

# THE ROPE SWINGS

TEN-MINUTE PLAY

By Toni Wilson

Copyright © MMIV by Toni Wilson

All Rights Reserved

Brooklyn Publishers LLC in association with Heuer Publishing LLC

Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this work is subject to a royalty. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. All rights to this work of any kind including but not limited to professional and amateur stage performing rights are controlled exclusively by Heuer Publishing LLC and Brooklyn Publishers, LLC. Inquiries concerning rights should be addressed to Heuer Publishing LLC.

This work is fully protected by copyright. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without permission of the publisher. Copying (by any means) or performing a copyrighted work without permission constitutes an infringement of copyright.

All organizations receiving permission to produce this work agree to give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production. The author(s) billing must appear below the title and be at least 50% as large as the title of the Work. All programs, advertisements, and other printed material distributed or published in connection with production of the work must include the following notice: **“Produced by special arrangement with Heuer Publishing LLC in association with Brooklyn Publishers, LLC.”**

There shall be no deletions, alterations, or changes of any kind made to the work, including the changing of character gender, the cutting of dialogue, or the alteration of objectionable language unless directly authorized by the publisher or otherwise allowed in the work’s “Production Notes.” The title of the play shall not be altered.

The right of performance is not transferable and is strictly forbidden in cases where scripts are borrowed or purchased second-hand from a third party. All rights, including but not limited to professional and amateur stage performing, recitation, lecturing, public reading, television, radio, motion picture, video or sound taping, internet streaming or other forms of broadcast as technology progresses, and the rights of translation into foreign languages, are strictly reserved.

**COPYING OR REPRODUCING ALL OR ANY PART OF THIS BOOK IN ANY MANNER IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN BY LAW.**

One copy for each speaking role must be purchased for production purposes. Single copies of scripts are sold for personal reading or production consideration only.

**BROOKLYN PUBLISHERS LLC**

**P.O. BOX 248 • CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52406**

**TOLL FREE (888) 473-8521 • FAX (319) 368-8011**

## THE ROPE SWINGS

By Toni Wilson

**SYNOPSIS:** After their mother dies, a pair of sisters meet privately for the first time in the backyard of the house they grew up in. Fifteen years has passed and in the ten minutes that pass in the play, we see what those fifteen years have done to the sisters, and we see if amends and healing are possible.

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 WOMEN)

#### *A pair of sisters...*

MARGO..... 33, no frills kind of woman, no make-up, simple hairstyle. She has spent the last fifteen years caring for her sick mother, who recently died. She is seeing December for the first time since.

DECEMBER..... 38, appears as a woman who wants to try and look as young as possible, perfect hair, make-up, clothes. She left Margo to care for their mother fifteen years before and attempts to make amends, or at least begin the healing process.

### SETTING

The house where MARGO and DECEMBER grew up. The backyard. Two ropes swings hang from two trees and there are leaves all around.

### TIME

Present. Fall. Evening, almost dusk.

**PROPS**

- Leaves
- A pair of rope swings (weight bearing)

**NOTE:**

These notations “—” in the play denote overlapping and interrupting of the lines from the characters.

**PRODUCTION NOTES**

The pushing of December off the swing could be replaced by Margo kicking December in the rear end, causing her to fall down. Margo then repeatedly trips her down as indicated in the script. Safety of the actress playing December is the key issue. Any kind of fight choreography can be used in place of what is indicated so long as Margo manages to keep knocking December down literally.

The lighting for the play should be a fall colored light with a leaf patterned gobo. You could have someone in the catwalk of the theatre dump leaves after the rope swings are lowered from the catwalk. These need to be weight bearing, per the actions of the script.

THE ROPE SWINGS

**AT RISE:**

*LIGHTS UP. Enter MARGO. She is dressed in simple black and looks tired and angry. She sees the two swings, she looks around and then looks back at the house. When she's sure she's alone, she sits on one of the swings and begins to cry. Beat. Enter DECEMBER. She wears an expensive-looking black suit and looks slightly bothered. She observes MARGO until MARGO notices her there.*

**MARGO:** *(Quickly wiping away her tears, embarrassed.)* What are you doing out here?

**DECEMBER:** I was looking for you. You're hard to find. There wasn't a place in that house I didn't look.

**MARGO:** I needed a breath of fresh air.

**DECEMBER:** I know what you mean. This has been a hell of a day, hasn't it? We couldn't have asked for better weather, though, or a lovelier service. Father Justin, is that his name? He's delightful, simply delightful.

