

WE'LL BE HOME TOMORROW

A Play for Four Actors
(though could be more)

by

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WE'LL BE HOME TOMORROW

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CHARACTERS

Mam
Dad
Daughter
Son
Holiday Friend
Small Boy
Redcoat
Peter
Granny
Parent
Girlfriend
Boyfriend
Attendant
One
Two
Three
Four

*"We're all going on a summer holiday,
We'll be going for a week or two"*

- **"Summer Holiday"**
Cliff Richard

*"A cheap holiday,
in other people's misery"*

- **"Holidays in the Sun"**
The Sex Pistols

WE'LL BE HOME TOMORROW

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The stage is empty. All atmosphere is created by sound and light and the FOUR ACTORS' movements and expressions. A School bell rings - FOUR ACTORS run out into the light, singing.

All: *No more days in school,
No more days in sorrow,
No more days in this old dump,
'Cos we'll be home tomorrow,
No more days in this old dump
'Cos....*

One: We'll

Two: Be

Three: Home

Four: Tomorrow

One: No School

Two: No gettin' up

Three: No Teachers

Four: No dark mornings

One: No homework

Two: No gettin' up

All: Holidays

One: Round one

All: Make your mind up time!

(Setting the style. For the rest of the play two of the ACTORS adopt the mannerisms and voices of other characters, in this case MAM and DAD. They stand back to back centre stage, a 'CHILD' either side of them)

Dad (2): Now I've read all the brochures Mother, and I think we should go to....

Children (3) & (4): Awwww!

Dad (2): I haven't said anything yet!

Mam (1): Quiet kids, let your Father speak.

Dad (2): I'd like to go to Spain.

Children (3) & (4): Awwww!

Mam (1): Why?

Dad (2): Well.... er.... the weather, British food.... er.....

Daughter (3): British pubs.

Mam (1): British videos.

Son (4): British people.

Dad: Yes...yes...home from home, well except for the occasional foreigner that is, Mother?

Mam: *(sigh)* Wellll!

Dad: So we're agreed, yes?

Mam: Wellll!

Children: Awwww!

Dad: It's the same every year.

Mam: It's just that I'd like to go somewhere.....y'know...

Dad: Different?

Children: Yesssss!

Mam: Anywhere....

Dad: But?

Mam: Spain really!

Dad: That's settled then.

Mam: What?

Dad: We go where we went last year.

Mam: And the year before that.

Children: An' the year before that, an' that, an' that, an' that.

(MAM and DAD both slap the child nearest to them. There is a moment's silence then both children begin to wail)

Mam & Dad: *(to each other)* Now look what you've done!

One: Round Two

All: The car! *(DAD has moved across the stage, MAM is now on the side, they shout their dialogue to one another. In between them the CHILDREN struggle to load various mimed objects into the car)*

Dad: Water...tyre pressure...that's it...(shouts) We're ready!

Mam: Lovely! *(DAD looks round in exasperation and sees the DAUGHTER sneaking A BOY into the car boot. She slams the boot shut)*

Dad: What are you doing?

Daughter: Nothing. *(DAD walks over to the boot and opens it)*

Dad: I told you he's not coming.

Daughter: But Dad, he'd be no trouble.

Dad: I said no.

Daughter: Awwww!

Dad: Nothing personal Peter lad, but you understand?

Peter's voice: *(as if coming from boot)* Certainly Mr. Roberts!

Dad: No hard feelings?

Peter's voice: Don't even think about it!

Dad: Good ... now where has your Mother got to?

Mam: Here!

Dad: Fine are you ready?

Mam: Nearly.

Dad: You said that an hour ago!

Mam: I was nearly ready then as well.

Dad: I'll be in the car. *(DAD get into the car)*

All (1, 3 & 4): Time passes.

