



# WHEN THE RAIN STOPS FALLING

BY ANDREW BOVELL



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.

## WHEN THE RAIN STOPS FALLING

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WHEN THE RAIN STOPS FALLING was commissioned and first produced by Brink Productions in Australia, developed in collaboration with Hossein Valamanesh. It received its world premiere at the Scott Theatre, University of Adelaide, in Adelaide, Australia, co-presented by Brink Productions, the State Theatre Company of South Australia, and the 2008 Adelaide Festival of the Arts, opening on February 28, 2008. It was directed by Chris Drummond; the set and costume design were by Hossein Valamanesh; the original music was by Quentin Grant; the lighting design was by Niklas Pajanti; the video design was by Theima Gen; and it was produced by Kay Jamieson. The cast was as follows:

GABRIEL YORK ..... Neil Pigot  
ELIZABETH LAW (OLDER) ..... Carmel Johnson  
GABRIELLE YORK (YOUNGER) ..... Anna Lise Phillips  
JOE RYAN ..... Paul Blackwell  
GABRIELLE YORK (OLDER) ..... Kris McQuade  
ELIZABETH LAW (YOUNGER) ..... Michaela Cantwell  
GABRIEL LAW ..... Yalin Ozucelik  
HENRY LAW ..... Neil Pigot  
ANDREW PRICE ..... Yalin Ozucelik

WHEN THE RAIN STOPS FALLING received its American premiere at Lincoln Theater Center's Mitzi Newhouse Theatre on March 8, 2010. It was directed by David Cromer; the set design was by David Korins; the costume design was by Clint Ramos; the lighting design was by Tyler Micoleau; the sound design was by Fitz Patton; and the original music was by Josh Schmidt. The cast was as follows:

GABRIEL YORK ..... Michael Siberry  
ELIZABETH LAW (OLDER) ..... Mary-Beth Hurt  
GABRIELLE YORK (YOUNGER) ..... Susan Pourfar  
JOE RYAN ..... Rod McLachlan  
GABRIELLE YORK (OLDER) ..... Victoria Clark  
ELIZABETH LAW (YOUNGER) ..... Kate Blumberg  
GABRIEL LAW ..... Will Rogers  
HENRY LAW ..... Richard Topol  
ANDREW PRICE ..... Henry Vick

## **CHARACTERS**

GABRIEL LAW

GABRIELLE YORK

HENRY LAW — Gabriel Law's father

ELIZABETH LAW — Gabriel Law's mother

JOE RYAN — The husband of Gabrielle York and stepfather of Gabriel York

GABRIEL YORK — The son of Gabriel Law and Gabrielle York

ANDREW PRICE — The son of Gabriel York and the grandson of Gabriel Law

*NOTE: Gabrielle York and Elizabeth Law are each played by two actors as younger and older women.*

## **PLACE**

London and in various parts of Australia.

## **TIME**

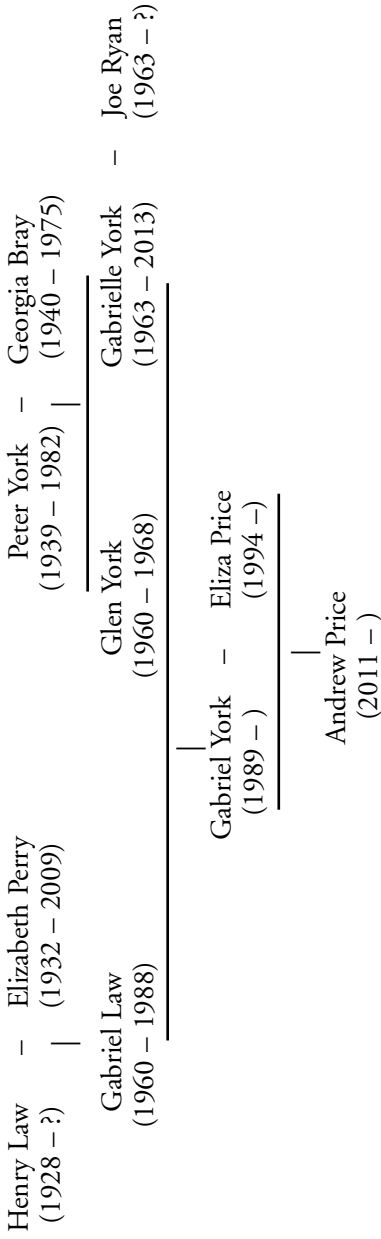
Back and forth in time between the years 1959 and 2039.

