

RAIN

A Play by Jeremy Gable

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

DERK, male, 40

ALANA, female, 16

KRISTEN, female, 17

JAMES, male, 24

DYLAN, female, 22

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The action takes place at  
various locations in Barstow, CA

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Time: Present

ACT ONE

(Lights up on DERK's apartment. DERK, forty, enters wheeling in a suitcase. He looks around his apartment with nervousness and disapproval. Behind him, ALANA, sixteen, enters, wheeling in another case. With her is KRISTEN, seventeen. A few small bits of ash float in with them. Both of them share DERK's sentiments about his apartment. A moment of silence)

DERK

So...here it is. My abode, my...whatever, my place.

(Pause)

Like I said, it's shit.

ALANA

I don't think it's that bad, rea--

DERK

No, it's a...steamy pile of poorly decorated shit. Look at it, it's cluttered and dirty and the air conditioning doesn't...It wasn't even fit enough for Anna and I, when we lived together...which is probably why she left. Along with all of our...

(Pause)

KRISTEN

I've seen worse.

ALANA

My room was really bad. I don't even remember what color the carpet was.

KRISTEN

Historians think it might have been green.

DERK

Yeah, but you're in, what, tenth grade?

ALANA

Eleventh.

DERK

Eleventh. That's okay for you.

(Pause)

Eleventh grade. What is that, junior or--?

ALANA

Junior.

DERK

Yeah. Junior. Wonderful. It's a good age to be.

ALANA

That's what they always tell me.

DERK

Huh. Yeah.

(Pause)

Your, um...Your dad. He's a good guy.

ALANA

Sure.

DERK

A really good guy. I wish I could tell you where he is. But I'm sure he'll come back soon.

ALANA

Yeah.

DERK

I bet he's fine, he probably just...And, and also, I'm sorry about your home.

ALANA

Not your fault.

DERK

Still...It's terrible. I hope more of your things can be saved. A fire is so...

(Awkward pause)

So, um...The couch. That's where you'll be sleeping until your mother gets here. If, um, you know, if that's fine.

ALANA

Sure. I mean, where else would I, you know--?

DERK

I guess.

ALANA

Unless I...

(She stops herself)

Yeah.

DERK

Yeah.

(Long awkward pause)

KRISTEN

Yeah.

(Another pause)

DERK

And it pulls out into a...You know what, towels. You'll need towels for when you take a...I'll get some...towels.

(He exits. Pause)

KRISTEN

Creepy.

ALANA

Don't.

KRISTEN

I'm serious, Alana.

ALANA

Stop it.

KRISTEN

He was totally drooling over your legs.

ALANA

No he wasn't.

KRISTEN

You shouldn't wear shorts around him anymore.

ALANA

Kristen...

KRISTEN

There was drool.

ALANA

He's a nice guy. Don't be mean.

KRISTEN

I'm not. Child molesters are nice. That's how they molest children.

ALANA

He's not going to...He's friends with my dad. He probably doesn't even want me that way.

KRISTEN

All guys want teenage girls that way. That's why they made a law. Hell, a guy invited me to go to his apartment last night. Yeah, while I was watching Dylan perform, just, boom, "come to my place". I told him I was seventeen, he still invited me.

ALANA

Did you wear my shirt, the one with the Japanese on it, the um...

KRISTEN

Yeah. And you should just give it to me, I look great in it. But yeah, he just flat out invited me.

ALANA

Did you go?

KRISTEN

What?

ALANA

He invited you. Did you go?

(Before she can answer, DERK enters, He carries a few towels)

DERK

Here you are. You can use these.

(He puts them on the couch)

So...who wants dinner?

KRISTEN

Um, I gotta jet.

DERK

Oh, really?

ALANA

No, don't go.

KRISTEN

Yeah, I have econ homework.

ALANA

No you don't.

DERK

Well, don't be a stranger.

KRISTEN

Mmm, yeah. Hey, is it okay if Alana can spend the night from time to time? Like, if she needs a shower or anything?

DERK

Oh. Sure. Although I just got out the...Wait, isn't your house on alert?

KRISTEN

Yeah, but the fires are still, like, a ways away. They haven't told us to leave yet, so it's safe...enough.

DERK

'Cause isn't that why she couldn't stay with you? I want to make sure she's going to be...But if it's just for a night, then...I dunno, I guess.

KRISTEN

Cool.

(To ALANA:)

Call me if you need to...borrow jeans, or...You know.

ALANA

Okay.

(They hug)

KRISTEN

So...yeah, bye.

DERK

Bye.

(She exits. Awkward silence)

Macaroni?

ALANA

Actually, I'm gonna get some sleep.

DERK

Oh. Alright. Well, what time do you have school tomorrow?

