

# *Rain Man*

a novel by

LEONORE FLEISCHER

based on a screenplay by  
Ronald Bass and Barry Morrow  
and a story by Barry Morrow

Level 3

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PC: 19 869

TS: distor K7

**Pearson Education Limited**  
Edinburgh Gate, Harlow,  
Essex CM20 2JF, England  
and Associated Companies throughout the world.

ISBN-13: 978-0-582-41785-4  
ISBN-10: 0-582-41785-6

RAIN MAN copyright © 1989 United Artists Pictures Inc.  
A Novel by Leonore Fleischer based on a Screenplay by Ronald Bass and  
Barry Morrow and a Story by Barry Morrow  
First published by Penguin Books 1989  
This adaptation first published by Penguin Books 1994  
Published by Addison Wesley Longman Limited and Penguin Books Ltd, 1998  
New edition first published 1999

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Typeset by RefineCatch Limited, Bungay, Suffolk  
Set in 11/14pt Monotype Bembo  
Printed in China  
SWTC/10

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## *Introduction*

*'Raymond sees danger everywhere,' said Dr Bruner. 'Any change frightens him. That is why he always does things in the same way every day. He eats the same way, sleeps the same way, talks the same way. But he's a person, your brother. In some ways, a very intelligent person.'*

When Charlie Babbitt's rich father dies, Charlie gets two surprises. One, he does not get his father's money. Two, his brother gets all the money. But Charlie did not know that he had a brother.

Raymond Babbitt is not like other people. He cannot live in the real world. He has lived in a home for many years. When Charlie meets him, he knows he has to fight Raymond's doctor to get the money.

But Raymond is someone special. When the brothers meet, it's the start of an adventure that will change them both.

*Rain Man* was the most successful film of 1988. Tom Cruise plays Charlie Babbitt and Dustin Hoffman plays Raymond. Before he made the film, Hoffman learnt as much as possible about people like Raymond. He talked to doctors and met many people with the same problem as Raymond. In the film, Hoffman shows Raymond's sad, strange world in a way that people all over the world could like and understand. He won the Oscar for Best Actor.

The idea came from a story by American writer Barry Morrow. He was a singer before he became interested in people with problems of the mind. Ronald Bass wrote the film with Morrow. He studied law, but now works full-time as a writer. Leonore Fleischer wrote the book of the film. She has written more than 50 books of films over the last 25 years.

## Chapter 1 Bad News

It was Friday afternoon in the office of Babbitt Cars, Los Angeles. Charlie Babbitt was shouting on the phone.

'But I have waited five weeks for these cars. Where are they?'

On another phone, Charlie's secretary, Susanna, was talking to a customer. The customer wanted six Lamborghini cars and he wanted them that day. Then a call came from the bank.

Susanna put her hand over the phone. 'They want you to pay back the money you borrowed,' she said. 'They want it this afternoon.'

'Tell them I'll pay on Monday,' said Charlie. Then he spoke into his own phone. 'You can have the cars on Monday, sir . . . Yes, I'm sure . . . Thank you, sir!'

Charlie put the phone down and smiled for the first time in a week. Monday. And this was only Friday! He had the weekend to think of something to save his business.

He looked over at Susanna, his Italian secretary. She was his girl and she was so beautiful! Charlie loved every part of her little body, her big black eyes, her long brown hair.

'Are you ready for our weekend in Palm Springs?'

