

NAME

Minari MP3.mp3

DATE

August 29, 2021

DURATION

24m 12s

2 SPEAKERS

Speaker1

Speaker2

START OF TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:00] Speaker1

The following is a message from Wellsprings congregation.

[00:00:07] Speaker2

Good morning, wellsprings. It's good to be with you again. The band that kind of helped me navigate my teenage years was called The Replacements. They never sold a lot of records, although a lot of bands who came after them, who became a lot more popular than they ever did, credited the Replacements existence for those bands ever being able to form in the first place. Replacement's helped me find a sense of my voice and also helped me to find some of my fellow teenage misfit toys sense of connection and belonging. My favorite replacement's album is called Let It Be, and it was released in the latter part of 1984, I think October of 1984. And the last song on Let It Be is called Answering Machine. And it is about an answering machine. Lead singer Paul Westerberg, kind of the the branchchild behind The Replacements, sings about the ways in which the answering machine gets in the way of connection that he yearns for with a family member who he misses or someone he's dating or a friend. But it's really just about how we can't stand the answering machine, the last verse goes, how do I say I miss you to an answering machine? How do I say good night to an answering machine? How do I say I'm lonely to an answering machine? The message is fairly plain. I hate your answering machine. Now it can be seen as somewhat quaint, and it is from the perspective of twenty twenty one to look back on.

[00:01:57] Speaker2

After all, the ink, virtual ink has been spilled over all these years about the ways in which technology is separating us. It's kind of quaint to go back and hear someone singing about complaining about how answering machine technology is what separated them. But, you know, every generation struggles with its own relationship with technology, whatever that technology is at the time. And here's the thing. Still love that song. Still love that album several times a year. I will listen to listen to it. Let it be from start to finish. And although I have aged, that album has never aged for me. I still just absolutely adore it. You know, that game that you play sometimes of your friends, like, you know, Desert Island, what would you take with you? What pieces of music you would have let it be would be at least one of my top three, if not given the choice. The only one, it might be the only one. But jury's still out on that. Thing is, though, a few years after I heard that song for the first time, an answering machine played out in my life in a very different way. Some of you might know that my mother, who was very close to him, she died suddenly and unnecessarily, it turns out, in November of 1992, when I was 22 years old, when she was forty seven. I am 51 now.

[00:03:22] Speaker2

She died in many ways right in the middle of her life. And it was a devastating experience for myself and for my family. We had a brother phone slash, fax machine slash answering machine in our apartment in New York City where he lives. Some of the time. And on the little mini cassette and those answering machine, many cassettes. On that outgoing message was my mother's voice. Sometimes when the phone would ring, I wouldn't pick up the phone. Not just for screening purposes. Sometimes that. But sometimes. I would let it play through. So I could just hear her voice. As many things are and happened with grief, after a few months, it became obvious that it was time to change. And I believe my dad, however, still has that little mini cassette with my mom's voice on it. I remember how in the midst of that grief and loss, the comfort that it brought me and brought other members of my family to hear her voice. Thinking of such tender memories in the midst of a tough time kind of brings me to today's Spirit Flake's message. The movie Minority, which won all kinds of accolades when it was released in 2020. It is a movie of tender memories during a difficult time. It's a story told by Lee Isaac Chung. And semi autobiographical, his family, like the family of first generation South Korean immigrants to the U.S., also moved to rural Arkansas in the 1980s.

[00:05:31] Speaker2

The story about the Yie family, Jacob and Monica. Mom and dad and David's sister and brother and shouldn't Sunja grandmother who joins them? The actress who played Sunja won the best supporting actress Oscar. And just if you haven't watched it, it's just absolutely one of the most dear and delightful acceptance speeches I've ever seen at an awards show. So this family of four and then five Sunja comes to join them in rural Arkansas, where David has moved the family. David, the dad, has moved the family to make a go of it as a farmer. He reasons and reckons that land is much less expensive in Arkansas than it was in California, where they had been previously. And that, as he says, there are 30000 Korean people moving to the United States every single year. And he wants to be able to farm and sell and provide produce specifically for Korean people in America. And like many foreign movies, if you know that genre, things do not go exactly as David and Monica. And Jacob would have hoped Jacob struggles as a farmer and the farm struggles and is stressful for all of them. It is a movie that takes great and beautiful pains. To express the inner lives of its main characters and also the tenderness and the fraughtness, the conflict and the resilience. The connection and the heartbreak that binds them all together. It is a beautiful movie, and I think it would have been a beautiful and much heralded movie whenever it came out.