ALANA

I don't. Tomorrow's Saturday.

DERK

Great. Well, we should do something. Go somewhere... that's not on fire.

ALANA

Okay.

DERK  
 Anyway, I'll let you, um...Okay.  
 (He starts to leave)

ALANA  
 Thanks.  
 (DERK stops)  
 For taking me in. S'really nice.

DERK  
 Oh, of course. It's just a few days. And your dad would've done the same for me, you know, take care of...the kid I don't have.  
 (ALANA smiles)

ALANA  
 I won't forget this.  
 (DERK, not knowing how to respond, simply nods)  
 Anyway...

DERK  
 Yeah, g'night.  
 (He exits. ALANA plops on the couch, grabbing her backpack. She opens it and pulls out a small journal. She writes in it. As she does, she starts humming a tune. It is simple, but rather haunting. DERK pokes his head back into the room, watching ALANA. Lights change. We are in the one-bedroom apartment of DYLAN and JAMES. The sound of a key in a door. The front door opens and JAMES, mid-twenties, enters. He walks in, a few pieces of ash floating in with him, and throws his jacket on the couch. He starts to go through the mail on the coffee table, but he stops when he sees a cassette tape laying next to it)

JAMES  
 Oh, sweet!  
 (He snatches it up and runs over to the tape player. He pops the tape in, presses play and speeds over to the couch, plopping down on it excitedly. After a couple seconds of silence, a song starts up. It is bittersweet and beautiful. We hear DYLAN's voice, singing on the tape)

DYLAN'S VOICE  
 So off I go  
 Wishing for snow  
 We need some cool

DYLAN'S VOICE  
(CON'T)

Far away from backyard pools  
So I'll slip my pain  
Face full of rain  
You'd do the same  
To stop the lick of flames  
The desert's burning  
The desert's burning  
The desert's burning

(JAMES takes in the music, the words, the emotions. He feels himself starting to tear up. He immediately grabs one of many vials that sit in a tray on the coffee table and holds it under one of his eyes. He squints, as if forcing a tear to come out)

JAMES

Come on. Come on.

(The outside door opens and DYLAN, early twenties, enters, carrying a guitar in its case. A few more bits of ash float in with her. She stops when she hears the song. JAMES, upon seeing her presence, puts down the vial and sighs)

DYLAN

You're listening to it.

JAMES

I hate you.

DYLAN

You like it?

JAMES

I hate you.

DYLAN

You don't like it.

JAMES

You know how, like, I hate cauliflower?

DYLAN

Oh, okay, not that you really...Like how you hate people that say "warsh" instead of "wash"?

JAMES

Yeah, that kind of hate.

DYLAN

Okay.

JAMES

That is my hatred of you. You're my sister and I love you, but--

DYLAN

So you like the song?

JAMES

I hate you because you interrupted me.

DYLAN

Oh, shit, sorry.

JAMES

You seriously just put me out, like, twenty bucks. I had it, and then you walked in, and then I lost it.

(He turns off the tape)

DYLAN

Sorry.

JAMES

So, that, first off.

DYLAN

You weren't crying because of the thing, were you? That thing that you were making a big deal over, the...?

JAMES

Oh, no, no. I'm over that. That's...yeah, no, gone the way of vinyl. It was the, ya know, it was the song.

DYLAN

So you like it?

JAMES

Yeah, I...I'm trying to figure out what I'm...I dunno, it's like there is this...Okay, like your throat has turned into glass, this really smooth glass, and your voice is like this...like the world's most purest and cleanest water, and it's just, you know...running over this glass and out of your mouth.

(Pause)

Does that make any sense?

DYLAN

No, but I like the imagery. I have this mental picture of me drooling. It's funny.

JAMES

This is really...really...good.

DYLAN

I would've given it to you at the coffee place, but I didn't know you were going to be there.

JAMES

How many takes?

DYLAN

Two. I started laughing during the first take.

JAMES

You're kidding.

DYLAN

Nope.

JAMES

You actually started...Why?

DYLAN

I really don't know. It's kinda based on something that happened to me about four years ago, and while I was singing it, I just started going back to that time. You know, the music I liked, and who I was into and...it just seemed so, like...

JAMES

Stupid?

DYLAN

Not stupid, but...inconsequential. Like I almost didn't give a shit anymore. Which, of course, I do, otherwise I wouldn't have written a song about it. But it just...You ever think about a time in your life and wonder why you even bothered breathing?

JAMES

College comes to mind.

DYLAN

Well, that's exactly what that was. So, yeah, I lost it. Just at the absurdity of trying to live through it all.

JAMES

Huh.

DYLAN

Yeah, but second take...Nailed it.

JAMES

(Holding up the vial)

No shit. This is gonna help get me outta the Mystery Shack. You're gonna make us millionaires.