One: Tick

Three: Tock *(alternately, growing in sound)*

(Over the chanting of ONE and THREE, DAD goes into a solo mime. He starts to hum a tune under his breath, tapping out the beat on the steering wheel, he then turns the wheel as if in a motor race, making the accompanying car noises. He stops suddenly and preens himself in the mirror, he has noticed a woman)

One, Three & Four: *(Wolf whistle)*

(DAD continues to look and smile at himself in the mirror, he tries pushing his hair over his forehead, decides against it and puts it back. He begins to scratch his nose and secretly picks it, something is stuck to his finger, he can't shake it off, he wipes it under the seat. All the time the ticking is getting louder. He begins to play with the car instruments, wipers, lights, radio, finally burning himself with the car lighter. He picks up a paper and throws it down. The ticking is even louder. He makes as if to scream. The family are suddenly in the car).

Mam: We're off then! *(DAD is deflated)*

Dad: About time. *(he starts the car)* Finally!

Mam: I'm sure I've forgotten something.

Dad: Like what?

Mam: I don't know. *(The car moves off).*

Mam: *(SCREAMS)* Can opener!! *(Scream of brakes, moans from the kids).*

Dad: You've forgotten the can opener!

Mam: Well.....not exactly, but something like that.

Dad: I don't believe it, we can't come more than 400 yards without stopping....fine holiday this is going to be.

Daughter: Are we there yet Dad. *(Silence)*

(MAM and DAD leave stage and two CHILDREN are discovered sitting on the back seat)

One: Round three.

All: Backseat games!

Daughter: Oh....Ohhh... (*no reaction*) Ohhhhh.... (*louder*)

Mam's voice: What is it?

Daughter: N...nothing.

One: Note herioc perspiration on forehead.

Daughter: Ohhhh.

Mam's voice: What is it now?

Daughter: I...I....I...feel sick.

Two: A tender family moment.

One: A poorly child.

Two: A concerned mother.

Mam's voice: Are you sick enough to puke?

Dad's voice: I'm not stopping this car again!

Mam's voice: Well?

Daughter: N...No.

Mam's voice: Well wind down the window an' get some fresh air. (*All make sounds of rushing wind as the window is wound down*).

Daughter: But...

Mam's voice: Occupy yourself...look out the back window to see where you're going.

Son: If she's sick on me, I'll be sick on 'er. Tell 'er Mam. (*argument dissolves into noise*).

One: Game two. (*the BOY starts to tap his foot, then the whole leg, then starts to twist and shake his body*).

Daughter: Do you want to?

Son: Shush!

Two: It's a fate worse than death....

One: ...to let on to your parents that you want to...

Daughter: Push your stomach in...that's what I always do.

Son: What?

Daughter: Like this! (*Both CHILDREN start pressing in their stomachs*).

Mam's voice: What's going on? (*Both CHILDREN freeze*).

Children: Nothing!

Mam's voice: Well stop fidgeting then...I can't get a moment's piece. (*Son begins to fidget. He is picked out in a spotlight*).

One: Dripping taps!

Son: What?

Two: Drip!

Three: Drip!

One: Waterfalls!

Son: Shut up!

Two: Fountains!

Three: Lots and ...

Son: No!

One: ...lots and lots...

Son: I can hold it...I can hold it!

Two: ...of running water.

Son: Mam?

Mam's voice: What?

Son: I..I...want to go to the toilet. *(car screeches to a halt)*

Mam's & Dad's voices: What did you say?

(LIGHTS on toilets, DAD and SON have backs to the audience at a urinal. ONE & THREE are standing opposite them).

One: Going to the toilet isn't natural.

Three: You can't just go...unless you're a Dad of course.

One: To them it's as easy as switching on a light. *(DAD & SON make as if going to the toilet. It's obvious the SON is having difficulty).*

Son: Sorry!

Dad: *(pointing across the stage)* Get back to the car!

One: Which you get back out of a hundred yards down the road...

Three: ...because this time you really want to go. *(DAD points the opposite way across the stage, the SON mimes the actions to the following words).*

One: Being a shy boy...

Two: ..you don't want to...

Three: ...too near the car.

One: You climb over the fence.

Two: Still not happy...

Three: ...you cross a field.

One: Climb a mountain.

Two: Swim three rivers.

Three: Then finally you're ready...

One: ...just as a coachload of Japanese tourists happen to pass by!

Son: Why me?

