

# On Holiday

A Covid Secure Play by Paul Symonloe

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**Cast:**

**DUNCAN:** A man in his forties, with a South London accent - blunt and self-confident.

**SHEILA:** A woman of a similar age, and with the same accent - long-suffering and, at times, fiery.

Act 1 Scene 1 (Lights up, curtain up)

(Set: A swimming pool. Props set on-stage: Two sun loungers, a table, gaudy cocktail, two mobiles). SFX Sounds of bathers.

*(Woman, loudly pursuing a man with a beer-belly in tight trunks, round pool. She's holding an atomiser, which she which she uses to spray the escaping man.)*

**SHEILA:** Stand still, will yer Dunc?!

*Man, runs dodging the spray, high-pitched, mock-hysterical).*

**DUNCAN:** Leave it out will ya Sheil! I'm not a bloody pot-plant!

*(Woman, re-doubles her efforts. Voice determined).*

**SHEILA:** Dunc, stop! The doctor says yer gotta stay cool!

**DUNCAN : (Ironic).** Well running away from a mad woman ain't gonna cool me down is it?! **(Wipes forehead).**

**SHEILA:** *(Ignoring him).* You're over-heating Dunc. I can see you are! Just stop will yer!?

**DUNCAN:** *(Stops, surrenders).* Okay! Just do it!

**SHEILA:** *(Chuckling in kindly triumph, sprays him elaborately, at arm's length, as if he's diseased).* There! Yer see? Wasn't so bad was it? *(Kisses his head. Mock spits excess water).*

Ugh! It's like kissing a geyser.

**DUNCAN:** *(Puzzled).* But I am a geezer...

**SHEILA:** No, no not that kind of... Oh, never mind!

**DUNCAN:** *(Mobile)* Tone? *(Laughs, pause.* Too right mate! Yeah, yeah. It's beautiful. *(Pause, laughs)*. Sheil? Yeah, still working 'er way up to zero tolerance! *(Pause)* Flab?! Cheek. I'm on a diet, I am! *(Pause)* Yeah, it's called the relentless nagging diet. Sheil nags day and night until I lose weight. Works a treat! *(Pause, laughs)*. Right, ok mate, we'll do that! *(Ends call. Walks up to Sheila, pulling her close)*.

Come 'ere Sheil.

**SHEILA:** Stop it Dunc! What if someone comes?!

**DUNCAN:** Yeah, and?

**SHEILA:** *(Between serious and flirting)*. You don't own me Dunc. You just rent out parts of me on a short-term basis!

**DUNCAN:** *(Mock-shocked)*. Okay, so long as it's not a time-share arrangement! *(Grabs her again)*. Come on babe, you'll pass your squeeze by date if you don't hold still!

**SHEILA:** Stop it Dunc, you're damp!

**DUNCAN:** Don't be like that Sheil! We're enjoying ourselves aren't we? Lucky to get away from you know what?! It's all behind us now. *(Grabs again)*.

**SHEILA:** *(Severe)*. No, Duncan I said stop! It's no joke. People are you know? *(Fearful)*.

**DUNCAN:** Are what?

**SHEILA:** *(Fearful)* Dying!

**DUNCAN:** *(Unfazed)*. Yeah, but we can't do anything about that can we? We should try to enjoy ourselves You and me are home dry Sheil! *(Runs after her, splashing water and laughing. SHEILA runs away shrieking)*. Well, not completely dry! *(Mobile rings)*. Yeah what!?! *(Pause)* No... *(Disconnects abruptly)*.

**SHEILA:** *(Comes to a halt. Echoes)*. Yeah what, no?! Business was it?

DUNCAN: *(Defensive)* Nah.

SHEILA: Who was it then?

DUNCAN: No one.

SHEILA: Yeah right! Didn't sound like no one.

DUNCAN: Nuisance call.

SHEILA: *(Fiery)*. Nuisance call? If you're turning down work Dunc...! We've beggared ourselves for this 'oliday!

DUNCAN: *(Conciliatory)*. It was already booked and paid for Sheil. 'ow was we to know this would 'appen?

SHEILA: Yeah, Duncan but if you...*(Mobile rings, pause... SHEILA concerned)*. Mum? What's the matter?  
*(Shocked)*. Oh mum, no you haven't?! *(Turns wordlessly towards DUNCAN)*.

DUNCAN: *(DUNCAN concerned)*. What's up Sheil?

SHEILA: Mum, get Lorraine over there, now! *(Pause)* Yes, but she can call the doctor. Tell 'er to keep 'er distance. *(Pause)* Mum! You must! *(Upset)*. Mum, I'll call 'er and call yer back.

DUNCAN: What's 'appening Sheil?

SHEILA: *(Sinks into lounge)*. Oh god Dunc! She's caught it.

DUNCAN: *(Pause, comforts her)*. Look love, she'll be okay.

SHEILA: What if she isn't?

DUNCAN: *(Diverting, odd)*. Did she say where she picked it up?

SHEILA: No, *(pauses thinking)*. It must 'ave been shopping.  
*(Cries)* Oh mum!

DUNCAN: *(Strained)*. Yeah.

**SHEILA:**       *(Finally stops. Questioning)*. Wait. Dunc, you did 'er shopping before we left didn't yer? She 'asn't been out for weeks.

**DUNCAN:**       *(Unconvincing)*. Yeah, that's right Sheil. I did it.

**SHEILA:**       *(Looks at DUNCAN sharply)*. You did *do it* didn't yer Dunc?

**DUNCAN:**       *(Defensive)*. Yes, of course I did it. What else would I be doing?

**SHEILA:**       *(Thoughtful)*. Now that's a question.

**DUNCAN:**       *(Defensive)*. I don't know what yer mean by that.

**SHEILA:**       No?

**DUNCAN:**       I took 'er the shopping like I said.

**SHEILA:**       On the Friday before our Saturday flight?

**DUNCAN:**       *(Tentative)*. Yeah.