DYLAN

Not if tonight's any indication.

JAMES

No, you know what, Dylan, those people were idiots.

DYLAN

They hated me tonight.

JAMES

Because they're idiots. You're too smart for them.

DYLAN

No, it's just their opinions. Their fuckin'...bullshit stupid opinions.

JAMES

You're trying to sell indie adult alternative...folk rock, I guess you'd call it, to a bunch of Barstow rednecks.

DYLAN

Adult alternative sounds too Top Forty Radio, please don't say--

JAMES

(Overlapping)

And the kind of people who live in the middle of the desert aren't the kind of people who want to hear about self-guilt and loneliness. You'd think they'd eat it up considering they all live these sad lives in this shit town that's just, like...*dying*. But no, they wanna hear about, you know, trucks and...like, bulls and...leather chaps. Not deep emotional things they can actually identify with.

DYLAN

Yeah, maybe.

JAMES

And hey, at least you got groupies. I'd love to have groupies. There aren't any Mystery Shack groupies.

DYLAN

Except for that one old lady that comes every Friday.

JAMES

Yeah, groupies should come with their own teeth. I saw her tonight.

DYLAN

What, the old lady?

JAMES

One of your groupies, the hot one.

DYLAN

James, she's, like, fifteen.

JAMES

She's seventeen. This close.

DYLAN

How do you know?

JAMES

I asked.

DYLAN

Jesus Christ, James, you talked to her?

JAMES

Relax, nothing happened. We just, you know...Mostly about you. Remember, you're the one they're in love with.

DYLAN

They just like my music. They probably don't want anything to do with the "me" part of me.

JAMES

She said she loved your sadness. She connected to it. That's what she told me. She's wearing this shirt that says "happiness" in Japanese, and she connects to your melancholy...ness.

DYLAN

Where was her friend?

JAMES

Couldn't tell you.

DYLAN

Hope she's okay.

JAMES

Wouldn't know. You think they'll go to your L.A. gig?

I hope *I* can go to my L.A. gig.

DYLAN

Whaddya mean?

JAMES

They're talking about closing the freeway because of the fires.

DYLAN

No shit.

JAMES

Yep.

DYLAN

That'd suck.

JAMES

Yeah, that'd ruin my day. And, ya know, my career.

DYLAN

Yeah. But it's, like, how many days away? I'm sure it'll pass.

JAMES

Hope so.

DYLAN

Yeah. Anywho...

JAMES

I'm off like a prom dress.

(He takes the tape out of the tape player)

(He starts to exit toward the bedroom)

James?

DYLAN

Yo.

JAMES

That girl.

DYLAN

(Pause)

Marlo Thomas?

JAMES

DYLAN

What are you, like, forty? No, the girl, Groupie Girl.

JAMES

Yeah?

DYLAN

You didn't do anything with her, did you?

JAMES

What, like...?

DYLAN

Like...You know...

JAMES

No. Just talked.

DYLAN

Really?

JAMES

Yeah, no.

(Pause)

I'm gonna...

DYLAN

Alright.

(JAMES exits, closing the door behind him. DYLAN takes her guitar out of the case and starts singing:)

How dare you  
This mystery  
Can't share you  
Our history  
You say I'm only  
Casting a reel  
I say you're only  
All that I feel.

(Lights change. We are at a coffee house where DYLAN is performing. The song she was singing continues off-stage, but with a muffled, faraway sound. KRISTEN sits at a table, listening to the song. She wears a shirt with the Japanese symbol for "happiness" on it. JAMES strolls in. He nonchalantly walks up next to her and starts listening to the song as well. A couple seconds of silence. Finally, he looks at her)

Happiness. JAMES

What? KRISTEN

On your shirt. JAMES

S'that what it means? KRISTEN

You didn't know that? JAMES

Nope. KRISTEN

Yeah. Koufuku. JAMES

Good to know. KRISTEN

I learned a little Japanese. JAMES

Brilliant. KRISTEN

(A few more seconds of silence)

She's really good. JAMES

Hmm? Oh, Dylan, yeah. KRISTEN

Really good. But you know that. I've seen you here before, right? JAMES

I dunno, maybe. KRISTEN

Can I sit? Do you mind? JAMES

KRISTEN

I'm expecting...someone. A...you know...

JAMES

Oh. Boyfriend?

(Pause)

KRISTEN

Okay, I wanna know something.

JAMES

Anything.

KRISTEN

Why do you like her music so much?

JAMES

What do you mean?

KRISTEN

You've come here before, right? To listen to her music? Name something about Dylan Gentry's songs that you really like. Tell me *why* you like her.

JAMES

Shit, I dunno. I just like her music.

KRISTEN

Right, I'm sure you're *really* into it.