(Everyone gets back in the car)

All: Back to the car!

Dad: I spy with my little eye...

Children: Awww!

Dad: ...something beginning with 'S'.

Children: Sky.

Dad: 'C'

Children: Car.

Dad: 'R'

Children: Road.

Daughter: Can't we play something else?

Mam: First one to spot a red car is the winner. (*silence*)

Son: There! I won.

Daughter: I saw it first!

Son: Liar!

Daughter: What do we win then?

Dad: Look at that! (*DAD nods, heads move in all directions*)

Children: What?

Dad: Aw, you missed it, never mind!

Son: What?

Dad: Look there's another one.

Daughter: Where?

Dad: It's gone. You're too late.

Son: I'm sick of this.

Daughter: When are we stopping Mam?

Mam: Oh, about an hour dear.

Son: (*to audience*) One hour later.

Daughter: Mam, are we stopping yet?

Mam: No dear, probably in about an hour!

Son: (*to audience*) Another "one hour later".

Daughter: Mam, you're gonna have to stop or I'll eat the dog!

Mam: It's all very well you saying that, but your father can't just leave the road like that, we've got to have somewhere to stop.

Daughter: There...look...there's a place.

Mam: Oh yes.

Daughter: Well?

Mam: We've passed it now dear...we'll have to wait until the next one.

Son: (*to audience*) One hour later.

Daughter: I don't see what was wrong with the last one.

Mam: Which one was that dear?

Son: The one hundred and fifty sixth!

Daughter: The one with the Hot-dog stall!

Son: And the swings...

Daughter: ...and the picnic benches...

Son: ...and the ice cream van.

Mam: Well it was a bit...y'know crowded.

Daughter: I'm gonna die unless we stop soon.

Son: I'd even eat them travel sweets Gran gave us.

Mam: Okay, okay, we'll stop at the next one we come to. Are you happy?

Son: Hungry more like.

All: Game number three.

One: Let's pretend we're at home. (*There is a deafening sound of traffic. The actors have to shout to be heard*)

Son: Poisoned by fumes.

Daughter: Deafened by juggernauts.

Son & Daughter: Pointed at by motorists.

Son: Mam gets out the picnic table.

Mam: It's a bit unsteady but it'll do.

Daughter: Dad gets out his paper.

Dad: Pass us a cup of tea love.

Son: The dog gets his bowl. (*The noise gets louder, the children look unhappy, the parents look totally content*).

Mam: Isn't this nice?

Son: Then Mam goes to the boot...

Daughter: ...and gets out the thing...

Son: ...that's been sweating...

Daughter: ...and breeding...

Son: ...ever since we left home.

Mam: Anyone for egg sandwiches? (*all scream*)

(*LIGHTS on four actors*)

One: No more...

Two: ...days...

Three: ...in...

Four: ...sorrow.

One: You finally get there.

Two: Three hours late. (*THE CHILDREN run around the stage*)

Daughter: I'm going on that first!

Son: That's useless!

Daughter; No it isn't.

Son: I'm having top bunk.

Daughter: I bagged that!

Son: No you didn't!

Daughter: Yes I did!

Mam: Shutup! Shutup! Shutup....we're here to enjoy ourselves.

Son: That's news to us.

Mam: Let's just all take it easy....and have a nice little rest before we go down to dinner.

Daughter: *(aside)* Tea she means. *(CAST all relax)*

All: *(group sigh)* Oh...my...feet.

One: Peace.

Three: Or so it seems...

Four: ...but at this moment...

One: ...a horrible transformation is taking place. *(DAD has his back to the audience and is crouched down like the cliched transformation scene in every corny horror movie).*

One: An everyday parent...

Three: ...with a mine of useless information...

Four: ...changes into something far more sinister...

One: ...at the start of a two week reign of terror....

Three: And embarrassment, don't forget the embarrassment!

One, Three & Four: ...from Doctor Dad to Mr. Holidaymaker! *(DAD reappears as holidaymaker with a knotted hankie and rolled up trousers).*

One: Round four.

All: He's never like this at home.

One: Transformation one.

