

# THESE THINGS HAPPEN

by

Chris and Ryan Wilkins

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Chris and Ryan Wilkins



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## **AUTHORS' NOTES**

Avoid making Roger stereotypical.

Feel free to censor the language as you see fit.

Ricky and Daniel have no lines. Both can be simply suggested. If you prefer, they can be cast and appear in their few parts.

A lot of the dialogue between Roger and Sara seems very confrontational. Remember they've been married for many years and most of it is bickering. Be sure that the scenes still build and it isn't tense the entire time.

It should be noted that both Roger and Sara aren't ever completely in the right, nor are they ever completely in the wrong. Divorce is much more complicated than that. No one is the good guy. No one is the bad guy.

## **CHARACTERS**

SARA: Mid 30's

ROGER: Mid 30's

## **SETTING**

It takes place in Sara and Roger's apartment, at a restaurant and at Daniel's apartment.

## **TIME**

The play is set in modern day.

# THESE THINGS HAPPEN

## SCENE ONE

*(We open to a dark stage. We hear pandemonium on stage. ROGER and SARA are mid-fight. It has been a long time coming and they are both talking very fast. Their lines should overlap.)*

SARA. It's one of those girls at the hospital! God!

ROGER. Sara. Would you calm down—

SARA. I never should've married a nurse.

ROGER. *(Lights up)* Sara!

SARA. Christ! I should have known this—

ROGER. Stop rambling and talk to me!

SARA. *(Takes just a second to think)* You think I'm so stupid don't you?

ROGER. When have I ever said that?

SARA. You thought I'd never figure it out.

ROGER. Figure what out!?

SARA. You're cheating on me, Roger.

ROGER. Sara.

SARA. It's the truth!

ROGER. I am not cheating on you. I would never do that—

SARA. You are so full of shit!

ROGER. Would you explain what the hell is going on?

SARA. I have proof!

*(RICKY opens his parent's bedroom door. Both parent's heads quickly look at the door. They try to hide that they were fighting.)*

ROGER. Hey, buddy.

SARA. Did we wake you, honey?

ROGER. We're having grown up talk, Ricky, you don't want to hear this. Why don't you head back to bed?

SARA. Go on, I'll come in soon and tuck you in.

*(Both watch RICKY close the door and leave. The fight starts at somewhat of the same intensity but begins at a more subdued volume.)*

SARA. I have proof you are cheating on me.

ROGER. Well then prove it.

SARA. Tonight I went to Michelle's across the street and I—



ROGER. You said you were going to the movies?

SARA. I was lying.

ROGER. *(To himself)* Now you're lying.

SARA. I went to Michelle's house and spied on you through the window. And I saw that black Volkswagen pull into the garage!

ROGER. You saw a black Volkswagen?

SARA. Don't deny it, Roger. I saw it. I've known something was up. You've been acting different for months—

ROGER. Sara.

SARA. And I have proof now—

ROGER. You saw my friend Daniel.

SARA. What?

ROGER. My friend Daniel drives a Volkswagen. He came over and we hung out.

SARA. No. No that's not possible.

ROGER. Daniel was the only person who came over. What? Am I not allowed to hang out with my friends when you're at movies?

SARA. There was a woman here!

ROGER. Or just not when you're spying on me? You've got some nerve, you know that? Accusing me—

SARA. *(Blurting out, confused)* But it broke!

ROGER. What? What the hell are you talking—?

SARA. Michelle said if I wanted to prove you were cheating I should put an egg under our mattress. So if you got in bed the egg would break. And it broke, Roger. Don't give me this shit about Daniel or whoever. You were sleeping with someone.

ROGER. *(Knows he's caught)* Okay look—

SARA. Why would you be in the bed if you were just with one of your friends?

ROGER. I can explain.

SARA. He wasn't the only person over! Who is she? One of those stupid bitch nurses, isn't she!?

ROGER. Please just listen to me.

SARA. Jesus Christ Roger! *(She rambles very quickly)* Why? What am I not good enough? Fuck! Are we supposed to get counseling or what does this even mean? What am I supposed to do? What do I tell Ricky?

ROGER. Sara.

SARA. I'm never going to be able to trust you after this! Never! This is too much. God damnit. Some stupid fucking nurse. She's good looking, isn't she?!

