inevitable!

TINA

(Not sure)

Yeeees Weell... I suppose in a way it was a little bit
the same for us.

LENA

(Interested)

Yes?

TINA

Yes well I says to Tone what shall we call it, and he says what about that Britney so I says well can you think of a better name and he says no unless its Jason to which I says but we already know from the ultrasound scan that it's a girl! So he says well we can't call it Jason then can we?! So I says well that leaves us with Britney. So you see it was inevitable too weren't it?

LENA

(A little faintly)

aaah yes... I suppose it was now that you explain it.

TINA

(Changing the subject)

Are you going to the entertainment thing tonight then?"

LENA

Well we aren't really sure yet. Light doesn't mix very well with other children so I'm a little worried about leaving her while we see the adult show

TINA

Ohhhh you're just like me!

LENA

(Looks as though she doesn't
particularly relish the comparison)

Oh?

TINA

Yeeeees you worry too much too. I'm just the same. I
was just saying to Tone to go and see how the kids are
doing. I imagine all sorts when I'm not with you know?

LENA

(Attracted now more by this motherly
topic)

Yes that's true. I worry so much about Light and how
different she is!

TINA

She's lovely. Lovely complexion.

LENA

Yes well we don't allow her sugar and we stick to a
strictly non-dairy and high pulse diet

TINA

(Looks as though she thinks the woman is
probably deranged but humours her)

Tone has one of those too.

LENA

Yes?

TINA

Yes when he's had ten pints down the pub he always comes back and complains that his pulse is going like the clappers, anyway that's what he always says!

(She shrieks with laughter)

LENA

No, no I mean pulses. You know, beans and lentils that sort of thing?

TINA

Oh. (as if the light has dawned) Yes well mine get baked beans every Tuesday with their chips. Tuesdays is chip day and Thursday is sausages and chips day. Fridays is take-away night that is, either pizza and chips or else its hamburger and chips or its kebab and chips from the van.

LENA

(Trying to hide her distaste)

Do you never make your own meals !?

TINA

(Leaping to correct a misimpression)

Ooh Yeeeee! Of course I do. We have microwaved every Monday and Wednesday without fail. We have turkey and chips or steak and chips (that's Tone's favourite) or we have risotto.

LENA

(Sensing that there may be an oasis of taste in among the junk food)

Really. Risotto. Do you have that with Parmigianino Reggiano?

TINA

((Pauses for thought for a second or two))

Nah. Chips!

LENA

Ah (Begins to show signs that maybe the conversation has not led to a meeting of minds), really well such a range of different things, with eer chips.

TINA

(Indulgently)

Yeeeee we do love our chips, well everyone does don't they?!"

Tony returns

TINA

Ooh Tone this is Lena she's Light's mum

TONY

Hello love

LENA

(Still a bit shy)

Oh yes, hi.

TONY

I just left your Light playing with our Britney and Ryan's happy just being there with them. They're looking after him together in fact

TINA

(Maternally)

Oh Tone are they?!"

TONY

Yeah they'll be a couple of wonderful mothers one day those two

LENA

Yes well one wouldn't wish to instil any stereotypical child-rearing expectations in to Light of course

TINA

(Blankly)

Any what?

LENA

(justifying herself)

I mean I don't want her to think that she was
imprisoned in the role of being a mother

TONY

No well it comes natural don't it Tine?

TINA

Yeah of course it does Tone. Our Britney she's always
wanted to look after our Ryan. Its just instinct!

LENA

(Feeling she is be out-argued)

Yes well look I must get back to Mark he'll be
wondering where I am I should think

TONY

(Cheekily)

Keep an eye on his stereotypical urges if I were you
love, all this sunshine brings out the beast in us men!

TINA

(Squeals)

Oh Tone you are awful!

Lena exits, smiling weakly

TONY

(With masculine gruffness)

But you like me! So what's with the brown rice woman then?!

TINA

Oh she's a bit stuck up but nice underneath.

TONY

Well I didn't tell you in front of her but Britney and this Light are getting on okay most of the time but there was a little bit of aggro when our Britney asks her why she always drinks sick instead of Coke.

TINA

Oh no did she? Why do children always call anything they don't like sick?

TONY

Because its white and disgusting I suppose!

TINA

Still I expect it'll all be all right Tone you know how kids get on each other's nerves?

TONY

Yeah or puke (he laughs) But you know what out Britney
can be like when she's roused!?

TINA

They'll be fine after they've got to know each other,
kids always are.

TONY

Listen we'd better be going those two woopsey blokes
are coming over and I don't want to be molested by the
men as well as all the women I haven't got the energy!

TINA

Oh yes who's been molesting you then?!

TONY

Oh well you see what's sauce for the goose!

TINA

Oh yes! And who's the gander then?!

TONY

I thought I'd keep you guessing on that score!

He runs off teasingly Tina runs after him exit

Enter Dick and Chas

Chas is doing the dandelion thing with a flower
from that part of the world.

CHAS

He loves me, he loves me not, he loves me, he loves me
not...

DICK

Will you stop that nonsense you poor sad old tart?!

CHAS

(With vigour)

He loves me!

DICK

He does not love you. He does not like you, he has not
even noticed you! He doesn't even realise that you
exist. He has other far more exciting people to meet
and focus on than you! And apart from anything else
he's a ladies man rather than a gentlemen's gentleman
not that you're a gentleman - YOU'RE AN OLD TART you
old tart.

CHAS

Sticks and stones, sticks and stones...

DICK

Okay, okay if he should prove to be both mad and blind at the same time and he felt anything for you, which clearly he does not, you prove it tonight at the entertainment.

CHAS

(Rising to the challenge)

Yes, right, fine I will then you wait and see!

DICK

What I'll see, what we will all see, is a sad old tart making a fool of himself which should at least be entertaining if nothing else is!

He laughs excessively while Chas just turns on his heel camply and makes off in a strop, Dick follows at a distance. Both exit.

SCENE 4

DINNER SPLIT BETWEEN THE AL A CARTE
AND JUNGLE JIMS RESTAURANTS

Al a Carte Reggie and Vera, Brian and Joan, Dick and Chas.

BRIAN