Son: Where do you come from?

Holiday friend(1): Our House.

Son: Do you want a kick? *(bouncing a ball)*

Holiday friend: Yeah!

Son: *(He kicks him on the leg and laughs. DAD appears)*

Dad: On me 'ead son, on me ead!

Son: But it's a football Dad!

Dad: I know son, I've kicked a few in my time.

Son: From his armchair more like. *(he throws the ball)*

Dad: An' now it's Bobby Charlton on the wing, he beats one man, two, three, *(he reaches the other small boy who takes the ball off him. DAD pushes him over)* four, shoots, it's a goal! *(he makes crowd noises)*

Son: You missed.

Dad: Penalty then!

Son: What?

Dad: Penalty!

Son: Go on then. *(DAD shoots, the SON saves)*

Holiday friend(1): Good save.

Dad: You moved...retake, retake! (*DAD shoots again as the SON returns to the goal*) GOAALLL!...the final whistle...the crowd carries dad off shoulder-high.
(*DAD exits*)

Holiday friend: That wasn't really your Dad was it?

One: Transformation two. (*DAD, DAUGHTER and a SMALL CHILD are on the beach*)

Daughter: Dad can I have my bucket and Spade back now?

Dad: Soon this is a particularly tricky turret.

Small child (1): My castle's better than your sandcastle mister! (*DAD slyly kicks over CHILD'S castle*)

Dad: Isn't now!

Three: Transformation Three.

Dad: (*posing*) Okay, who's for a swim?

Son: It's always embarrassing when your Dad's got bigger knockers than your Mum.

Daughter: He's got a dolphin on his long trunks...

Son: ...an' he thinks he's the man from Atlantis.

Dad: C'mon love, 'bout time you went in!

Mam: Oh all right then.

Son: Mam's annual dip! (*MUM & DAD stand at the edge of the water*)

Dad: It's lovely!

Daughter: It's freezing!

Mam: (*up to her ankles*) Oh it's cold...that'll do for this year.

Three: Transformation Four.

Daughter: Dads are the worst dancers in the world.

Son: 'An they've really got it in for their daughters!

Dad: (*singing and dancing*) Let's twist again like we did last summer.... (*the song ends, they clap and THE DAUGHTER tries to sneak away*) C'mon, c'mon we can jive to this!

Daughter: It's the National Anthem Dad! (*She sits down whilst DAD continues to mime dancing*)

One: (*The FAMILY are all sitting down*) Transformation Five.

Red coat (3): Which Dad has the knobliest knees.

Dad: Here! Here! It's me. (*He rolls up his trousers further*)

Daughter: Dad!

Dad: What?

Red coat (3): Who is the ugliest Dad in the room?

Dad: I'm here. *(points at face)* I claim my prize. *(They pull him back)*

Daughter: Dad, you're embarrassing us!

Dad: What? It's only a bit of fun!

Red coat: And finally, who is the thickest Dad in the room?

Dad: It's me! *(He escapes and runs to the stage)*

Mam: Look the other way children, he's not with us!

(LIGHTS on ONE & THREE)

One: So dramatic a transformation...

Three: ...is not without its side effects.

Son: Back from the beach...

Daughter ...to "Water's Edge Hotel".

Son: Five miles from the sea!

Mam: That hill will be the death of me.

Four: The click of a bolt.

Son: He's in the toilet.

Daughter: Oh, I wanted to go.

Mam: You'll have to wait.

Son: *(whispers)* Not after Dad! *(The sounds of DAD'S discomfort underscore the following dialogue, growing louder all the time)*

Daughter: I don't want to go now!

Son: Mam do I have to wear that awful tie for dinner?

Mam: Of course!

Son: But nobody knows us here.

Mam: That's all the more reason to look smart.

Daughter: I can't hold it much longer.

Four: The click of a bolt. *(Silence as DAD walks across the room and eases himself gently into the seat)*

Dad: Ooohh!

Four: The transformation is complete. *(THEY all look at THE DAUGHTER)*

Daughter: It's no good I've got to go! *(She rushes into the toilet)* Aw...Dad!