[00:07:32] Speaker2

I think the fact that it came out during 2020, during this pandemic, during this time in America of just. Completely open from some people and always outrageous but unapologetic xenophobia and anti Asian hatred and violence. Those numbers have spiked and actually continue even if it's dropped off the front pages a little bit. Still continue to be a horrifying and dangerous for many members of the Asian American community. I think that's one of the things that helped this story, this story of one particular Asian-American family resonate and kind of cut through the noise and also stand as a beautiful, necessary counter to the xenophobia of this particular time in American life. So the family, the family tries to make a go of it as farmers in rural Arkansas, and yes, they are the only family, the only Korean family in this part of rural Arkansas. And the filmmaker Lee Isaac Chung. He does not skirt around the fact that the differences between the family and they're mostly almost entirely white neighbors always go so smoothly. He tells this part of the story with a gentle but also direct touch. And one of the other things that the filmmakers that really like really resonates is that so often in American movies made by white Westerners, Asian people are otherized in the form of, you know, speaking incorrect. English or or made to seem exotic or kind of fetishized as spiritual in some ways or sexualized.

[00:09:29] Speaker2

The reversal here in this movie is that it's the fellow white Arkansas folks who live in this town and also farm who are seen as the ones who are actually the eccentric and odd. But again, Lee Isaac Chung tells that part of the story and also a gentle way to. This is a very quiet movie. And I think it resonates even more because it is not afraid to be quiet. Heartful and soulful and how it conveys the honest lives of its characters. There's a theme that runs throughout this movie and really brings home the point that love is not an abstraction, right. Love is something we do with our bodies. Scene in the movie where young David, just a tremendous young actor, I can't wait to see what he does. He's six or seven in this movie when young David, especially interacting with his grandmother, refers to can't stand each other and we see them growing together, trusting each other. It's really beautiful. We see young David having his, his ears cleaned out by his mom as a kind of act of devotion and love. We see one character being bathed by another character after a long day for me, and I won't give it away if you haven't seen the movie, a final act of heroism, heroism, while the family is seeming to maybe come apart at the seams from the stresses and the strains, and then the farm becomes in in a final act of heroism that seems to promise that the family will be able to make it together, even if the future of the farm is in doubt.

[00:11:24] Speaker2

This is not really an idea, but more a practice that love is not an abstraction, but a set of ways of relating to and with each other in and with our bodies. This movie is about the particularities of memories of recalling a time long ago it's set in the early 1980s and how a family learns over and over and over to stay faithful to one another, even when there are repeated mistakes and misunderstandings. And I think that is another profound reason why *Minari* has touched me and why it's resonated with so many people, I think it had six Academy Award nominations and one one, as I mentioned. I think it would have been likely to have been. Showing up on many critics best of at the end of any year. But especially in 2020. Its message of connective love in the midst of discouraging circumstances. I'm going to tell you, it goes right to the heart. When I was watching it, my mind immediately went to a Twitter thread that I read not so long ago, kind of Twitter thread that went viral. Maybe you have seen it, but I saved it because I knew at some point, yeah, this this this overreach, and I'm going to show the thread up on screen.

[00:12:57] Speaker2

While I read it through. It's from someone named Sherry Turner. Who says this? I look at my mum's old house and Google Maps, Street View. The house where I grew up, it says Image captured May 2009. There is a light on her bedroom. It is still her house. She is still alive. I am still visiting every few months on the train to Bodmin Parkway. The writer is from South-West England. And you see it's from June. mid-June of this year. Her little pink car will still be in the garage. But I will have taken a taxi from the station, and when it arrives, she'll be standing in that doorway, smiling and waving. Smaller than the last time I saw her. We will play *Scrabble* and watch *Tipping Point*. And there will have been no pandemic, no other deaths, no as yet undiscovered illnesses. And I won't know how perfect it is, and I wouldn't go back and say even if I could, because sometimes it's best not to know. I take a screen print of the house with the light on. Because it won't last forever. And one day the Google van will go back down that street and replace her house with someone else's. And though there may be a light on in the window, it won't be her. What a powerful find. A picture of her mom's house. A moment frozen in time. Years ago, 2009, in which her mother was still alive.