## **A NOTE ON PRODUCTION**

This original Australian production used seven actors. The roles of Henry Law and Gabriel York were played by the same actor, as were the roles of Gabriel Law and Andrew Price. As a result, Gabriel Law did not appear as one of the ancestors in the final scene. Subsequent productions in Europe and North America have used nine actors allowing the character of Gabriel Law to appear in the final scene. When nine actors are used it is the intention that Henry Law doesn't appear in the final scene.

The play is performed without an intermission.

## FAMILY TREE



# WHEN THE RAIN STOPS FALLING

*Let us begin with a steady fall of rain.*

*Gabriel York stands beneath a black umbrella.*

*People pass him by. Back and forth. Back and forth. Like Gabriel they carry umbrellas and wear raincoats. Their heads are bent against the relentless weather and against their relentless lives. Back and forth. Back and forth. Until in unison they stop.*

*And Gabriel opens his mouth and screams.*

*And a woman falls to her knees in the street.*

*And a fish falls from the sky and lands at Gabriel's feet.*

*Black.*

## GABRIEL YORK'S ROOM ALICE SPRINGS, 2039

*Gabriel York stands holding the fish.*

GABRIEL. I do not believe in God. I do not believe in miracles. I cannot explain this. It began with a phone call. It was Friday evening. About ten P.M.. Which was unusual. The phone rarely

rings and never at that hour. I was reading. As I do before bed. A history. *The Decline and Fall of the American Empire 1975 – 2015*. I am fascinated by the past. Which may, at least in part, explain the fish. I have not seen a fish like this for many years. Not since I was a boy. I mean I have seen pictures of them but not one in the flesh. They are, after all, or at least they are meant to be, extinct. Though I have heard rumors that they are still occasionally caught and served, secretly, in the most exclusive of restaurants but only for the select few and only for those who can pay. If I was to purchase such a fish, if purchasing such a fish as this was still possible for the man in the street, it would cost me a year's wages. I could never dream of affording such a delicacy. If such a delicacy still existed. (*He looks at the fish.*) Which strangely, it seems to do. I hesitated before answering the phone. Wrong number, I thought. Surely. Who would call me? Me? At this hour? It was my son. Andrew. The name was his mother's choice. I had wanted to call him Joe. After a man I once knew. He was my stepfather and he was a good man. He told me he only swore once in his life and that was the day he met my mother. And he was always losing his hat. He liked to walk and one day he went for a walk and never came back so it was probably better that it was Andrew and not Joe. I haven't seen Andrew for many years. I left when he was a boy. It was cowardly of me, I know. But I was not the fathering type and to be perfectly honest I thought the boy had a better chance without me. I sent money, of course. When I could. And a card. Now and then. For the first few years. I'm not proud of it. Anyway there he was ... this Andrew, this son of mine, on the phone at ten P.M. on a Friday night. "Hello? Is this Gabriel York? It's Andrew here. Your son. I hope you don't mind me calling you like this. I hope you don't mind. It's just that I'm in Alice. And I was wondering if I could see you. Dad?" Only it went more like. "Hello?... Is this ... Gabriel York? ... It's Andrew here ... Your son ... I hope you don't mind me calling you like this ... I hope you don't mind ... It's just that ... I'm in Alice ... And ... I was wondering if I could see you? Dad?" And my mind was racing, trying to stay calm, trying to take each piece of information in and just as I came to terms with one extraordinary fact, such as "It's Andrew," he would say something else, like "Your son" until I felt unable to reply and the longer I said nothing the harder it became to say anything at all and so I hung up. And returned to my book. *The Decline and Fall of the ...* I can't