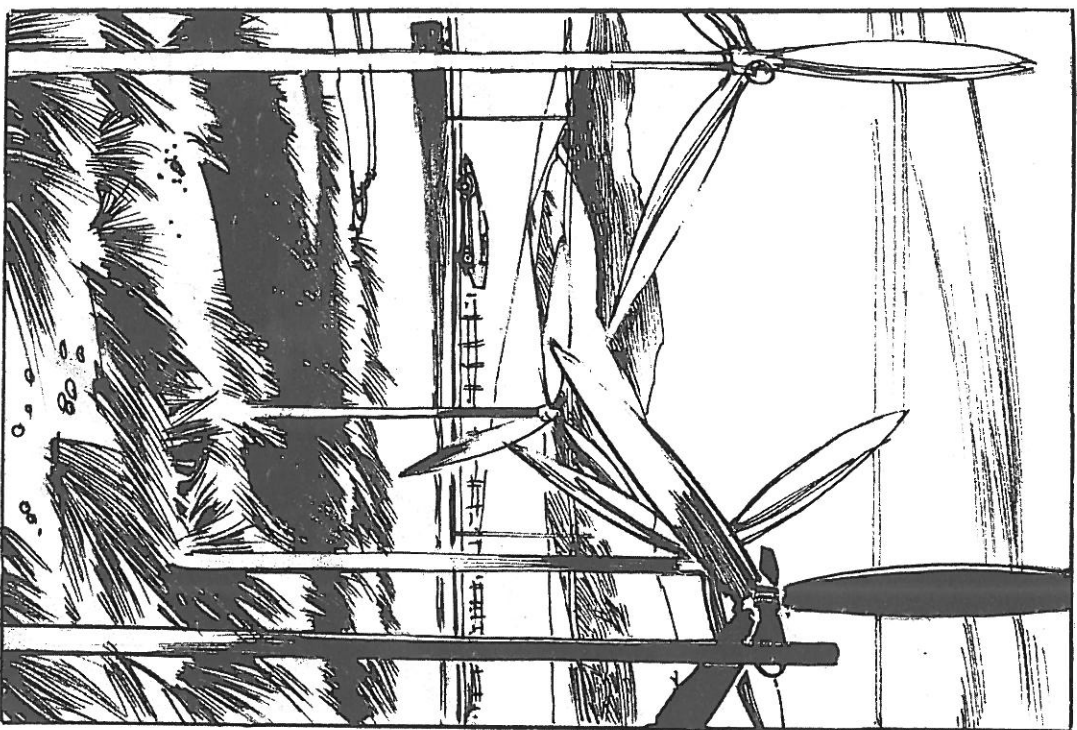
Susanna looked surprised. 'We're still going?'

'Of course,' said Charlie. 'Don't worry about this little problem. I'm going to make eighty thousand dollars from those cars.' He smiled his best smile. 'Not bad . . . for two or three phone calls.'



They were driving through the desert when a call came through on Charlie's car phone.

'Mr Babbitt? Mr Charles Babbitt?' It was a girl's voice.



*They were driving through the desert when a call came through on Charlie's car phone.*

'Yes?'

'I'm calling for Mr John Mooney. He's your father's lawyer . . . here in Cincinnati. And . . . I'm sorry, but it's bad news. Your father has died, sir.'

'Oh, no!' Susanna said, her eyes on Charlie. But his face didn't change, and he didn't say a word.

'The funeral is on Sunday, Mr Babbitt. I've got his telephone number if you . . .'

But Charlie was not listening. He just continued to look at the road in front of them.

'Oh, Charlie,' Susanna said softly. 'Are you all right?'

He didn't answer, but a few seconds later he turned off the road and stopped the car. 'Sorry about the weekend,' he said finally.

'The weekend?' Susanna said. 'Charlie -'

Charlie did not look at her. 'Look,' he said quietly, 'I hated my father and he hated me.'

Susanna looked across at him. Charlie was only twenty-six, but she thought he was the most handsome man in the world. He was tall and strong, with thick dark hair and a wonderful smile.

'Poor Charlie! That's very sad.'

'My mother died when I was two. And then it was just . . . me and him.'

Susanna bit her lip and touched Charlie on the shoulder.

'What happened?'

Charlie was silent. Then he said, 'Nothing I did was ever good enough for him.'

'I'm going with you to the funeral,' Susanna said suddenly.

Charlie smiled. 'That's nice,' he said, 'but you don't need to.'

'I want to go,' Susanna said.

Charlie looked across at Susanna. 'I forgot who I was talking to,' he said, with a small, sad smile.

