

It Was Raining in Minneapolis

Written by

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Synopsis:

Two brothers, one a famous actor and one a humble family man, meet for the first time in years in a quiet Minneapolis kitchen on a rainy night, and discuss what it means to be truly happy.

Characters:

Bill - The humble brother who owns the house. He supports his brother, but is conflicted by doing so.

Richie - The actor. He parties and lives the Hollywood lifestyle, which blinds him to his brother's issues.

Girl 1 - A background character. Comes out during Richie's flashback.

Girl 2 - A background character. Comes out during Richie's flashback.

Set:

A quiet Minneapolis suburban kitchen. Bill will sit at a table, and there should be room for Richie's flashbacks to happen.

Specifically placed objects (wine bottles) to blend the flashbacks and reality.

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Lights up on BILL, who is sitting at the dining table, writing something down on paper. The set is dressed like a typical suburban kitchen - the lighting is warm inside, while outside, seen through the windows, it's cold and blue. The sound of a storm beginning can be heard.

BILL is dressed plainly, wearing glasses, yet still squinting while trying to read the lines on the paper. He takes the glasses off, tries to look without them, then, frustrated, puts them back on. He shuffles the papers and continues to write. After a moment, he turns to the audience to narrate.

BILL: It was a typical Sunday evening. My wife and kids were out somewhere - with friends - and I was alone, left to work. They had asked me to come... but I... had to work. They wouldn't have the convenience of going out to see friends if they didn't have an income right? (Beat) It was raining in Minneapolis that night. I didn't think he'd show up - he doesn't like rain.

RICHIE starts jingling the key in the lock, then the door opens. He enters and stops there; BILL and RICHIE stare at each other awkwardly for a few moments. RICHIE is dressed more gaudily, with a long coat and tall-heeled boots. This makes him look bigger than he really is.

RICHIE: Bill.

BILL: (Pause) What are you doing here?

RICHIE closes the door and walks in, glancing about, as if he's judging the meagerness of the kitchen. He turns to his brother and notices the papers he's writing on, walking over and looking down at them. He reads them, then looks up at BILL.

RICHIE: Is that real?

BILL: Yeah, that's real. (Pause) You wanna answer me?

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RICHIE stands there in silence for a moment, as if what he just saw has made him think. He snaps back to reality, and walks back over to the kitchen.

RICHIE: I, uhh... I was looking for something.

BILL turns in his chair.

BILL: What? *(Pause)* You have everything already, don't you?

RICHIE: *(Dismissive)* Bill...

BILL: *(Irritable)* No, really. What could you possibly want in my house, huh? I don't have much left to take, Richie.

RICHIE starts looking through cupboards like a thief robbing a house. BILL looks at him in disbelief.

BILL: Are you serious? *(Pause)* Fine, asshole. Raid my house. See if I care. Take everything. Not like my kid would mind if her uncle stole all of our stuff.

RICHIE: *(Turn in anger)* Would you shut up? Huh? *(Pause)* I just came in to get this thing, then I'm gone. You'll never see me again. I won't exist.

He continues to search through the cupboards. BILL turns around and looks back at his papers, trying to read them again. After a moment, Bill turns back to the audience.

BILL: Richie was my brother. He moved to L.A. years ago, making it big in Hollywood as an actor. I'd funded most of his trip... and he never even paid me back. He's rich now - rolling in more money than I've ever even seen in one place. And I didn't get a cent. Then he came here, to my little house in Minneapolis, where I live with my family - where I had finally forgotten about him... At least... where I had tried to finally forget about him.

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RICHIE looks at his brother, then the lights go dark. They come on again in gold, and two girls come out from behind the house. They're dressed in flashy dresses. Bill doesn't notice any of this. He keeps his eyes on his papers. RICHIE walks over to the girls and kisses both of them on the cheek. Now he looks at the audience to narrate. As he speaks, the three play out scenes of partying, acting in a film, and drinking, all while Richie faces the audience. Everything is kind of happening around him as he speaks.

RICHIE: After my first role, I blew up. I got paid a million for the lead in that project, and the first thing I did was buy a proper house. My second role earned me two million. I bought a bigger house. Then the girls came. One of them introduced me to a funny little white powder. I fell in love with them, and their powder...

There are bottles of wine sitting on the kitchen counter. RICHIE picks up three and hands the two extra to the girls. At the same time, they all throw their heads back and drink, then the girls start to dance around, drunk. RICHIE stumbles around the stage, then resumes his placid narration.

