

MISSING BUTTERFLIES

A play in Two Acts

by

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Cast of Characters

- KRISTEN: 66 Mother of HAILEY and wife of CRAIG. Very attractive, determined, and caring, Dry sense of humor when nervous. Kristen is conflicted and desperately seeking answers for her life. She is on a journey to find her passion. Very Christian with high morals. Doesn't get along with HAILEY. Same race as CRAIG and HAILEY.
- CRAIG: 66 Imposing, good-looking, loving, devoted husband of KRISTEN and father of HAILEY. High Christian and moral ethic. Strong and protective. Same race as KRISTEN and HAILEY.
- STACY: 67 Good-looking, sarcastic, funny, witty, and angry ex-wife. She is on her own journey to find purpose in life. Best friend of KRISTEN. Opinionated and very competitive. She is steadfast in her opinions. She will not tell you what you want to hear if she does not believe it. Race open. Suggest black.
- ROGER HUTCHENS: 65 Don Juan. Must be able to pass for CRAIG in silhouette. Very handsome. He is a ladies' man and knows how handsome he is. He is a Psychiatrist and very charming and intelligent. He has great insights as a shrink. He is romantic, sensual, and charismatic but has a very dark side. Same race as KRISTEN.
- HAILEY: 40 Wife, mother, daughter of KRISTEN and CRAIG. Devoted to her father. Adversarial relationship with KRISTEN. Very headstrong. Same race as CRAIG and KRISTEN.
- PASTOR BRIAN:
SECURITY GUARD: 60 As PASTOR BRIAN, he is insightful, compassionate, non-judgmental, and filled with a sense of peace. As a SECURITY GUARD, he is non-descript. Race open. Suggest black.
- ANGELA:
WOMAN: 45 Sexy, slim, great figure, beautiful. ANGELA is a femme fatale. As WOMAN very non-descript. Race open. Suggest black.

Scene

Denver and Boulder area. Kristen's living room, coffee shops, the exterior of a church, a park, Red Rocks, and a theatre.

Time

Present.

Set Vision

Three-set split stage style. Each set is angled. The living area, on a higher level, is the largest section. It's centered at an angle so you can see both sides of the front door. One scene utilizes both the exterior and interior of the door. It is a nice middle-class living room. The front of the angle is cut off allowing more room for the pathway from the church to the courtyard area. A couch and coffee table with a chair is needed. There is a hallway on the upper stage left wall to the kitchen and a hall to the bathroom and bedrooms lower stage left. The lower-level stage right is the larger of the lower sections. It is the exterior of a church with steps up to the door. At the front of the living room is a wide path that leads to a courtyard just left of the living room. The smallest set on the lower level is stage left downstage. It is Red Rocks and doubles as a Coffee Shop. The back wall of the coffee shop can revolve to be the back of Red Rocks Red Rocks is the audience seating and will have a couple of stone-looking seats higher up that are usable. The final scene is a stage set. It can utilize the living room any way that fits your theatre. The apron of the stage can be the aisle and seating for that scene or use the Coffee Shop area as the 'audience' seating area.

SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1	Living room	Evening.
Scene 2	Living room	Half-hour later.
Scene 3	Living room	Two weeks later. Morning
Scene 4	Church exterior	A few days later. Late morning
Scene 5	Church exterior	One hour later.
Scene 6	Coffee shop.	A few days later. Afternoon
Scene 7	Living room	Two weeks later. Early morning.
Scene 8	Living room	7:30 the next morning.

INTERMISSION

ACT II

Scene 1	Red Rocks	8:00 the same night.
Scene 2	Living room	7:00 the next morning.
Scene 3	Church exterior	A few days later. Morning.
Scene 4	Living room	A few days later. Night.
Scene 5	Living room	The next morning.
Scene 6	Coffee shop	A few days later. Late morning
Scene 7	Coffee Shop	A bit later.
Scene 8	Exterior park	Two hours later.
Scene 9	Interior Theatre	Three weeks later. Night.

ACT I

Scene 1

SETTING: Kristen's living room. Evening.