JAMES

Well I'm certainly not into...

(Pause)

I guess it's probably the juxtaposition of her voice to the words that she writes. Her songs are filled with such deep despair, almost like her crying has turned into poetry, right? And yet her voice is just so...

KRISTEN

Beautiful?

JAMES

Not beautiful, I mean it's beautiful, but...emotionless. Cold. Just so disconnected from the sadness. It's almost like she's saying, "Yeah, you tore me apart with what you did, but you know what, I'm not even going to give you the satisfaction of knowing how much you hurt me."

(Pause)

If that makes sense.

Yeah. I agree.

KRISTEN

I'm a big fan.

JAMES

Same here.

KRISTEN

May I...?

JAMES  
(Indicating chair)

Yeah, go for it.

KRISTEN  
(He sits)

I thought I'd seen you around. You and your friend, right?

JAMES

Sometimes.

KRISTEN

Yeah, I don't see her here tonight. Where is she?

JAMES  
(Pause)

She's...You know, she's sixteen.

KRISTEN

I figured. Fifteen, sixteen.

JAMES

And I'm seventeen.

KRISTEN

Okay.

JAMES

That doesn't bother you?

KRISTEN

Why would I be bothered?

JAMES

So you're not trying to...? KRISTEN

What? JAMES

Hey, what's your name? (KRISTEN just shakes her head)

Um...Brandy. KRISTEN

No it's not. JAMES

Kristen. KRISTEN

Kristen. What do *you* like about Dylan's music? JAMES

It's really beautiful. KRISTEN

Well, yeah, of course. But why? JAMES

Why what? KRISTEN

Why is it beautiful? JAMES

It's just, um...I dunno, it's really beautiful. KRISTEN

Yeah, you said that. JAMES

Okay. (KRISTEN cannot come up with a response)

(JAMES returns to the music)

I like her sadness. KRISTEN

Her sadness? JAMES

KRISTEN

Yeah. Her songs are really sad. And, I dunno, I guess I like that.

JAMES

What, so, you respond to what she's singing? You connect with it, you understand it, something like that?

KRISTEN

Something like that.

JAMES

That's cool. I'll tell her that, she'll like it.

KRISTEN

(Sarcastic)

Oh, you're gonna tell her that?

JAMES

Yeah.

KRISTEN

What, you know her?

JAMES

Yeah, she's my sister.

KRISTEN

She's your sister?

JAMES

Yeah.

KRISTEN

Like, you're related to her.

JAMES

She got the good genes. Obviously.

KRISTEN

Dylan Gentry is your sister.

JAMES

I can say it one more time to let it sink in if you want.

KRISTEN

I'm sorry, I just...I think she's great, she's...You're really her brother?

JAMES

I'm gonna stick with yes.

KRISTEN

So, wait, you were just screwing around with the whole "not knowing why you like her music" thing?

JAMES

Yes. Yes I was.

KRISTEN

Why?

JAMES

Because I'm flirting with you.

KRISTEN

Oh, ya think?

JAMES

Yeah, I'm a little obvious. Doesn't change how I feel.

KRISTEN

And how do you feel?

JAMES

Fascinated.

(Pause)

I've seen you here a lot. I can't help but notice you.

KRISTEN

Well, we're the only ones actually watching--

JAMES

I'm not talking about your friend.

(Pause)

KRISTEN

You're not really her brother.

JAMES

My name is James. I'm single and I live with Dylan. I work at the Mystery Shack, that tourist thing off the freeway. It's the house on a slant where all the optical illusion stuff happens, water running uphill, brooms standing on end, stuff like that. It's shit pay, and I hate it. So I plan to sell homemade novelty gifts on the side. My featured item is gonna be a vial of my own tears, genuine tears, which you can give to someone special, claiming they're your own. Tears you've

JAMES

(CON'T)

shed for them. I can sell a lot of them because I cry easily. And I cry easily because I have a lot of reasons. The world is full of shit, and it's a good time for crying.

(Pause)

So there you go. All of my cards. Now that you know me, I want to know you. Yes, you're seventeen. But I am terribly fascinated by you. I watch you watching my sister, and I want to know what sadness in you makes her music so accessible. What beautiful tragedies you've had to go through.

KRISTEN

I'm fine. My life is...fine.

JAMES

But there's something pounding in you. I can see it.

KRISTEN

What do you want from me?

JAMES

Nothing. You don't have to do anything. However, if you want to, I invite you to come home with us after the show. Just to talk, hang out. It's ultimately up to you. I don't wanna pressure you at all.

(Pause)

KRISTEN

I have a curf--

JAMES

Like I said...no pressure. It's up to you.

(Pause)

No pressure.

(Lights change)

If you would like to read the script in its entirety,  
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