RICHIE: I guess it was 'cause I thought nobody liked me... If I got drunk, then, well, I was the life of the party. Everyone wanted to be me, to be with me. The drunker I got, the more fun I had, the more friends I made, and the more girls I got. My funny white powder stopped doing it for me, so I found a new friend. (Pause) We had a love-hurt relationship. Whenever we met, it was painful, but she always made it up to me afterward.

He takes a rag from the kitchen and wraps it around his arm. He finds a needle in the drawer and shoots it into his arm, cringing at the pain. He puts the needle back in the drawer and falls backwards. The two girls catch him and stand him back up, then they take their bottles of wine and force them towards his mouth. He struggles and breaks away. The two girls get angry and put the bottles back where they were in the kitchen. They storm off stage.

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RICHIE: The two girls I loved... left me. They took a lot of my money... and they left me.

RICHIE, distraught, puts the bottle back with the others, then walks over to the kitchen counter. He searches through the drawer and pulls out a bottle of pills. He takes some, caps the bottle and puts it back, then he falls to the floor behind the counter, vanishing behind it.

Lights go dark, then return to the warm hue of reality. BILL turns toward the kitchen.

BILL: How long are you gonna be? Huh? Linda and Susan are coming home soon.

RICHIE stands up, finished with searching through the cupboards. He glares at his brother, then spots a side table across the room. He walks over to it.

RICHIE: Shove off, Bill. I'm done when I'm done. You're kid's not even gonna know I was here.

He pulls open the drawer of the side table and starts rummaging around. There's nothing, so he slams the drawer closed and leans on the table. Silence for a moment.

BILL: Sit down, Richie.

RICHIE turns and looks, confused. He doesn't say anything, and neither does BILL, so he moves to sit down at the table with his brother. They stare at each other quietly, until RICHIE speaks.

RICHIE: (Calmed down) Do you ever... feel like... feel like no one really gives a shit about you?

BILL: (Pause) All the time.

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RICHIE: And how do you deal with that? *(Pause)* I know you don't drink.

BILL: *(Frown)* Why would I need to? *(Pause. Richie stays quiet)* I have a wife and kid, Richie. That's how I deal with that. You don't- you don't get it, do you? My God, I should never have sent you to L.A.

RICHIE: That's not what this is about, Bill. Just answer my question.

BILL: That's what it's all about, Richie! Jesus Christ! *(He stops to calm down. After a moment)* It's about perspective. It's not about how many girls you sleep with - it's not a competition. You know what happens when you meet that many girls? They're not real - they're not gonna satisfy what you want them to satisfy - 'cause at the end of the day, Richie, you'll be more alone than you were when you started. *(Beat)* If you find one girl - one girl - who loves you, who's meant to be with you for the rest of your life, that's gonna show you that you're worth it. Everyone in the world can hate your guts, but as long as that one person loves you more than anything, that shit doesn't matter. That's Susan for me, Richie.

RICHIE: *(Frustrated)* It's not about the girls, Bill.

BILL: *(Irritable)* Oh, sure, okay. But the girls are part of it, aren't they? Your problem is insecurity-

RICHIE: *(Interrupting)* -Oh, Jesus-

BILL: -No, really, it is. Grow up and realize that. *(Pause)* I get it, Richie, I really do. I feel the same way sometimes. You know I'm anxious. How do I deal with that, though? That's what matters. You drown your problems in alcohol and women, and I don't. There's your problem. There's a thousand ways to feel adequate, Richie. Getting hammered and snorting coke shouldn't even be on your list.

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RICHIE gets quiet for a moment.

BILL: You understand? Huh? *(Pause. He doesn't answer)* Do you have friends in L.A.? Real ones; The ones who give you coke are not real, in case you couldn't tell.

RICHIE: *(Pause, thinking)* Yeah, I guess.

BILL: Who are they?

RICHIE: The guy who gave me my first role - he still talks with me all the time. We went out for a drink a couple days ago. *(Pause)* Not at a party - just at a bar. *(Pause, thinking of more)* My friend Rose. She's an actor. I was in her first film, so I, uh... I was kind of a role model for her, but now we're good friends.

BILL: What does she look like?

RICHIE: Jesus, Bill.

BILL: Hey. Tell me, dumbass.

RICHIE smiles and looks down at the table, thinking. After a moment, he speaks.

RICHIE: She's a little shorter than me...

BILL: *(Interrupting)* Must be tiny then.

RICHIE: *(Playfully)* Oh shut up. *(Smile, then continue)* She's got this short dark hair and her eyes are really pretty. *(Pause)* She wears red lipstick all the time - Chanel I think. Cherry red or something, I think she told me.