ROGER. Sara I'm trying to—

SARA. The egg broke, Roger! Who are you sleeping with?!

ROGER. *(This is the only way he can figure out how to tell her. It comes both as a means of quieting SARA, but also is still very vulnerable)* Daniel was the only person who came over.

*(Both stand in silence, maintaining eye contact, as it slowly dawns on SARA. This realization is very important to the audience.)*

SARA. With...*(ROGER hesitantly nods his head. As she understand what happened, she is shocked and blurting out at first, more confident by the last two words)* Get out. *(She points to the door)* Leave.

*(ROGER, not wanting to cause a fight, leaves. Lights Down.)*

## SCENE TWO

*(The lights are still down. We hear a door open. It is the next morning and ROGER has returned to the apartment.)*

SARA. Roger? Is that you?

ROGER. Yeah.

SARA. You're back. *(Lights up)*

ROGER. I came to grab a few of my things.

SARA. Why?

ROGER. I thought you wanted me out of the house.

SARA. Look, I over-reacted. It was very hard for me to listen to what you said last night.

ROGER. The truth?

SARA. I scheduled us to meet with a marriage counselor. We can work this out. We'll put this behind us and get on with our lives.

ROGER. I think we should get a divorce.

SARA. What?

ROGER. I think we—

SARA. I heard you. What're you talking about?

ROGER. You said it yourself; I've been acting weird for months now. It's because—well—I think it'd be best for everyone if we separated.

SARA. What about Ricky? What's best for him?

ROGER. You think I haven't thought of that?

SARA. You can't just leave us.

ROGER. I'm not abandoning you. It's not like I'm leaving forever. I just think we should—

SARA. You are so selfish.

ROGER. I want what's best for both of us.

SARA. You want a divorce so you can go be with Daniel or whoever the hell he is. Because you like men now—

ROGER. Don't bring him into this. This is between you and me.

SARA. You brought him into this, Roger. You're the one who had strangers in our bedroom.

ROGER. Yes. I cheated on you. I admit that. Okay?

SARA. *(Beat)* I don't want a divorce.

ROGER. Why not?

SARA. Because we're going to work through this.

ROGER. What if I don't want to work through this?

SARA. Then you're going to stop thinking about yourself for ten fucking seconds and think about me and Ricky.

ROGER. You'd be happier if Daniel didn't have to sneak into our room every time you go to the movies. You and Ricky don't deserve that.

SARA. What the hells the matter with you?

ROGER. *(Starting to leave)* I'm getting some things.

SARA. Don't walk away from me! I'm talking to you!

ROGER. We're getting a divorce. *(Exits)*

SARA. You can't do this to us!

ROGER. *(Off stage)* I'm doing this for us!

SARA. The hell you are! You're a selfish asshole! *(Lights fade slowly as SARA continues to yell at ROGER)* You can't do this! I won't let you! I'll never agree to it! And if I meet this Daniel I swear to god I'll fucking murder him!

### SCENE THREE

*(ROGER and SARA are now at a restaurant. Two other empty tables could be placed with theirs, but other actors are not needed for the scene. Lights are still down as they get seated.)*

SARA. I hate this restaurant.

ROGER. You love this restaurant. It was the first place we went on a date.

SARA. The food is lousy and the service is awful. *(Lights up)*

ROGER. Or maybe that's why you hate it.

SARA. I don't see why we need to go to a fucking restaurant anyway.

ROGER. Because, I prefer to discuss this with you in a public place. We don't want a repeat of our last discussion.

SARA. I got a little angry. I think given the circumstances—

ROGER. People get divorced. Let's be adults about this. We should be able to come to an agreement without lawyers. All right? Let's just, be civilized.

SARA. Fine. (*With disdain*) How's Daniel?

ROGER. Great. He really wants to meet you.

SARA. I'd rather not.

ROGER. Offer's always open.

SARA. I'll think about it.

ROGER. I heard you got a job?

SARA. I got my old one back at the office. I guess I don't get to be a stay at home mom anymore, just a single one.

(*An imaginary waiter enters. The waiter may also be suggested.*)

ROGER. I'll have a water.

SARA. Something with vodka. (*SARA waves off the waiter not wanting to explain*)

ROGER. It's one o'clock?

SARA. I'll need a drink to get through this conversation.