## Chapter 2 A Map of the Past

Charlie Babbitt walked away from his father's funeral without looking back. Getting into the car beside Susanna, he said, 'We're going to stay in Cincinnati another night, OK? There's something I have to do before we go.' Charlie started the car.

'Where are we going now?' Susanna asked.

'East Walnut Hills.'

Walnut Hills is the richest part of Cincinnati. All the houses are big and very expensive.

Charlie parked the car in front of one of the largest, most expensive houses in Walnut Hills — Sanford Babbitt's house.

'This is my father's place,' he said.

Susanna got out of the car. 'Is this where you lived when you were a boy?' she asked, her eyes wide, full of questions.

'Yeah, but I left when I was sixteen,' Charlie said. He picked up the suitcases and carried them towards the house.

'I had no idea . . . you came . . . from all this,' Susanna said.

This was a Charlie Babbitt that she didn't know.

But Charlie wasn't listening. He put the suitcases down and walked towards a car that was in front of the garage.

It was a 1949 Buick Roadmaster. It was light blue and everything about it was perfect.

'I've always known this car,' Charlie said in a quiet voice, 'but I only drove it once.'

Near the garage was a flower garden with some wonderful roses.

'Someone must water those roses,' said Susanna, who loved flowers. 'They're all dying.'

'I hate those roses!' Charlie said suddenly.

Susanna looked at him in surprise, but Charlie was already opening the front door.



*It was a 1949 Buick Roadmaster. It was light blue and everything about it was perfect.*

Later that afternoon, Charlie and Susanna were looking round Charlie's old bedroom.

'You know that car in front of the garage?' Charlie asked suddenly.

'It's beautiful.'

'My father loved that car. The car and the roses. The Buick was *his* car and I could never drive it. But one day I borrowed it to drive my friends round town.'

'What happened?'

'My father telephoned the police. He knew I had the car, but he telephoned the police and said, "Someone has stolen my car". The police stopped us and took us to the police station. Charlie's face was angry now. 'My friends' parents came for them after an hour. My father left me there for two days.'

'Two days!' Susanna said. 'And you were only sixteen. Poor Charlie!'

But now Charlie was picking up an old coat from a box in the corner of the room.

'Is that yours, Charlie?' Susanna asked.

Charlie didn't answer. He was looking carefully at the little coat. 'It's like a map . . .' he said, in a strange voice. 'A map of my past.'

'What are you talking about?'

'What?' Charlie looked over at Susanna and then back at the coat. 'Oh, I was just thinking . . . Susanna, when you were a child, did you have . . . secret friends?'

'Yes, I think everyone does.'

'What was the name of my secret friend?' Charlie asked himself. He tried to remember. 'Rain Man. That's it. The Rain Man. When I was frightened I held this coat and listened to the Rain Man sing.' He smiled. 'That was a long time ago.'

Susanna laughed and touched Charlie's arm. 'What happened to your friend?'

'I don't know,' Charlie said. 'I just . . . grew up, I think.' He turned the coat around in his hands for a few seconds longer. Then he threw it back into the box.

'Let's go and eat.'



Charlie Babbitt and his father's lawyer, John Mooney, met in the dining-room that evening.

Mr Mooney put on his glasses and took some papers from his case. 'Before I read the will,' he said, 'your father has asked me to read you a letter that he wrote to you. Is that all right?'

Charlie did not want to listen to his father's letter. But he did want his father's money. 'Of course,' he said.

Mooney opened an envelope and took out two pieces of expensive paper.