*Beat.*

**MARGO:** What?

**DECEMBER:** You're in my swing.

**MARGO:** And?

**DECEMBER:** Move it. It's my swing. I want to swing on it.

**MARGO:** You—

**DECEMBER:** It's still my swing, even if it's been a couple decades since I last swung on it. So scoot.

**MARGO:** Fine.

*MARGO moves to the next swing and DECEMBER sits on hers. MARGO tries to ignore DECEMBER, who starts to swing and sing.*

**DECEMBER:** *(Singing.)*

*Would you like to swing on a star?*

*Carry moonbeams home in a jar?*

**MARGO:** Do you have to sing?

**DECEMBER:** *(Singing.)*

*and be better off than you?  
Or would you rather be a mule?  
Is there something wrong with my singing?*

*Beat.*

**DECEMBER:** I've missed this place, and that song, oh, the memories it brings back. Mom had the most beautiful singing voice and one of my favorite memories was when she would sing us to sleep every night with that exact song. Don't you remember it?

**MARGO:** If you don't mind, I'd like to be alone.

**DECEMBER:** That was the life. Playing all day, being sung to at night. All those wonderful carefree days! They just don't make the days like that anymore. All there is, is work, responsibility, work.

*MARGO stands.*

**DECEMBER:** Hey, where are you going?

**MARGO:** Back in the house.

**DECEMBER:** Oh, speaking of the house, what do you want to do with it?

**MARGO:** *(Deep breath, speaking as evenly as possible.)* Is this a conversation we have to have right now?

**DECEMBER:** Why not? This seems like it's as good a time as any. All the guests have left and—

**MARGO:** Which means I should go back in the house and clean up.

**DECEMBER:** Don't worry, Aunt Shelley's cleaning up.

**MARGO:** All the more reason to go and help.

**DECEMBER:** Margo, she's capable. Come on, let's sit and chat.

**MARGO:** Chat? - - I really don't want to talk to you right now.

**DECEMBER:** Why not?

*MARGO stares at DECEMBER.*

**MARGO:** You can't just expect - -

**DECEMBER:** What? What can't I just expect?

**MARGO:** I'm not doing this.

**DECEMBER:** What?

**MARGO:** Fighting with you—

**DECEMBER:** I'm not fighting. I'm just trying to have a conversation—

**MARGO:** (*Pleading.*) December, please, this is how it always starts—

**DECEMBER:** —with my kid sister. (*MARGO gives up and listens, annoyed.*) I haven't seen you in so long! You've gotten so skinny, you can't be eating right—

**MARGO:** —I'm going back in the house—

**DECEMBER:** —and, honey, those clothes, and no make-up, and your hair is an absolute scream—

**MARGO:** I have things to do. Certain duties—

**DECEMBER:** Duties? Duties! Always with the duties. God, I hated how she called them that. She's dead, she won't know if the duties don't get done.

**MARGO:** You . . . wouldn't understand.

**DECEMBER:** (*Stands and crosses to MARGO, places her hand on her shoulder, and MARGO shrugs it away.*) Oh, my poor sweet Margo. You're so tense over this whole thing, you're liable to just explode.

**MARGO:** Who wouldn't - be -

**DECEMBER:** You're right to feel this way. Look at all you gave up: fifteen years, your youth, your education, friends, possibilities for marriage and children. All that, so much, just to care for her.

**MARGO:** She was our only mother.

**DECEMBER:** Point well taken. I know I would feel exactly the same way, had I been in the same situation.

**MARGO:** You - you - - I'm going back in the house.

**DECEMBER:** Margo, you should take a vacation.

**MARGO:** A vacation?

**DECEMBER:** (*Sitting back on her swing.*) Yes, a vacation. Don't look at me like that. I know what I'm talking about. Somewhere tropical, with palm trees and hot little cabana boys to take care of your poor tired body.

BY TONI WILSON

***Thank you for reading this free excerpt from THE ROPE SWINGS by Tony Wilson. For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script, please contact us at:***

**Brooklyn Publishers, LLC**

**P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406**

**Toll Free: 1-888-473-8521 • Fax (319) 368-8011**

**[www.brookpub.com](http://www.brookpub.com)**

Do Not Copy