

Millie's Sunshine Tiki Viallas

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2012 Grace Cavalieri

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MILLIE'S SUNSHINE TIKI VILLAS

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Synopsis:

The Sunshine Tiki Villas make up a retirement community for the elderly. The characters are far from retired. They are busy, and thrive on betrayal, rivalry, jealousy— all the interesting human attributes which have peppered our lives since Shakespeare's time and before. There is a cartoon-like quality to their strivings, because no one cares what becomes of them. The characters are Coco, Muriel, and Lady Veronica. Most of all it is confusion that steers the ship of their lives, and although not dementiaed, the characters struggle to make sense of their yearnings and are at a loss to make use of their lives. This one-act play is inspired by Cavalieri's collection of this same title which is a book length novella in verse, now on Amazon and Kindle.

Place: A bungalow in the Tiki Villas

Time: The Present

Characters: Coco, Muriel and Veronica (all elderly women)

Scene opens with Coco and Muriel seated.

Coco

Is the world just a projection of us Muriel?

Muriel

I'd hate to think the world smelled like chicken soup and Lysol.

Coco

And urine

Muriel

And urine

Coco

That's why we are staying here at Millie's. It's so cheerful.

Muriel

Now why are you crying?

Coco

I'm crying because...

Muriel

(*Warning*) we've talked about this, Coco.

Coco

Because...

Muriel

We made a bargain not to give in. we have a show of strength to put on here at The Villas.

Coco

O.K. I'm crying because I'm happy.

Muriel

That's better. What shall we do today? Work on our memoirs?

Coco

We could get started on this.

Muriel

On what?

Coco

Sorting through these words in the shoebox

Muriel

All the words people lose before they have to move out.

Coco

Yesterday, Triumph told me he tripped on the... on the... And couldn't remember the word for *sidewalk*. So I wrote it down and when it happens again I'll just hand it over.

Muriel

The shoebox is getting full.

Coco

Well, people need choices.

Muriel

I tripped on the...*(puzzled)*

Coco

I wait 30 seconds, it's only fair....they may recall.

Muriel

I tripped on (picks out word from shoe box) **FLORIDA**.

Coco

Oh yes. Many proper nouns saved here. They're the first to go.

Muriel

I tripped on *Florida*.

Coco

It satisfies them.

Muriel

Everyone loses words.

Coco

Everyone loses everything that ever lived.

Muriel

Stop it Coco.

Coco

I'm happy about it (*crying*) This is how I look when I'm happy.

(Noise off)

Coco

That's Triumph again next door; Cottage 11.

Muriel

Triumph is in cottage 9.

Coco

Oh is he now. And how do you know?

Muriel

He was telling me his wife is coming soon and # 9 was too small for both of them.

Coco

That's Harry, not Triumph. And his wife is always coming and never arrives, have you noticed?

Door bell

Coco

I'll get it.

(*There stands Veronica with suitcase*) You weren't to come downstairs yet (looks at watch) until next month.

Veronica

There's no heat up there.

Coco

I don't care- this is not our plan.

Muriel

Who is this?

Coco

Veronica, I'd like you to meet Muriel. Muriel, Veronica.

Veronica

How do you do.

Coco

I was going to explain later, Veronica, but Muriel and I go into somewhat of a spat... and this is a surprise to me as well....

Veronica

Where do I put this?

Muriel

What do you mean?

Veronica

Where do I stash my clothes? The rest are coming.

Muriel

Well certainly not here! Coco?

Veronica

Ok, ok let's all sit down.

Muriel

I don't want to sit down.

Coco

Well I think you need to Muriel. Veronica has come to stay.

Muriel

Stay.

Coco

With us.

Muriel

You and me. Where?

Coco

She can't live upstairs forever.

Muriel

Upstairs!

Coco

She's been here weeks already.

Muriel

Upstairs... our Villa? And I didn't know it? How could this be? What does this mean COCO!?

Veronica

She didn't know how to break it to you.

Muriel

I guess not.

Coco

I let her.

Muriel

This isn't your villa ONLY.

Coco

I know, I know. I did it anyway.

Muriel

You didn't care what I thought? Felt? This is my home too.

Coco

There's a part of me that does things like this.

