

# **STOP RAIN**

## **By Patrick Gabridge**

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**CAST: RAIN and MARLA**

**SETTING: A park bench.**

***AT RISE: MARLA waits impatiently. SHE's in her late 30s and wears a business suit.***

***(Finally, RAIN enters, a little anxious. SHE's in her late teens or early twenties, shabbily dressed.)***

RAIN: Sorry.

MARLA: I've been waiting for more than an hour.

RAIN: The buses are all screwed up. I hate the bus. The people smell, the men press up against you. There's always someone in there who looks like he should be locked up. And waiting. Always, you gotta wait for the stupid thing to come. I hate waiting. It doesn't suit me. Waiting's not my thing, you know.

MARLA: Mine neither.

RAIN: Right. Sorry. You look nice. Is that a new suit?

MARLA: No. It's just one I wear to work. I had to take off work to be here.

RAIN: Right. It looks good. I know you're busy and all that...I've been looking for a job.

MARLA: I thought you had one. At the grocery store.

RAIN: Didn't work out. My manager, he was crazy. Always making remarks, you know, passes. I like to flirt a little sometimes, but he... You know how it is. And the buses are a pain. I had to take two transfers to get there, and they never worked out right.

MARLA: What happened to the car?

RAIN: The car?

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MARLA: The car, Rain. The money. The car that Rich helped you choose, so it would be reliable. So you could keep a job. What happened?

RAIN: Right. About the car. That's sort of why I called you.

MARLA: Did it break down?

RAIN: Not exactly.

MARLA: Julio.

RAIN: I didn't know he was gonna do it. He said he was going to the store for some bread and milk, just like a normal person. Just like a normal person would. Then I don't see him for two days, and when he comes dragging his sorry butt home, no car. Not even most of the money left. I was so mad. You should have heard me scream at him. Julio, you idiot, I screamed at him, that was the car from Marla, that was our ticket. He knew, but he didn't care. Sometimes, he's not a very good person.

MARLA: Are you still with him?

RAIN: I kicked him out that night. He knew that if he wanted to live, he'd better get himself out of my sight. The ambulance woulda had to come and pick up the pieces.

MARLA: But he's back.

RAIN: Some things you can't explain.

MARLA: No. I guess that's true. But I don't like to believe it.

RAIN: Nobody does. So the car, it really was a good idea, Marla. I mean, I had a chance, and I messed up, but I learned my lesson. If I had another, I would never let him go near the keys. I'd hide them. Because I want to be responsible. You know I hate to ask for anything, but you know what they say about the poor man: give him a fish and he eats today, teach him to fish and he, you know, eats a lot more. I wouldn't ask if I didn't have to, but I ain't got a fishing rod right this second. Most days I don't even have a worm.

MARLA: Aren't you even going to ask about him?

RAIN: You know I want to... How's Nathan?

MARLA: He's great. I brought some pictures.

***(SHE pulls out an envelope and sets it on the bench next to RAIN, who looks at it, but doesn't pick it up.)***

RAIN: Thanks. What's he doing these days?

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MARLA: The whole kindergarten thing. He likes the social part of it, making new friends, the playground. It's hard to have him go for the entire day. When he comes home, he's full of stories of who did this and who did that. He's starting to read. He tries not to make too big of a deal out of it, like he doesn't really care, but I can see the pride in his face when he finally gets it. I'd forgotten how hard it is, it's been so long that it just seems like something I do automatically. But it's definitely an effort for him, sounding the words out, it's all new to him.

RAIN: You're a good...a good mother to him now. And I'm sure Rich is a good father.

MARLA: We're trying. It's not always easy, but we're very happy. And grateful, Rain. We'll always be grateful to you.

RAIN: It was the right choice for me. For him. I'm glad it was you that adopted him.

MARLA: Rain?

RAIN: Hmm.

MARLA: You missed our meeting last week.

RAIN: I know. I didn't forget. Don't let him think I forgot. I...it was the car and Julio and the buses and I...

MARLA: You should have called.

RAIN: My phone's out. If I can get a job again—

MARLA: You should have found a pay phone, something.

RAIN: I figured you were already on your way. I guess I could have left a message, but I didn't want to. Was he pretty disappointed?

MARLA: Of course he was. He was very upset. This is the third time, Rain. Third time this year. It's not fair. It's one thing to let us down, we're grown ups, we can handle it. But he's just a little boy. He's not ready for this.

RAIN: I won't let it happen again.

MARLA: Neither will we.

RAIN: What do you mean?

MARLA: Rich and I have been talking. Debating. Arguing. And I'm not sure how Nathan is going to feel. My guess would be relieved, at least for now. It doesn't need to be permanent. We don't want it to be. It would be good for him to know you, to have a connection to his roots. The books all say he'll need it. I'm sure it will somehow make him feel more complete. But for now, he's too young to be so deeply disappointed so often.

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RAIN: You're cutting me off?

MARLA: We want to suspend visits, yes. For a while. We'll keep sending pictures and letters, and we still want them from you.

RAIN: He's my son.

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