[00:15:03] Speaker2

And here's the thing, Twitter being Twitter, there's a whole bunch of people who helpfully and sometimes those know it all came in and says, well, even if Google does a new street mapping, they still archive it somewhere. So it never goes away. And that's fine. Actually, that was comforting. Sherry Turner says that was comforting, but something else more amazing happened. People started to share their own stories of Google Street View on maps and their beloved departed, their tender memories. That still speak to them because those images are captured. I'm going to share a couple with you. We lost our dog a couple of months ago. And has been one of the hardest losses of my life. I was so happy to see that he's still waiting by the window for us to come home somewhere. See the little picture of that dog, its little face down in the lower corner. And another one I thought was really powerful. But if you read through the whole thread, you'll see a bunch of these. My dad died three years ago, put on Google Maps. He is still doing some gardening, which he loved. I mean, I knew that was coming and it's just so moving. This Twitter thread of memory and loss and abiding love and people and beings who after their lives have ended just because they happen to be a particular place and a particular time.

[00:16:41] Speaker2

Their images are captured. And can be shared and savored. I'd just like to pause and let that sink in. The title of this movie, Minari. It is about farming, it is about gardening. Minority. Is sometimes called water sellery, it is a very common vegetable that is grown all throughout. East Asia and is a food. Found very commonly in Korean cuisine. Minari, as you learned during the movie, and I did not know beforehand, is kind of savored and shared because it is very hearty and can grow in difficult circumstances, circumstances where other vegetables could not grow. You get the metaphor here for this movie. It also has healing and medicinal properties for some. A plant that can grow in many places and in challenging circumstances. I think that's why this movie, Minority based on the vegetable about this. Farming family. Resonates so deeply. We all know in different ways, and for some of us, more difficult, but we all know. Small taste. Large taste. Small challenges, big overwhelm the challenges over these last almost a year and a half now. And. Delta. Not going away. And indeed, it feels as if all the challenges and masks and vaccinations and anger. And mistrust. In some ways, it feels almost worse than earlier in the pandemic. One, maybe because we thought. We were past it, or at least getting out of it. Around the time of that tweet thread in June. Now, here we are with the sequel, and it's really unpleasant.

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And here's the other thing. So many of us feel our reserves so deeply drained. For me, that's the beauty of this movie. Of its tender storytelling of memories. Of ties that bind in difficult times. That is not just about a nostalgia, a looking back. But in that remembering yearning. To remember what holds us close. Even when there is fracture. To remember what lifts us up, even when we are crestfallen. To remember. What helps us to love again, even when our hearts are broken? I want to end with a song from earlier in the pandemic, Dolly Parton, who, you know, it said if there's just maybe one person that most Americans could agree on, we can't agree on much these days. It might actually be Dolly Parton. And some of it is the myth that's grown up around her. Not all of what we read online about her is true, although much of it is. She is a song from pretty early, I think from May of twenty twenty still pretty early on in the pandemic called When Life is Good Again. Some of you might know it when life is good again. I'll be a better friend. A bigger person when life is good again, more thoughtful than I've been. I'll be so different then. More in the moment when life is good again. I love that. It reminds me of the NRA, of the plant, tenacious. And fertile and growing and green.

[00:21:10] Speaker2

Even under difficult circumstances. And this far into the pandemic, that did not end quickly and is still ongoing. Not to argue Dolly Parton. But to be able to remember the things that fill the heart now. With how life is. In this moment. Not just waiting until and life is good again. But to be the kind of friend. Spouse, partner, child. Parent, grandparent. That we yearn to be. As best we can. Under these trying circumstances. Not easy. And you have to remember to be tender. It is a saving grace. Amen. And may you live in blessing. I ask if you would, please pray with me. Divine presence. You who are as present as this very breath. And as real as our most treasured memories and deepest aspirations to be the kind of people who we are to be. We're probably all experiencing this time in somewhat different ways. And so to be able to pause and to notice what is here for us right now in this moment. It is a gift to our hearts, to our spirits, to our bodies. To remind us that as challenging as things may be, there is a core of freedom. Of remembering and reconnecting. With what is passed. And also, in many ways, still present. Of that, which puts energy into our bodies once again. Of that, which reminds the heart to open once again. Of that, which calls love and connection back into our lives. Once again. On that.

[00:24:00] Speaker1

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END OF TRANSCRIPT