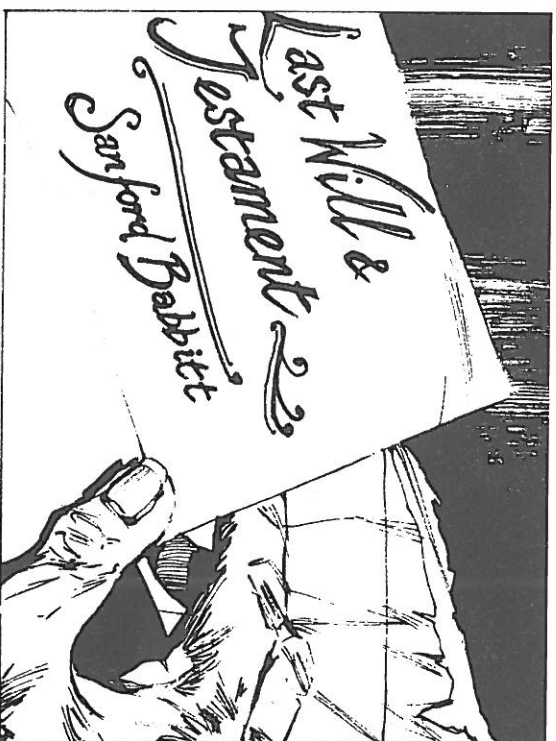
'"To my son, Charles Babbitt. Dear Charles,"' the lawyer began. '"Today is my seventieth birthday. I am an old man, but I will remember the day that we brought you home from the hospital. You were the perfect child . . ."'

'He wrote it,' Charlie said, with a very small smile. 'I hear his voice.'

'"And I remember too,"' Mooney continued reading. '"the day you left home. You were so angry, and you had all these big ideas . . ."'

The lawyer stopped reading. He looked up at Charlie, but there was no change in the young man's expression.

Mooney did not look up from the letter again. '"You did not write, or telephone, or come back into my life in any way. For all these years I have not had a son. But I want for you now what I always wanted for you. I want you to have the best life possible."'



*Now Mooney picked up the will. Without looking at Charlie, he began to read.*

John Mooney stopped reading and put the letter back into its envelope. The old lawyer seemed sad. Charlie did not say anything. He just sat there waiting for Mooney to read the will.

Now Mooney picked up the will. Without looking at Charlie, he began to read.

“To Charles Sanford Babbitt, I give my 1949 Buick. I also give him my roses.”

Charlie moved anxiously in his chair. He did not like what he was hearing.

“I am leaving my home and all my money to someone who is very important to me. Because this person cannot use the money, a friend will look after the money for him.”

Mooney stopped reading and looked up.

‘I don’t understand,’ Charlie said.

‘Your father’s money, around three million dollars, will go to someone who cannot use it,’ Mooney explained. ‘Another person will look after the money.’

So Charlie Babbitt was not getting his father’s house, or his father’s money.

‘What’s the name of the person who is going to get the money?’ he asked.

John Mooney put the will back into his bag. ‘The will says that I cannot tell you.’

Charlie was beginning to get angry. ‘Who is this person who’s going to look after the money? You?’

‘No, it isn’t me,’ Mooney said. The old lawyer stood up and picked up his hat.

‘Who is it then?’

‘I’m sorry, Charles,’ Mooney said. ‘I’m your father’s lawyer. I can’t tell you.’ He walked towards the door and then turned to face Charlie. ‘I’m sorry, son. I can see that you’re upset, but—’

‘Upset?’ Charlie jumped out of his chair. ‘I get an old car and some roses. Wonderful! And this man without a name—’

‘Charles—’

‘This secret person gets three million dollars!’

‘Charles—’

‘Sanford Babbitt. You want to be his son for five minutes?’

Charlie shouted. ‘Did you *hear* that letter? Were you *listening*?’

Charlie was so angry, he could not continue speaking.

‘Yes, sir, I was,’ John Mooney replied, looking at Charlie straight in the eye. ‘Were you?’

### Chapter 3 Father’s Secret

Charlie wanted that three million dollars. It was his money! But first he had to know who was looking after it.



Next morning, he went to his father's bank and talked to a woman there. He smiled his beautiful smile and lied to her. Five minutes later he had the name and address that he needed in his pocket. Dr Walter Bruner of Wallbrook Home, Ohio.

With Susanna next to him, Charlie drove the Buick out of Cincinnati. It was a hot July day and they had the roof of the car open. On both sides of the road were the Ohio hills.

'This is beautiful,' Susanna said. 'Where are we going?'