Dad: What's the matter? I opened a window.

Son: Poor man his nasal passages must be totally shot away!

One: Sad...very sad.

Two: That brings us to mothers.

Three: Born worriers.

Four: They must think the world and everything in it...

Two: Is against them.

Mam: Germs, can you see them? Horrible things.

Son: Mummy, I've cut myself.

Mam: There, there, Mummy'll kiss it better.

Two: This gentle concern...

Three: ...tempered by a steel will...

Four: ...that Rocky would be proud of!

Mam: If you fall and break your legs ... *(she continues and THREE joins in)*

Mam & Three: ...don't come running to me!

Daughter: Mam! Mam!

Mam: What?

Children: We want to go on the 'Megadeath White Knuckle Leave Your Stomach Behind' ride!

Mam: Oh I don't know.

Children: Please!

Mam: What do you think Father?

Dad: You wouldn't get me up in one of those!

Children: Please!

Mam: Well?

Children: Pleeaasse!

Mam: I don't think so.

Children: Awww!

Mam: But I'll tell you something I will let you go on.

BLACKOUT

LIGHTS UP on the four characters on a very tame merry-go-round, DAD has got his eyes closed. The CHILDREN look almost asleep. "Magic Roundabout" Music.

Mam: Isn't this nice?

Two: Mam's greatest fear must be the lost child!

(MAM is talking to the girl)

Mam: Now don't go far.

Daughter: No.

Mam: Don't talk to strangers!

Daughter: No.

Mam: If you get lost, find a policeman.

Daughter: Yes.

Four: She's only going for an ice-cream!

Mam: Here's your map... a compass...

Two: Five hundred yards down the prom!

Mam: Emergency phone number... O.K.... now don't be long.

Daughter: No. (*GIRL moves off*)

Mam: I don't know, Father, have we done the right thing?

Dad: Only time will tell.

(*DAUGHTER runs across stage*)

Daughter: One cornet, one tub, one 99, one for me and sweets with the change,
one tub one 9 and I get sweets with the change, sweets with the change and
one 9... (*She gets to the counter*)

Attendant (4): Yes?

Daughter: Er... One Megadeath white knuckle lolly and er... how much change
have I got?

Attendant (4): Er... 4 pounds 80 pence.

Daughter: Brilliant!!

Two: Eventually you head back...

Daughter: Er... this way... I think...

Four: You stand there...

Two: Looking at a beach you've never seen before...

Four: Alone...

Two: Now the sensible thing would be to...

Four: Ask a policeman.

Two: What do you do?

(*DAUGHTER looks at the others, then wails*)

Daughter: Waaaahhh!

Four: Fatal, fatal...

Two: That's the calling cry...

Four: ...of the horrible old Granny!

Granny (2): What's the matter, lovey?

Four: Even at this stage there's hope...

Daughter: I could say, "Horrible old Granny, I'm lost and I want my mummy."

Four: But...

Daughter: Chin wobbling...

Four: What comes out but...

Daughter: Mu...huh...mu...bub...gaarr...

Granny (2): Even Grannies lose patience!

Four: At this point Mum arrives!

Mam: There you are... I've been worried sick, where have you been? (*MAM hugs
the GIRL, then starts to beat her to each syllable*)

Don't... you... ev-er... do... that... a-gain... I... was... so... up-set!

Four: The return of Rocky!

One: Round five.

All: Romance!

(MAM and DAD are arguing like Punch and Judy)

Dad: I didn't!

Mam: You did!

Dad: I didn't!

Mam: Oh yes you did!

Dad: Oh no I didn't, did I children?

Mam: That's right, bring them into it!

Three: Not all romances work out!

Four: But some are fun!

Three: But you've got to find the right boy first, or girl?

Four: The swimming pool...

Two: The high board...

One: The poser!

(The SON is strutting up and down)

Son: Diving off, that'll impress her.

Two: So you climb...

Three: ...and climb...

One: ...and climb...

Son: It didn't seem this high from the ground!

Two: You reach the top...

One: ...and cling on for dear life!

Son: I want to go down!

Three: Shame.