Veronica

Alien love.

Muriel

Upstairs... in our house? Why?

Veronica

I like people.

Monica

Yes?

Veronica

And I like being alone.

Muriel

So?

Veronica

But I don't like those two things at one time.

Muriel

How does that explain my house?

Veronica

I could be alone upstairs.

Muriel

That's true.

Veronica

And you said you didn't even know I was there so what's the fuss?

Muriel

That's because we've always had squirrels or raccoons.

Veronica

Well I would hear you down here-your coffee cups in the morning; the spoons on the tabletop. It was so quiet and I feel part of it. Family! But I didn't have to face you and say Good Morning. I hate that.

Muriel

Well I'll be damned.

Coco

Maybe I should explain. She didn't have a place to stay and there's our empty attic, and it has a toilet, when Aunt Edna lived here.

Veronica

The sound was nice and dry for my violin.

Monica

You played a violin in my attic?

Veronica

When you went off to the dining hall or to your crafts and bazaars...

Monica

(To C) You... You... You...

Coco

Muriel, you always take the conventional view. That's what's the matter with you. At painting class on Thursdays, everything is brown with you...never a smidgen of red.

Muriel

Someone lives upstairs in my attic, without my knowing it. How long?

Veronica

Oh, 6 months or better. The palm tree outside was put in, and now. Look at the size.

Muriel

They are fake palms.

Coco

One of the advantages here. Reason we bought here, remember Muriel?

Muriel

Quiet Coco. You played a violin for 6 months up there?

Veronica

Every day. Oh not very well, I'm afraid.

Muriel

Coco this is against the law!

Coco

What law? I'm like your sister.

Muriel

Breaking and entering.

Coco

I had a key.

Muriel

The law of civility.

Veronica

She didn't hurt anyone. You didn't even know I was here. What's uncivil about that?

Muriel

Coco, can I speak to you a moment? *(V unpack, puts stuffed animals on table; crystal ball, puts vase on table, drapes shawl on chair, pillow on couch)*

Coco

What's the difference? Let her be. What harm can it do? You can remove these things later.

Veronica

I can give you money. You want money?

Muriel

I don't think that's the principle at stake here.

Veronica

I can play the violin for you (brings violin out of suitcase).

Muriel

Sit down, both if you. I want you to understand. I am a woman, not a man. If I want someone to like me, I do not need to use money.

Coco

That's for sure. She's cheap.

Muriel

I do it on some other level.

Veronica

So you don't want my money then?

Coco

She didn't say that.

Muriel

I'm trying to tell you - you are corrupting my life here. You are making up rules I don't believe in.

Coco

No one suffered here Muriel . No one suffered but Victoria. You were perfectly happy the whole time, so what harm was done?

Veronica

I couldn't even use the front entrance. Down the back steps. Always up and down the back steps. And they don't even have backs on the steps. You can see the sky between. Very unsettling. Are you sure you don't want to hear a little sonata?

Coco

Can't I keep her Muriel? She won't eat much...please? Oh please?

Muriel

I am not a mean person. I'm just too old to start again.

Coco

Millie had no extra villas at all, Muriel. We checked. Please, she's so lonely.

Muriel

I can't learn another person's habits, to tell her my allergies, to explain why I stay in bed when it rains. You have to tell someone everything about yourself all over again when everyone else already knows. I'm too old to start again. I'm too tired for anything new

(Coco puts cup on table)

Muriel

No, over here. This table.

Coco

What difference does it make?

Muriel

I like to show you.

Coco

Show me?

Muriel

You know you always say I don't notice you, and what you do. So I'm showing you I am concerned with what you do.

Coco

Where I put my coffee cup?

Muriel

See. I can't please you.

Veronica

Ladies, ladies, let us come to terms. May I speak frankly?

Muriel

Please.

Veronica

Let us look at this a different way. *(She pushes each person to a different place in the room, setting them there)* There, now we have a fresh view of each other. I came here because I had no place to go.

Muriel

That is not my problem.

Veronica

Wait, listen. Neither of you has any place to go. No one has a place to go. No one cares if you live. No one is waiting on the porch for you, either of you. You've outlived your use. The world is small if you don't have wings...sitting here in your # 12 Villa with nowhere to go. That's why I'm here. An angel of sorts. I'm earning my wings you might say, I am bringing the villas some wings!

