

1 **Smelling the Coffee**

2  
3 by

4  
5 **The Reverend Bill Keane**

6  
7 **This drama is set entirely around a table where three people gather, coffee mugs in**  
8 **hand, considering all the apparently little things that have turned out to mean so**  
9 **much in their lives. At the end of the play there is a twist that encourages the**  
10 **audience to likewise reconsider all the blessings we so often take for granted in this**  
11 **world.**

12  
13 **Characters:**

14 **BOB (SEE DESCRIPTION BELOW)**

15 **JOAN**

16 **ALEX – An average group of mature, friendly, but apparently unremarkable**  
17 **people, sitting down over a cup of coffee. Play can be adapted for male/female roles.**

18  
19 **The play opens as Bob, carrying a mug of coffee, walks over and sits behind a table.**  
20 **Actors sip coffee all through the play. (KEEP IN MIND IT IS IMPORTANT FOR**  
21 **ALL CHARACTER FACES TO BE SEEN BY THE AUDIENCE, SO THIS**  
22 **SHOULD INFLUENCE HOW THE TABLE AND CHAIRS ARE PLACED).**

23  
24 **BOB: (AFTER CASUALLY ENTERING THE SCENE AND SITTING, TAKES A**  
25 **SIP FROM HIS MUG) WOW, THAT SURE DOES TASTE GOOD! THE COFFEE**  
26 **THEY MAKE HERE HAS GOT TO BE THE BEST I'VE EVER HAD. (TAKES**  
27 **ANOTHER SIP) WOW.**

28  
29 **JOAN: (ENTERS WITH HER MUG) HEY BOB! I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE**  
30 **HERE! WHEN DID YOU GET IN? (SHE SITS AT THE TABLE WITH BOB)**

31  
32 **BOB: GEEZ, I FORGET. THE TRIP WAS EASY THOUGH. I'VE BEEN FEELING**  
33 **SO RELAXED LATELY I'VE LOST ALL TRACK OF TIME.**

34  
35 **JOAN: KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN! (TAKES SIP FROM MUG) AAHHHHHH.**

36  
37 **BOB: ISN'T THAT GREAT? I CAN'T GET OVER THE COFFEE! REMINDS ME**  
38 **OF SOMETHING I'VE HAD BEFORE, BUT I CAN'T PLACE IT!**

39  
40 **JOAN: CHURCH, BOB.**

41  
42 **BOB: THAT'S RIGHT! I KNEW IT!**

43  
44 **JOAN: IT'S *CHOCK FULL O' NUTS* (SINGS THE OLD JINGLE) "THAT**  
45 ***HEAVENLY COFFEE, HEAVENLY COFFEE, HEAVENLY COFFEE...*" IT'S THE**  
46 **ONLY COFFEE THE GUILD WOULD BUY FOR CHURCH FUNCTIONS.**

1 **BOB:** IT'S THE ONLY COFFEE THAT COULD WAKE ME UP AFTER THE  
2 SERMON!

3  
4 **JOAN: (LAUGHS)** BOB, YOU'RE SO FUNNY! BUT THE SERMONS WEREN'T  
5 BAD!

6  
7 **BOB:** NO, THEY WEREN'T. ACTUALLY JOAN, IT'S TAKEN ME A LONG  
8 WHILE TO APPRECIATE JUST HOW GOOD THEY WERE, AND HOW  
9 DIFFICULT IT MUST BE TO PREPARE STUFF LIKE THAT EVERY WEEK.  
10 **(TAKES ANOTHER SIP, THEN SEES A FRIEND)** HEY, THERE'S ALEX!  
11 ALEX! COME SIT HERE!

12  
13 **ALEX: (ENTERS WITH A MUG)** HEY GUYS! **(SITS)** ANOTHER BEAUTIFUL  
14 DAY! BRIGHT AND CRISP, GOOD FRIENDS, GREAT COFFEE... IT DOESN'T  
15 GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS... **(THEN ALEX SINGS)** "HEAVEN, I'M IN  
16 HEAVEN..."

17  
18 **JOAN:** BOB AND I WERE JUST SAYING HOW GREAT THE COFFEE IS.

19  
20 **ALEX: (JUMPS RIGHT IN)** IT'S THE AROMA. YOU KNOW THE SAYING,  
21 "WAKE UP AND SMELL THE COFFEE.?" THIS IS WHAT THEY'RE TALKING  
22 ABOUT.

23  
24 **BOB:** I GOT ONE BETTER, OR AT LEAST AS GOOD.

25  
26 **JOAN:** WHAT?

27  
28 **BOB:** OK, OK... **(PAUSES)** YOU WAKE UP AT A CAMPSITE, AND THERE'S  
29 THE SMELL OF POTATOES AND ONIONS COOKING IN BUTTER ON A GRILL.

30  
31 **ALEX:** OH MAN, THAT'S THE BEST!

