Lillenas® Drama Presents

ANOTHER CUP OF COFFEE

from A Collection of . . . Sketches

by Kris Rasmussen

Scripture References: Proverbs 17:17; Isaiah 49:15

Themes: Friendship, suffering, and questioning God

Cast: Three men in their 60s or 70s

HAL
FRANK
JOE

Props:
- Coffee tables
- Coffee mugs
- Phone
- A Bible
- Newspaper
- Coffeemaker

Setting: A simple newsstand/coffee shop, present day

Scene: A story about friendship, memories, and a hope that never forgets.

Running Time: 7 minutes

(Lights up on an empty coffee shop/newsstand in the early morning hours. The door to the shop is locked, and a man in his seventies, HAL, is waiting outside the store. Another man about the same age, FRANK, enters and unlocks the door.)

HAL (disapprovingly): 6:15.

FRANK: It is not. Besides, you were here at 5:45. I always open at 6. You’re always here waitin’ at 5:45.

(FRANK starts a pot of coffee. HAL sits down with a paper.)

FRANK: Betty called me over at the house. She can’t find Joe. Told her we’d keep an eye out.

HAL: He’s getting worse, isn’t he?

FRANK: Seems like it.

HAL: Betty told me someone found him out on Baker Road last week. Thought he was visiting his folks out at their farm.

FRANK (still working behind counter): Betty’s got her hands full. Oh, but if Joe does show up, she wants him to bring home some brown sugar. Remember that.

HAL: OK. Who’s Ed?

FRANK (after a pause): You didn’t hear?

HAL: What?

FRANK: Cancer. Tumor. Something like that. Anyway, he’s over in Ann Arbor getting operated on.

(FRANK pours coffee and brings it over to Hal, sits. They drink in silence for a moment.)

HAL: Oh. Yeah. It’s awful quiet ‘round here these days.

FRANK (looking at empty chairs): I know. (Shivers) Can’t get warm this morning.

HAL: Yep.

FRANK: I’m thinkin’ about finally finishing up the back room.

HAL: Sure ya are. You have been for about 15 years.

FRANK: What year did the back room catch fire?

HAL: I don’t know.

FRANK: ’89? ’90?

HAL: It was the same year you put the new roof on.

FRANK: Really? You sure?

HAL: Yes.

FRANK: You’d think I’d know that.

HAL: You’d think.
FRANK: Anyway, you helped me fix it up. That's why nothing works around here.

HAL: Exactly.

(A brief, comfortable silence. They drink coffee, look at the newspaper.)

FRANK: Says here Dick Harris died.

HAL: No.

FRANK: Yep. How many is that this year? Three?

HAL: Four.

FRANK: Ya sure?

HAL: Yes.

FRANK: I'm gonna be the only one sittin' here pretty soon.

HAL: Hey. I've had one hip replacement surgery. That's it. That's not so bad.

FRANK: Then why do you keep bringing it up?

HAL (looking out window): Joe.

FRANK: Yeah, poor Joe. What he has—

HAL: No. I think I see Joe. Outside. Making a snow angel. (Standing up) I better go make sure he comes inside. You go call Betty.

(HAL exits briefly while FRANK picks up the phone and dials. HAL reenters with JOE who is carrying a large faded Bible. FRANK hangs up the phone without talking to anyone.)

FRANK: About time you got here.

JOE: Who you calling?

FRANK: No one.

HAL: Sit down, Joe. Frank just made a fresh pot of coffee.

(JOE continues to pace aimlessly back and forth near the table as FRANK pours some more coffee.)

JOE: I'm not lost. You don't need to call anybody. I'm having one of my good days.

FRANK (uneasy): You bet.

JOE: Betty's driving me crazy. I had to get out of the house.

HAL: Frank, didn't Betty want Joe to pick up something?

FRANK: Brown sugar. I'll get ya some before you leave.

JOE: I know. Brown sugar. She already told me. And she wrote it down.

(JOE looks for the slip of paper. He can't find it and searches in earnest frustration for it in his pockets, his jacket, his Bible.)

JOE: I had it. I had it. I didn't leave it at home. I had it right here. I had it.

FRANK (uneasily, trying for a joke): Don't worry about it. I was supposed to bring home cinnamon one time and brought Bev chili powder instead.

JOE: But I had it.

HAL: Heck, Frank can't even remember what year the back room caught fire.

FRANK: Neither can you.

HAL: It's not my store.

(They all chuckle, then lapse into silence as both FRANK and JOE sit down.)