AT RISE: CRAIG is on the sofa doing the crossword puzzle. KRISTEN is struggling with what to tell CRAIG. She paces as her mind works.

(These are the thoughts running through KRISTEN'S mind. CRAIG cannot hear them.)

KRISTEN

Heavenly Father, I know you don't want me to be miserable for the rest of my life. I've made up my mind and I'm going to tell him. I don't want to hurt Craig! God, help me with this! I have prayed so hard. What is wrong with me? How did I let it get this far? I watch the butterflies and I see freedom. Nothing planned just enjoying the flowers and random patterns of flying. How I long to be flying free! Dear Lord, I am desperate for something exciting, different, and new! Something to make me want to get out of bed! I didn't sign up for a life of confinement with my husband. Staring at the world through the window! I want a burning passion for something... to feel alive! I remember falling in love! I want to feel that again! I look at Craig and I long to feel something for him. I can't do this anymore! Oh, Craig, you are such a good man! How do I tell you? I miss enriching each other's lives with freshness and passion. I want to fall in love with you again. How can I make you see that every nerve is screaming, 'I need to be alone! I want to run till I can't anymore!' I need time to breathe without you! I love you but you're suffocating me! Please go before this feeling kills what love is left. I can't say that! He would be so hurt! This feeling is consuming me like a white-hot, burning, fire tornado sucking the life out of me with every boring second. Help me, Jesus! Give me the words! Give me the courage to tell him without hurting him.

(She paces nervously.
KRISTEN sits then paces
again. CRAIG looks up.)

CRAIG

Sweetie, would you please sit down? I need an eleven-letter word for nerves and your pacing isn't helping any.

Butterflies. KRISTEN

Nice! That fits! Are you ready to tell me what's bugging you? CRAIG

I miss it! Don't you? KRISTEN

Miss what? CRAIG

Butterflies. KRISTEN

Butterflies?? CRAIG

Nervous excitement. Anticipation. The mystery of the unknown. I miss it so much! KRISTEN

What brought this up? CRAIG

I'm empty inside. I have been for a long time. KRISTEN

(puts down his puzzle)
Kristen, what's the matter? CRAIG

Dear, sweet, wonderful Craig... KRISTEN

That sounds ominous. CRAIG

I'm feeling... claustrophobic. KRISTEN

Let's go for a walk. We could get some ice cream. CRAIG

It's not that kind of feeling. Have you ever been lonely... with someone? KRISTEN

Me? Kristen, are you lonely with me? What did I do?? CRAIG

KRISTEN

Nothing! Oh, Craig! You did nothing wrong. It's me. I'm feeling claustrophobic and very, very empty.

CRAIG

How long have you felt like this?

KRISTEN

It's been months.

CRAIG

Months! Why didn't you say something?

KRISTEN

After working all those years we're now spending twenty-four-seven together. I thought it was just settling into our new life.

CRAIG

There's always a period of adjustment. It's normal! We both went from busy lives to being with each other all day. Hey, I had a minute of anxiety when I first retired but it passed. I fell in love with you all over again, believe me, it will pass.

KRISTEN

How I envy that feeling! I kept hoping this feeling would just go away but it's consuming me. I've tried everything I can think of to change the way I'm feeling. I've tried exercise, meditation, taking classes but you decided to take them with me. I tried to join a club and you joined too, "so we can be together." I saw how happy you were, and I just sucked it up and went along. I'm desperate to feel the same wonderful, exhilarating feeling we had when we were first married.

CRAIG

I hate hearing you're unhappy. What can I do? What do you need?

KRISTEN

Dear sweet Craig, I miss learning about you! Discovering something new every day about you. I miss enriching each other's lives with freshness and passion. I want to fall in love with you again. I need time to fall in love with you. Craig, there is no easy way to say this. I can't breathe. My whole body is screaming I am hopelessly, desperately lonely in the same room with you!

(horrified)

I'm so sorry! I practiced telling you and it came out all wrong. I didn't mean to hurt you!

CRAIG

Well, it's a little late for that!

KRISTEN

I'm sorry I said it so callously. It just exploded!

CRAIG

What's going on?

KRISTEN

Craig, I need to be alone.