Son: But there's always somebody coming up...

One: SHE left three hours ago...

Two: ...and to make things worse...

One: ...your kid sister is doing backflip...

Two: ...after backflip...

One: ...and somersault...

Two: ...after somersault...

Son: I've got to do it... right, one, two...

Three: Three!

Son: Er... one... two... geronimo!

One: Not so much a dive...

Two: As a death!

Three: But at least it's over.

Son: *(swimming)* Never again... Oh look, some idiot's lost his...

One: ...blue trunks floating past.

Son: Same colour as mine! *(SON climbs out of the pool and realises they are his*

trunks. DAD suddenly appears with a camera)

Dad: Blackmail material... Yes!

Son: How embarrassing!

Three: Now that's something little sisters know a lot about.

(BOY with a GIRL, LITTLE SISTER is nearby)

Boyfriend (2): I mean you know it was always you!

Girlfriend (1): I...

Sister (3): Liar... you said you were only with 'er 'cos that Sharon goes home tomorrow!

Four: Or...

Girlfriend (1): I think you're very attractive.

Sister (3): You wouldn't say that if you saw him in the morning.

Four: Despite little sisters, romance can survive, but then you only have to say Goodbye.

LIGHTS on GIRL and BOY stood by the car. The PARENTS are waiting.

Girlfriend (1): Will you miss me?

Boyfriend (2): Yes!

Girlfriend: Lots?

Boyfriend: Oh, lots and lots!

Girlfriend: Promise to write.

Boyfriend: I promise!

Girlfriend: Have you got my address?

Boyfriend: Er... yes, 147 times.

Girlfriend: *(gets pen)* Well, here it is again in case you lose it!

Parent (4): Hurry up, for God's sake!

Girlfriend: O.K., I'm coming... Dads?!

Boyfriend: I know.

Girlfriend: Do you?

Boyfriend: Yes!

Girlfriend: You will ring?

Boyfriend: Yes.

Girlfriend: You've got my number?

Boyfriend: 146 times!

Girlfriend: Well, I've copied it out again, just in case...

Boyfriend: I lose it.

Girlfriend: Right.

Boyfriend: Right.

Girlfriend: I've got to go... I'll miss you.

Boyfriend: I'll miss you... Bye.

Girlfriend: Bye. (*GIRL is sobbing*)

Boyfriend: Bye!

(*GIRL goes*)

Three: 500 yards down the road, there's a telephone box.

Girlfriend: (*dialling*) Hello? Are you missing me yet?

Boyfriend: Yes!

Four: We've all got to go home sometime.

One: Round six!

All: Return journey!

Mam: Get in that car.

Son: But I just want to have a last go on...

Dad: You heard your mother.

Daughter: I feel sick.

Mam: It always seems quicker on the way back, dear.

Four: Eight hours later...

Mam: Here we are!

Son: I don't believe it!

Dad: I couldn't really account for that 3-hour hold up!

Daughter: In the hotel car park?!

Dad: Anyone can forget to fill up!

Son: C'mon, let's go in... there's bound to be loads of post!

Daughter: Yeah! (*CHILDREN rush off*)

Mam: Glad to be back, dear?

Dad: Well...

(*DAUGHTER enters*)

Daughter: One lousy letter, an' that's a bill... Oh yeah, and brother's tripped over an' hurt his ankle, you forgot to cancel the papers, straight into the bannister he went, an' we've forgotten the dog, an... an... where are we going next year?

Mam: Let's talk about that when the time comes, I mean you can't have a holiday every day of the week, I mean we'd never recover.

LIGHTS on 4 actors

One: Back to school...

Two: New uniforms that scratch...

Three: New teachers that shout...

Four: Having to get up early...

One: Wish we were still on holiday.

All: Yeah!

Two: Ah well...

Three: There's worse thing.

Two: What? What's worse than having to get up early? I can't think of anything, can you think of anything?

One: No.

Two: More days...

Three: In school...

Four: No more days...

All: In sorrow, no more days in this old dump, 'cos in 12 months' time, we'll be home tomorrow, we'll be home tomorrow.

THE END