JOE: Where is everybody?

FRANK: They . . . aren't coming today.

JOE: Who's not?

FRANK: Umm . . . the others.

HAL: But I was here early.

JOE: Where's . . . Where's . . .

(JOE fumbles for a name. He stands up and paces again as he tries to remember. He silently gets angry with himself that he can't remember.)

HAL: Jerry?

JOE: No.

FRANK: Al?

JOE: No. He . . . lives out on Baker Road . . . I think . . . we . . . I don't know.

(A small uncomfortable silence as HAL and FRANK look at each other.)

HAL: Ed's in the hospital. Did ya know that?
JOE: Ed? Maybe that’s it. Ed. Too bad. I like Ed. Is he gonna get better?

HAL: We hope so.

FRANK: Is that your Bible there? Now you never brought that with ya to coffee before. Ya going to start naggin’ us about going to church again?

JOE: No. Maybe. It’s just got all the names of my family in it. And it’s got important dates in it, and I put pictures in it. See? Here’s one of us out deer hunting.

HAL: Look at that. Gee, I was good looking back then.

JOE: We used to go fishing too.

FRANK: All the time.

JOE: Ya know, I wanna go fishing. I never go fishin’.

FRANK: It’s 20 degrees out.

JOE: I just wanna stand up to my waist in a river and fish. Fish and fish and fish.

HAL: Catch ya some nice trout, huh?

JOE: Yeah. Fish and fish and fish.

(Frank pretends he is casting his rod into a stream.)

HAL: We should do that.

FRANK: Yeah, we should. This spring. We’ll go.

JOE: Naw. Betty won’t let me.

HAL: Sure she will.

JOE: No. She thinks I can’t do anything.

FRANK: We’ll go.

JOE (all smiles, like a kid): OK.

(Frank pretending he begins casting his rod again.)

HAL: We should do that.

FRANK: More coffee anybody? I gotta start acting like I’m working pretty soon.

HAL: Yeah, I guess I should get home and see what Martha has on my honey-do list.

JOE: I’m not going anywhere. I’m staying here all day.

FRANK (teasing): I’ll put you to work.

(Phone rings. Frank gets up to answer it.)

JOE: OK. I’ll stay here all day. ’Cuz Betty’s mad. But I’m not lost.

HAL: Women.

JOE: Yeah.

FRANK (overlapping JOE and HAL): Yeah. Uh-huh. OK. (Hangs up phone) That was Betty. She’s on her way over to pick you up.

JOE: OK. Bye.

HAL: No, she’s not here yet, Joe. You better wait.

JOE: I don’t want to go home. I want to walk.

(Frank stands up to leave.)

FRANK: Have some more coffee.

JOE: No more coffee. See ya later. (Beat) Who’s in the hospital?

HAL: Ed.

JOE: I know Ed.

FRANK: Sure.

JOE: OK. I’m going.

(Frank shuffles slowly out of the shop, forgetting his Bible on the table. Frank and Hal watch him leave.)

FRANK: I hope Betty gets here quick.

HAL: Yep. He’s walking right down the middle of the street. I should go out and get him.

(Hal hesitates. He watches Joe but doesn’t leave.)

HAL: I couldn’t. I just couldn’t be—I couldn’t.

FRANK: It’s not like he had a choice.

HAL: But he seems like he’s OK. I mean, not unhappy, anyway.

FRANK: So? Don’t make it right. (Beat) We really should take him fishing.

HAL: Yeah. We should. We will.

(Hal thumbs absentely through the Bible on the table.)

HAL: I wonder if he can still remember anything he’s read in here.

FRANK: He left his Bible? Great. Just great.

HAL: If you believe something your whole life, but you can’t remember it now, does it still count?
FRANK (irritated, defensive): You’ve never been a philosopher, Hal. Help me clean up. (More irritated) Brown sugar. I forgot to give him the brown sugar.

HAL: We’re his friends for fifty-some-odd years. Even when he doesn’t remember us, we’re still gonna remember him, right?

FRANK: Yeah. Sure.

HAL: We still feel the same way about him, right? That doesn’t change. Maybe that’s part of the answer with the God thing.

FRANK: Do you want another cup of coffee, or are you gonna help me clean up?

HAL: I’m gonna go and make sure Joe’s out of the street. Maybe I’ll make a snow angel with him.

(HAL leaves. FRANK sits down and drinks coffee in silence. FRANK begins to thumb through the Bible.)

The End