

When the Rain Stops Falling - original

GABRIELLE

There you are.

JOE

Where?

GABRIELLE

Sitting on a park bench . . . in the snow.

JOE

Am I? Thought I was dancing the waltz at a Viennese ball. The weather is turning against us, Gabrielle. It should not be snowing Adelaide.

GABRIELLE

But it's beautiful, Joe . . . It's so beautiful.

(Beat)

Have I hurt you?

JOE

No.

GABRIELLE

You're a liar.

JOE

Being turfed out of the flat on an ugly night in the middle of winter tests the patience a little. But there's no one day I regret being with you. Not one. And don't you say a word to contradict that because I know what I feel. And I know that you can't say the same. I stole you. I know that. Got you at a weak moment. You needed someone. And I made sure it was me. One thing you've got to give me credit for though is my patience. I have waited twenty-five years for you to love me.

GABRIELLE

And now I'm losing my mind.

(Beat)

I'm angry, Joe. Always have been.

JOE

I know.

GABRIELLE

No you don't. Not really . . . The only time I ever saw you angry was when you hit your thumb with a hammer. And you didn't even swear.

JOE

No, well I don't like language. It was just the way I was brought up. Can't help that.

GABRIELLE

Sometimes I wish you would just scream.

JOE

I don't know what that would achieve.

GABRIELLE

It would tell the world that you're in pain.

JOE

I wish I'd never stopped the car . . . Yeah, there you go. I've said it. I wish I just put my foot down and let you bleed to death. With him. I would have made it back to the Coorong and met some half-decent girl who would have loved me.

GABRIELLE

I have loved you.

JOE

Not the way I've loved you.

GABRIELLE

You love too much.

JOE

Don't say that to me. Because there is some woman in Salt Creek who would know how to be loved by me. And don't tell me you're angry. Who do you think you've been angry at for twenty-five years? Loyal old Joe, that's who. Like a dog, that's what I am. And why? Because I saved you. Because I never measured up to something I never even understood. But don't you dare measure me against him. Twenty-five years, it's been. Against what? A couple of weeks? If that? I have raised his son and lived with his ashes in the cupboard for twenty-five years. Yes, you made my life hell but worse . . . you did the same to your son.

GABRIELLE

Don't.

JOE

It's true, Gabrielle. In the end the boy couldn't wait to leave.

GABRIELLE

Did he call?

JOE

No.

GABRIELLE

I thought that maybe . . .

JOE

No. He hasn't called for seven years.

(Beat)

GABRIELLE

They're cruel, aren't they? Children. They're so fucking cruel. (Silence) I've had enough.

JOE

Come on then.

GABRIELLE

No, Love. I want you to let me go. (Beat) There are pills in my bedside drawer.

JOE

No.

GABRIELLE

Help me do this.

JOE

I can't.

GABRIELLE

I'm going anyway. A month. Two. Six at the most. And I'm gone. I won't know who you are. I won't know who Gabriel is? I won't even know who I am.

JOE

You're asking too much.

GABRIELLE

I always have. (Beat) It's only life. And I've had a miserable one and I've had enough of it. This goes way back, Joe, way before you. It was your bad luck that you stopped the car but you did and that's your lot but mine goes way back . . . To a little kid playing on the beach . . . and the bastard that took him. That's all. Not your fault. Not my fault. But I've had enough now. I have seen death every way and I'm not afraid of it. (Beat) Take me home now . . . Make love to me. You big gorgeous thing.

JOE

Gorgeous?

GABRIELLE

Yeah . . . I always thought so. You've been alright in the sack too. At first it was like you were shearing and I was the seep but you got better, Joe. Over the years you got better. You learned such tenderness. But it's been a while . . . can't remember the last time.

JOE

It was the twenty-fifth of November, 2010. Three years ago.

GABRIELLE

Christ! . . . I want clean sheets and candles and music and we're finished I want you to let me go.

JOE

What am I going to do without you?

GABRIELLE

I don't know, Love. Go back to the Coorong. Find that woman in Salt Creek. She's probably still there.