imagine what he thought of me. I tried to concentrate on the page I was reading but found myself re-reading the same line over and over again, its meaning escaping me, when I tasted something salty in the corner of my mouth and realized that I was crying. The tears were falling from my eyes, rolling across my cheeks and gathering in the corners of my mouth. And of course I knew I was crying because of him, hearing his voice, the voice of an adult now when I could only remember the child but it also felt like I was crying for so much more. So I lifted the receiver and recalled the last number. "Andrew? ..." And he didn't say anything and I knew that he was crying too and I wondered whether his tears tasted as bitter as mine. I hoped not ... "I'm so sorry," I said ... "I'd like to see you very much. Why don't you come for lunch tomorrow?" And as soon as I had given him my address and hung up I knew that it was a mistake. Lunch? What was I thinking? What would I give him? I can hardly feed myself let alone a son I haven't seen for what ... twenty years? What do you serve for lunch in circumstances like that? I mean lunch hardly seems the point. And besides what will he think of me? Me? I mean what will he think of the clothes I wear? My suit? Which looks alright from a distance but up close is quite shabby and old-fashioned. Secondhand. Or third perhaps. But certainly not purchased new. And my shoes, worn at the toes and down at the heel. And will he notice that I don't wear socks? Not if I don't sit down or cross my legs. If I remain standing my son won't know that I don't wear socks. And what will he think of my room? It isn't much. It isn't anything at all. A one-room bed-sit on the twelfth floor. Not the kind of place a father should live. Surely. And it needs a paint and the carpets are worn. And it's dirty. To be perfectly honest, it's filthy. In the corners and on the window sills and the ceilings. Layers of dust and dirt and grime and dead insects. Years of neglect. And will he notice the smell? Of a man who lives alone. I mean I wash. Of course I wash. But not often. There hasn't been the need. Until now. And so I began to clean it. The room. That night. A bucket of hot water and soap suds. I washed the walls, the ceilings, even the light fittings were scrubbed. I washed the door handles and the light switches and the dark corners behind the furniture. I scrubbed the table and the floor and polished the windows. I dusted the books and the lampshade and even took to the grouting between the tiles with a toothbrush. And by morning, when I had finally finished, I looked around and it

# WHEN THE RAIN STOPS FALLING

by Andrew Bovell

5M, 4W

It's raining. Gabriel York is awaiting the arrival of his grown son whom he hasn't seen since he was seven. "I know what he wants. He wants what all young men want from their fathers. He wants to know who he is. Where he comes from. Where he belongs. And for the life of me I don't know what to tell him." That's the beginning of this compelling family saga that takes us back and forth in time from one generation to another, from 1959 to 2039, from London to Australia. With four generations of fathers and sons, their mothers, lovers and wives, the play is epic in its scope, yet at the same time extraordinarily intimate.

*"Bovell ... has created a quietly spellbinding puzzle of a universe that is as stealthily thrilling and defiantly mystical as it is catastrophically melancholy."* —**Newsday**

*"Bovell's time-hopping structure is intricate but surprisingly natural — never strained or purposely obfuscating. Rather, as in the works of Faulkner, it is a powerful metaphor for the impossibility of escaping the past, for the way we are all shaped by what came before — and are living in the shadow of what comes next."* —**Time**

*"Bovell's play is weighty stuff, a work of great sorrow and beauty."* —**Variety**

*"Bovell weaves in symbolic imagery and the repetition of key phrases. This gives a surreal feel to the enterprise, without lessening its emotional impact."*

—**TheaterMania.com**

**Also by Andrew Bovell**  
SPEAKING IN TONGUES

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