'We're going to see a Dr Bruner,' Charlie answered. He did not say another word.

Twenty minutes later Charlie slowed the car down and turned to the left. The new road was very narrow. On both sides there were big trees. 'This is the place,' he said, 'Wallbrook Home.'

'But why have we come here, Charlie?' Susanna asked.

'It's something about my father's will,' Charlie said. 'It won't take long.'

On the way up to the house, they saw a strange man. There was paint all over his face and he was smiling like a child. They got out of the car and walked up to the front door. A nurse came out to meet them.

'I'd like to see Dr Bruner, please.'

The nurse took them into a comfortable waiting-room.

'Could you wait here, please?'

The nurse left the room. Charlie jumped up and went through a door into another room.

'Charlie,' Susanna called. 'Where are you going?'

She followed him into the other room where a group of people were watching television. Others sat at tables, playing with children's games. Two nurses in white coats sat at the back of the room. Nobody spoke.

'I don't like being here, Charlie,' Susanna said. 'It isn't right! Let's go back to the waiting-room.'



Twenty minutes later Charlie slowed the car down and turned to the left. The new road was very narrow. On both sides there were big trees.

Dr Brunner was a big man. He was about fifty-six, with grey hair and a calm face.

'Could you please tell me the name of the person who will get my father's money?' Charlie asked politely.

'I'm sorry. I cannot tell you that.' Just like Mooney.

'Why is it a secret?' Charlie left his chair and went over to stand by the window. 'Is this person . . . an old girlfriend of Dad's?'

From the window, Charlie could see the old Buick. Susanna was sitting in the back, enjoying the afternoon sun. A small man, carrying a bag, moved towards the car. He walked in a strange way, moving from side to side.

'Mr Babbitt, I knew your father from the time you were two years old,' Dr Brunner said softly.

Charlie turned. 'The year my mother died,' he said quickly.

'Yes,' said Brunner. 'Now, the will names me as the person to look after the money. But this hospital and I get none of that money. I am doing this for your father.'

Charlie was beginning to feel very angry. To calm himself, he turned back to the window. The man with the bag was now standing next to the Buick. 'And you want me to just forget about the money?'

'I think you have been upset,' Brunner said softly, 'by a man who never knew how to show love.'

Charlie knew that this was true. He did not know what to say. Outside, the man was taking a small notebook out of his bag. He began writing in it.

'I understand how you feel,' Dr Brunner continued. 'But there's nothing I can do.'

'I'll fight for my money, Dr Brunner,' Charlie said.

Dr Brunner got up from his chair. 'I'm sure you are a fighter, Mr Babbitt,' he said. 'Your father was a fighter. But I am a fighter too.'

Dr Brunner walked with Charlie out through the front door. The day was getting hotter, but it was still beautiful weather.

The little man with the bag was still standing by the Buick. He was writing in his notebook. Again and again he looked from the car back to the notebook. He did not look at Susanna.

'Raymond,' said Dr Brunner, 'go back inside.'

The man with the notebook was not listening. He continued writing in the notebook. Charlie walked past him and went to open the door.

'Of course, this car is not white,' Raymond said. He did not look up from his notebook. 'This is a blue car now . . .'

Charlie looked at Raymond in surprise. He was a small man of about forty. He looked clean and tidy, with short hair and very ordinary clothes. What was a little strange was that there was no expression on his face. There was no light in his small black eyes, and no movement in his mouth. It was a face that was neither happy nor sad.

Smiling, Charlie turned to Susanna. 'You know,' he said slowly, 'this car *was* white. My dad painted it blue when I was very little.'

'And, and,' Raymond continued quickly to himself, '. . . it cost an *arm* and a *leg*.'

The smile left Charlie's face. 'That's what my father often said - "an arm and a leg". How does this man know that?' he asked.

Charlie looked at the man called Raymond. Raymond looked up for a second. Then he looked at his notebook again.

'You come with me, Raymond,' Dr Brunner said. 'These people have to go.'

But Charlie was moving closer to Raymond. 'Do you know this car?' he asked.