ROGER. (*Taken aback*) Are you serious? It's the middle of the day.

SARA. (*Ignoring him*) I'm taking the apartment.

ROGER. I think we agree on who gets what.

SARA. Where are you living?

ROGER. I'm staying with Dan.

SARA. You already moved in together?

ROGER. You kicked me out of the house. Where did you think I'd go?

SARA. I don't know. I didn't think things would move so quickly.

ROGER. Sometimes things go quickly.

SARA. How long have you been seeing him?

ROGER. That doesn't matter.

SARA. I want to know.

ROGER. A while, okay?

SARA. How long's a while?

ROGER. Can we focus on our agreement? Please?

SARA. Okay, let's *focus*. You want to talk about custody don't you?

ROGER. I want to *discuss* custody, yes.

SARA. Judges always side with the mother.

ROGER. I want to *discuss* it, Sara. We're supposed to come to an agreement. I have every right to see him.

SARA. I don't want him staying with you.

ROGER. (*Not angry, but starting to catch on what SARA may be getting at*) Why the hell not?

SARA. Because. He's too young.

ROGER. Too young to see his father? That makes no sense.

SARA. I don't want Ricky spending time in Daniel's apartment. He's too young to be raised like that.

ROGER. Like what?

SARA. By two fathers.

ROGER. There it is.

SARA. Roger, he's too young! He doesn't need to be learning about being gay and sex and—

ROGER. You can hate, Daniel. Fine! And you can hate me too. But you will not keep my son from me. Don't pretend you're trying to protect, Ricky, from the big bad gays. He's ten. I think he can handle—

SARA. I just want the best for our son.

ROGER. That's bullshit.

SARA. I don't want him staying at Daniel's apartment. I'm not explaining to Ricky what gay people do and—it's traumatizing enough that he has to see his father with another man.

ROGER. Traumatizing? I'm his father. Not some child-corrupting faggot—

SARA. He is not staying at Daniel's!

ROGER. Fine! I won't stay at Daniel's apartment. I'll fucking rent a hotel room every time he stays with me. Is that what you want?

SARA. (*Getting up to leave*) I think we should let the lawyers handle the details.

ROGER. We shouldn't need lawyers.

SARA. You've changed, Roger.

ROGER. (*Beat*) Well that makes two of us.

*(SARA exits. ROGER sits at the table frustrated. Lights down.)*

#### SCENE FOUR

*(We are in the ROGER and SARA's apartment again. They are addressing RICKY, who is positioned right in front of them. Lights are still down.)*

ROGER. Listen Ricky, this isn't going to make a lot of sense and it's okay if you want to cry. (*Lights up. ROGER looks at SARA. They've discussed how to tell RICKY, yet it doesn't seem to have helped*)

SARA. Your father and I aren't going to—well—

ROGER. What your mother is trying to say is, mommy and daddy aren't going to live in the same house anymore.

SARA. Your dad and I are getting a divorce.

**END OF FREE PREVIEW**

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### **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

Among many others, Chris and Ryan Wilkins' plays include *Rob in the Hood*, *These Things Happen*, and *Thomas Brady's First Day of Kindergarten*. In only their first year, these scripts have delivered forensics students to multiple final round performance opportunities.

The Wilkins brothers competed in high school forensics at Lincoln High School in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where they were recently the 2011 National Champions in Duo Interpretation at the National Forensics League (NFL) Tournament. With a combined seven years of speech experience, observing all ranges of performances and scripts, the Wilkins twins have now set their eyes on coaching students and writing scripts for forensics performance. Their hope is to continue to help anyone and everyone they can in the forensics realm.

## **THESE THINGS HAPPEN**

by Chris and Ryan Wilkins

GENRE: DRAMA (One-Act)

CAST: 1 Male, 1 Female

### **SUMMARY:**

After ROGER admits he's cheating on his wife SARA with a man named DANIEL, an ugly divorce occurs. Trying to cope with the loss of her marriage, Sara turns to alcohol and keeps ROGER from seeing their son RICKY. ROGER tries to keep RICKY in his life, while still moving on with his new partner. Both parents struggle to find a common ground with their son after their marriage is torn apart. **THESE THINGS HAPPEN** depicts the harsh realities of broken marriages and custody battles, but shows us that ultimately there can be life after divorce.

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