BILL: Is she pretty?

RICHIE: Bill...

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BILL: Is she pretty?

RICHIE: Yeah, I guess.

BILL: You guess?

RICHIE: Okay, asshole. She's pretty. *(Pause)* Yeah, she's pretty.

BILL: Hmm. How often do you talk to her?

RICHIE: Uhh... Once a week or something, maybe two. *(Pause to think)* I'd like to see her more. I just... can't really come up with a reason to.

BILL: Why not? You get girls all the time.

RICHIE: She's not just a girl, Bill. She's... I can't treat her like that - like I treat all the rest of them.

BILL: So you love her?

RICHIE: *(Backpedaling)* No... No, I don't love her. She's just a friend, alright.

BILL: *(Frown in disbelief)* Richie... I can't... Seriously? This is your way out, you understand? This is the one girl you don't want to treat like a prostitute. She obviously means something to you, so let her be your way out - away from the alcohol and the drugs.

RICHIE stands up and walks away from the table.

RICHIE: I can't, okay? She's a friend. If I ask her out and she says no, then I lose a friend - I don't have many of those right now, like I told you.

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BILL: So you're gonna let her go out with other guys? You're gonna live your life with her as a friend, screwing other women and feeling like shit whenever you see her? Huh? Richie, this is your opportunity to get out of this situation.

RICHIE: (*Fired up*) Get out? What do I lose if I get out, huh? My career?

BILL: (*Angry*) Why would you lose your career by *not* taking drugs?

RICHIE: I don't know, Bill! (*Pause*) I'm just gonna get what I came for and leave.

BILL: And what did you come for, huh?

RICHIE is rummaging through the top kitchen cupboards. He stops when he finds what he was looking for, and pulls it out of the cupboard - it's a pocketwatch.

RICHIE: (*Accusatory*) I can't believe you had this.

BILL doesn't say anything. RICHIE scowls across the kitchen at him.

RICHIE: Dad gave this to me. Me! Okay? Why'd you take it out of my luggage when I left, huh? You stole it from me!

BILL: (*Erupting*) 'Cause I'm being evicted!

They stop and stare at each other. BILL turns and picks up the papers from the table, lifting them to show RICHIE.

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BILL: Evicted, Richie! Evicted! That's why Susan and Linda are talking to their friends. They're asking if we can stay there! That's why I took your watch, so I could pawn it and feed my family! You're rich, you greedy bastard - you weren't even here to help me! You were off in L.A. getting wasted, blowing all your cash. I don't have the cash to blow, Richie. I lost my money to send you there!

RICHIE: (Angry) Why didn't you tell me?

BILL: 'Cause how could I? How could I ruin your dream when I was the only one who could make it happen? I was betting on you, Richie, betting that you'd come back and repay me. That you'd save me from going under, but no shit - you didn't.

RICHIE stands there with the watch in his hand, staring at his brother. No one speaks for a moment. After a while, BILL puts the eviction papers back down on the table and sits in the chair, turning away from his brother. RICHIE looks down at the watch, then at BILL.

RICHIE: (Slowly) I'm gonna miss my flight.

BILL says nothing. RICHIE starts to leave, but stops at the door, turning back to the kitchen. He sets the watch down onto the counter, glances once more at his brother, then leaves through the door. BILL turns to the audience once his brother is gone. Lights dim and a spotlight comes on over the kitchen area, as well as the dining table.

BILL: It was raining in Minneapolis the night Richie left. I wondered how he was doing after, whether he asked Rose on a date, or whether he was still getting drunk. I wondered what happiness meant - whether he was happy, or whether he was still miserable... Whether *I* was happy... (Pause) The watch - a Rolex from the Twenties - sold for a nice sum that kept me afloat until I could get a job. (Longer pause) But, one day, I turned on the news and instantly broke down crying. (Longer pause again. With impact) Richie had overdosed on meth..

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Normal lighting returns after a dramatic pause. The back door opens and a female voice calls Bill's name. BILL gets up from the table, hiding the eviction papers and putting a smile on his face.

He turns to start walking towards the back door, but stops when he notices the watch on the counter. He picks it up and looks at the door RICHIE had left through, then he takes it and hangs it by the chain it's attached to over one of the bottles on the counter so that the audience can see it clearly. As he leaves the stage to greet his wife and daughter, a spotlight comes on over the watch, so that only the watch and the bottle it hangs from can be seen. We hear the rain drumming against the windows and the roof, then, as the lights go dark, it holds for a moment, still drumming, then it fades.

Blackout.

The End