CRAIG

Apparently, you're already alone in the same room with me! Never mind. I don't want to fight with you.

(beat)

Tell you what; I'll get a room for the night. We can both check our feelings and talk about what's really bugging you in the morning.

KRISTEN

I don't think you understand. I need you to leave... to move out.

CRAIG

You're kicking me out?

KRISTEN

At least for a while.

CRAIG

Are you leaving me?

KRISTEN

No! Yes. Well, not leaving, leaving. I'm a mess! I'm screaming inside. I don't know who I am anymore.

CRAIG

Join the club! I don't know who you are right now either. Kristen, is there someone else?

KRISTEN

No! I'm not looking for someone to replace you! No one could ever take your place. I need to be alone for a while.

CRAIG

I love how I make you crave distance from me!

KRISTEN

Please try to understand! I need to find my passion. I want to laugh again. I want to feel alive and I don't right now.

CRAIG

Five minutes ago everything was fine. My mind is racing to understand any of this! Nothing makes any sense!

KRISTEN

Do you realize that in sixty-six years I have never spent one night alone? Not one! I never even dated anyone but you. The moment I saw you, I knew you were the only man for me. I went from being a kid to being a wife overnight. I was excited to see where you were taking us. You were the most creative man I had ever known. Life was filled with surprises. Then a few years later we had Hailey and Matt.

CRAIG

You said you loved being a mother.

KRISTEN

I do! I also love being a grandmother. When Hailey and Matt were old enough I finally got to live my dream job working at the aquarium. I had a job I enjoyed, children I adored and the love of my life at my side. Do you remember how excited we were to share our day and our dreams with each other? We had dreams so big they carried us away on a river of hope. Remember when we lost the apartment?

CRAIG

I felt like such a failure. Making you sleep in a tent.

KRISTEN

That summer was the best time of my life! You made me feel rich! I wasn't cooking on some camp stove; I was a chef cooking on the stone bar-b-que you made for me. You made me a featherbed from pine boughs fit for a queen.

CRAIG

Wind whispering in the trees. Romantic nights mesmerized by the stars.

KRISTEN

Dreaming without limits. The anticipation of sharing our day's adventure with each other was like a great novel I never wanted to put down. Every day was a honeymoon...

CRAIG

Until we retired and I became clingy and boring.

KRISTEN

We spend every minute together; share the same opinions on everything. There's nothing new to talk about because we both do everything together. All the beauty, all our travels are covered in a sickeningly sweet sauce of sameness. Our lives have become vanilla. I miss the thrill of discovery and sharing that excitement.

KRISTEN (CONT'D)

I miss the anticipation of your surprises. I miss butterflies!

CRAIG

We worked our entire lives to spend our retirement together and now you want to throw it all away for butterflies?? Okay, so maybe life has become too routine, too comfortable. Let's go away! Somewhere exotic. We can skinny dip in the ocean and make love on the beach. Play native, drink out of coconuts.

KRISTEN

Collecting paper umbrellas and dancing to a Caribbean beat.

CRAIG

Snorkel at dawn, siesta at noon and romance the night away.

KRISTEN

It sounds so romantic and wonderful.

(CRAIG kisses KRISTEN passionately.)

CRAIG

I hear Seychelles are very romantic. Or we could go to Jamaica or Bermuda.

KRISTEN

I can feel the music! Those drums! Star-filled nights.

(CRAIG and KRISTEN begin to dance. Swaying to the music of their souls.)

CRAIG

If you want stars, what about Bora Bora? Fred and Tracy said the island life is so secluded. Only a few shops in town and an island we can explore in the moonlight. Just you and me.

KRISTEN

Just you and me. Making the same memories. Traveling the same path... together.

(gently pushes him away)

Then it's back home again to our vanilla lives. I can't. I just can't!

CRAIG

You make it sound like life with me is a prison. What the hell do you want from me?

KRISTEN

Find interests outside of me. Something that will make every day exciting. Learn something new. Find a passion that doesn't involve me before we smother our love.

CRAIG

I know you love me! You couldn't make love like we shared last night if your heart wasn't in it.