Muriel

How's that?

Veronica

At least I do something. I came here. I went somewhere. You two never had the guts to even do that.

Muriel

I think you're really crazy.

Veronica

You two are close, yes? And have been together, moving here together from the start.

Coco

Oh yes through the anus of time.

Muriel

I think the word is Aynals.

Veronica

I think the word is annals.

Coco

Whatever -we've been friends.

Veronica

Look at that wheelchair over there.

Coco

I get so sometimes I can't walk.

Veronica

So you're not accountable to the world anymore. Do you know the meanings of these words?
Uxorious, thralldom, refulgent?

Muriel

No one knows them.

Veronica

See how you settle. What else have you given up that you can't get back?

Coco

Oh I've forgotten how to cook. One day I woke up and I couldn't make zucchini bread and I used to make it all the time.

Muriel

Where is this heading?

Veronica

Covenants. Don't each one of you want to make a change before you die? That's why I went upstairs. I was tired of being afraid.

Muriel

What does this have to do with invading my house?

Veronica

I was invited (*indicates C*). When was the last thing you did something new?

Muriel

I started to put jelly on my toast.

Veronica

What kind?

Muriel

Peach.

Coco

Everything passes, Muriel. It could be quite natural for Veronica to do things and live here with us.

Muriel

Coco, you don't live here legally.

Coco

Yes, until the deed is final I know... Veronica can live here and you won't have to tell her about yourself. And your habits. She doesn't care... right Veronica?

Muriel

It's about our cells. People swap cells. Back and forth if they're together. I'm careful about that! (*Storms off*)

Coco (*takes V aside*)

Should we tell her about our plans?

Veronica

Which ones?

Coco

You know, fixing the house up for our music students.

Veronica

Not yet. She seems unstable...

Coco

That's true. I'll leave you two alone for a few minutes. Try to make up to her. Flatter her. Think of something. Ask her about life. Tell her about your magic. Tell her a story, a tragic one. Tell her your mother died. Get close. I'll get the tea (*EXIT COCO*)

Muriel (*peeks in. Speaks to V*)

I thought Coco would never leave. Did you?

Veronica

There for a moment I thought she was suspicious as if she knew something.

Muriel

What could she know? She's stupid.

Veronica

Well, I thought I should have looked guiltier. I thought when she looked at us she knew.

Muriel

How do we get rid of her so we can fix up the house for our music students?

Veronica

Is this going to backfire on us?

Muriel

Give it time. I'll keep up the hostility, and you keep being impervious and we'll see where it takes us.

Veronica

Where it takes us is not a plan.

Muriel

We could surprise her with the truth and watch her explode.

Veronica

She's your only living friend and in your living trust. I am not cutting that ribbon.

Muriel

She's not getting anything anyway. We just decided to each other that whoever finishes the memoir first gets the lease in her name.

(Coco enters)

Veronica *(to M as if begging)*

I have nothing. I spent a life in service to my family.

Coco

You worked.

Veronica

Turned my earnings over. I have only my magic.

Muriel

This is not a welfare stop.

Veronica

By the looks of you two I can see I waited too long to come here.

Muriel

Especially since you weren't invited in the first place.

Coco

You could have been here all the time. Just think. We left our husbands and look at us.

Muriel

They died.

Coco

We still left them afterwards. And now, I have Muriel.

Muriel

And I have Coco. It's been a less than positive experience. Let's eat something.

Veronica

The question at hand is, what do we do now?

Coco and Muriel

Do?

Veronica

Even thinking is doing something.

Coco

What shall we think about?

Muriel

How are we going to get out of this mess?

Coco

We're not in a mess, we're three lonely people who live together.

Muriel

No I live here. You joined me and Victoria is a carpet bagger.

Veronica

I'd go back if I could I swear but I've evolved to be here.

Muriel

Where?

Veronica

To memory --to the past ---but when I get there no one's home.

Muriel

Poor Veronica. Life has passed you by too. I know I myself never learned chess.

Coco

Or Russian.

Muriel

And now there's computer animation. It's always something.