KRISTEN

It was a last desperate attempt to re-ignite the passion I long for. I love the idea of you.

CRAIG

We've always worked through things together. Let's go see Pastor Brian. He helped us when we had issues with Hailey. I'll call him.

KRISTEN

I've already seen him; several sessions in fact. I've been praying and hoping but I'm still suffocating!

CRAIG

Now I'm suffocating you???

KRISTEN

My identity has been so wrapped up in you and the kids that I've forgotten who I am! I want, for once in my life, to be an individual.

CRAIG

You hit me with this crap out of the blue and I'm suddenly supposed to understand that you don't want me around anymore?? Yesterday I was the perfect husband and today I've become some boring, sickeningly sweet wimp who happens to share your bed. What is it you really want? And don't give me some bullshit about butterflies. Do you want a divorce? Is that what all this is about?

KRISTEN

I don't want a divorce. I just need to breathe!

CRAIG

Oh, I get it; life was good until you *had* to spend time with me. The kids and your job were just a distraction. Now we're alone, I'm the guy who's choking the life out of you!

KRISTEN

Please don't say that! I have to do this or I'm going to end up resenting you.

CRAIG

It sounds like you already do!

KRISTEN

I'm numb. I'm feeling old! I feel life slipping by at a rate I never thought possible. I want to feel young again! I want to explore life! I want to miss you! I want to love you the way you deserve.

CRAIG

You want to love me? That is such a pile of...!

KRISTEN

I'm lost! Craig, I don't know who I am anymore.

CRAIG

Well, join the club! I don't know who you are either!

KRISTEN

You've always been my best friend, my lover, my life...

CRAIG

No!! No, no, no!! Don't tell me I'm your best friend! If I were, you would've told me what was bothering you a long time ago. A best friend would never let this get so far!

KRISTEN

I was afraid to say it out loud. It would've made it real.

CRAIG

Sounds pretty damn real to me! Life isn't all butterflies and roses. It isn't always sexy and romantic. Sometimes it's boring or hard but we have always been supportive of each other. I've been a faithful and loving husband to you. I'm sick that you feel so stifled and starved for aloneness that the thought of being with me is breaking you. I don't understand all this. Married people work through issues and support each other until death do they part! I'll give you space. I may never get why you are throwing us away but Kristen, I will never stop fighting for you! I'll go... for now.

(CRAIG starts to leave.)

KRISTEN

I do love you, Craig! I pray I will someday appreciate what that means.

(CRAIG turns back and takes KRISTEN in his arms. He kisses her with a passion. KRISTEN'S knees buckle. CRAIG lets her go.)

CRAIG

I love you.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

If you find any love left for me, you'll find me holding a net of those damn butterflies.

KRISTEN

Hurry and find your net!

(CRAIG exits out the front door. KRISTEN melts into a puddle of tears as a CAR is heard peeling out.)

(SLOW FADE TO BLACK)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT I

Scene 2

SETTING: KRISTEN'S Living room. A half-hour later.

AT RISE: KRISTEN is sitting in the dark. She has been crying.

(A KNOCK at the front door. STACY pokes her head in with a bottle of Scotch and a container of Haagen-Dazs.)

STACY

(turns on the LIGHT)

Oh, Kristen! Are you okay?

(KRISTEN nods 'no'. STACY hugs KRISTEN.)

STACY (CONT'D)

Well, you did it.

KRISTEN

(sobs)

I've never seen him like that. Stacy, I hurt him so badly!

STACY

Go ahead, let it out.

KRISTEN

He was so shocked and so wounded! I feel like dirt.

STACY

How did you tell him?

KRISTEN

I blurted out I was desperately lonely with him. You should have seen his face! I saw that big man crumble before my eyes. Nothing came out right. I'm a horrible person! I sounded like a selfish witch. Me, me, me, I, I, I. How can I look at myself in the mirror again!

STACY

(pours two glasses of scotch)

With fistfuls of scotch! After a few of these, you'll be so snookered the person in the mirror can't see back.

KRISTEN

He was so angry I thought he could hit something. Instead, he kissed me down to my toes.