Veronica

I'll go to the attic and practice. I always played on Tuesday when you were both away.

Coco

Knitting is at the art center on Tuesday at noon.

Muriel

What are you practicing for?

Veronica

Whatever event will show up. Real or imagined.

Muriel

If life is an illusion, maybe we should just sit it out to the end.

Coco

You know what I wish? That when you turn the TV on people were really there.

Veronica

It's on tape.

Muriel

So sad.

Veronica

That's why I play, I'll play for you.

Coco

Someday later, Veronica.

Muriel

When we feel better.

Veronica

My husband was always looking for an escape route when I played. Shifted his eyes. They went from side to side.

Muriel

A less than positive sign, yes.

Veronica

What of yours?

Muriel

I scarcely remember him.

Veronica

And you Coco?

Coco

It's shameless what a person can feel. I'd rather not say. I lost two.

Veronica

Misplacing them, yes, but losing seems irresponsible somehow.

Muriel

There's so much besides the world.

Veronica

That's why the violin is better. Music.

Coco

And Muriel's husband.

Muriel

Oh I already forgot who we were talking about.

Coco

Feelings.

Veronica

There are no feelings in the afterlife you know.

Coco

What has that got to do with anything, dear?

Muriel

Well it is something to look forward to.

Coco

Everything changes.

Muriel

Oh yes. The Orient is called Asia now. Everything changes.

Coco

Veronica, clear something up for me. What do you want?

Veronica

Autonomy, but with people.

Muriel

And you, Coco?

Coco

This time of day? Dinner.

Muriel

This puts me in an awkward place. It always impinges on me. I can't provide either of you what you want on an instant. So I am the one burdened, it seems.

Veronica

You are both a mess of broken dreams, and so ending up like this will not do! The end of your life is most important because that is the way you'll begin your *next* life...You want to be failures next time too?

Coco

I want to wear mesh stockings.

Muriel

I wanted to be in the circus once.

Veronica

Aha!

Muriel

And I was so young but I joined up. I had never done anything and I was thinner then. I wanted to be loved but I was so shy.

Coco

I became a nun.

Veronica

Yes. If you can believe in God, you can believe in anything. I understand that.

Coco

I thought it would help but I was lousy at that too.

Muriel

So she became a lesbian.

Coco

MURIEL.

Muriel

Just for a year.

Veronica

She was lousy at that too trust me (dead silence).

Muriel

Veronica!

Coco

Muriel!

Coco

But then you did marry. I met him, your ex.

Muriel

Adultery.

Veronica

You committed adultery?

Coco

Muriel hardly committed marriage. I met him, her ex.

Muriel

Ha! Coco! You forgot the time I walked in and caught you sitting on the couch. He had his head in your lap? And you were entirely naked. Entirely.

Veronica

Naked usually assumes entirely, dear.

Coco

And what did he say?

Muriel

He said he hadn't noticed.

Coco

You could have given him the benefit of the doubt.

Veronica

You believed him?

Muriel

Of course not. I told him to get up and get dressed also.

Coco

Muriel makes so much of everything. Did you ever in your life imagine that perhaps- just perhaps- he was telling the truth? I'm talking about the benefit of doubt...you never once gave... I don't know what to think.

Muriel

Oh he was dapper alright.

Coco

And when Muriel wasn't looking once he held my hand up to his cheek and kissed the palm of my hand.

Muriel

An outrage.

Veronica and Coco

And what did you think?

Coco

(*Dreamily*) I thought ...I was glad I didn't forget to wash my hands after I went to the bathroom.

Muriel

And wouldn't it have served him right though.

Coco

It is shameless what a person can feel.

Muriel

I am just on the verge of...of...of... I am on the verge of ...

(Coco rushes in holds out shoe box. Muriel picks a word)... of cosmetology.

Veronica

Yes. Aren't we all.

(Doorbell rings)

Muriel

That may be Triumph. I invited him to dinner to meet Veronica. He's tall enough.

Coco

But you didn't know she was coming so how could you? Poor dear forgetful Muriel. Here. You hold it. You need it more than I do. *(Drops box in Muriel's lap.)* I'll get it *(Moves to door)*

The End