32  
33 **JOAN: (EXCITEDLY JUMPS IN)** OK, OK... WHAT ABOUT THIS ONE? THE  
34 SMELL OF POT ROAST AND CARROTS SIMMERING IN A CROCK POT FOR  
35 HOURS...

36  
37 **ALEX:** MY MOTHER'S SPAGHETTI SAUCE... WE'D COME IN ON A COLD  
38 DAY, AND AS SOON AS YOU'D OPEN THE BACK DOOR... IT WAS GREAT.

39  
40 **BOB:** HOW ABOUT CINNAMON-RAISIN BREAD JUST AS IT COMES OUT OF  
41 THE OVEN?

42  
43 **JOAN:** MY GRANDMA MADE THAT, AND WE'D PUT THE BUTTER ON WHILE  
44 IT WAS STILL WARM...

45  
46 **ALEX:** HERE'S A WEIRD ONE...

1 **BOB:** GO AHEAD.

2

3 **ALEX:** (PAUSE) THE SMELL OF A NEWBORN BABY AFTER A BATH...

4

5 **JOAN:** (EXCITEDLY) YES! OH, THAT IS SO PRECIOUS!

6

7 **BOB:** AH YES, THE NEW BABY SMELL! KIND OF LIKE THE NEW CAR  
8 SMELL, WITHOUT THE STICKER SHOCK! (EVERYONE LAUGHS) OK, HOW  
9 ABOUT THE SMELL OF A PINE FOREST?

10

11 **JOAN:** JUST THE IMAGE... ALL THE GREEN SET AGAINST THE  
12 CONTRASTING BROWN NEEDLES ON THE GROUND. LIKE YOU'RE  
13 WALKING THROUGH A GORGEOUS PAINTING.

14

15 **ALEX:** OR THE FEELS AND THE SOUND OF SLEEPING ON A BED OF PINE  
16 NEEDLES, WITH A LIGHT WIND RUSTLING THROUGH THE BRANCHES.

17

18 **BOB:** YOU KNOW WHAT SOUND I ALWAYS LIKED?

19

20 **JOAN/ALEX:** NO.

21

22 **BOB:** THE SOUND OF A TENNIS BALL OFF A NEWLY STRUNG RACKET.

23

24 **JOAN:** THE POP OF A MAJOR-LEAGUE FASTBALL SNAPPING INTO THE  
25 CATCHER'S GLOVE!

26

27 **ALEX:** HOW ABOUT THE YELL AND THE SMELL OF THE HOT-DOG  
28 VENDORS IN THE STADIUM, "HOT-DOGS HEAHHH!" WITH THE SOUR KRAUT  
29 WAFTING IN THE AIR...

30

31 **BOB:** HOW ABOUT THE RUSH YOU FEEL WHEN YOU'RE IN THE OCEAN,  
32 AND YOU LEAN FORWARD TO RIDE A WAVE, AND THERE'S THAT  
33 MILLISECOND MOMENT WHEN YOU GET LIFTED UP BY THE WATER AND  
34 YOU'RE TOTALLY OUT OF CONTROL!

35

36 **ALEX:** THAT IS WILD! LIKE BEING AT THE PEAK ON A ROLLERCOASTER!

37

38 **JOAN:** (PAUSE) YOU KNOW WHAT I MISS?

39

40 **ALEX/BOB:** WHAT?

41

42 **JOAN:** (TAKES A SIP) AFTER I RETIRED, I MISSED MY JOB.

43

44 **BOB:** YOU MEAN THE JOB YOU THOUGHT WAS A HASSLE? I THOUGHT  
45 YOU COULDN'T WAIT TO GET OUTTA THERE?

46

1 **JOAN:** I COULDN'T! BUT THEN, I MISSED IT. THE PEOPLE, THE  
2 CHALLENGE, EVEN THE BOSS – IT MADE ME FEEL NEEDED, LIKE I WAS  
3 IMPORTANT. I NEVER THOUGHT I LIKED MY JOB, AND THEN I REALIZED  
4 HOW LUCKY I WAS JUST TO HAVE ONE ALL THOSE YEARS.

5  
6 **ALEX:** KIND OF LIKE WHEN WE DID THAT CHURCH MISSION PROJECT. WE  
7 WORKED SO HARD! I WAS DEAD TIRED EVERY DAY, BUT WHEN IT WAS  
8 OVER, AND FINISHED, I FELT SAD.

9  
10 **BOB:** YOU KNOW, IT'S FUNNY... **(PAUSE)** I SPENT MY WHOLE CAREER  
11 TRYING TO MAKE MORE MONEY, AND RIGHT NOW I HAVE NO FEELING  
12 FOR MONEY AT ALL.

13  
14 **JOAN:** AND THE THINGS TOO! THE TV'S, THE CARS, THE APPLIANCES I  
15 THOUGHT WERE SO CRUCIAL TO GET... **(PAUSE)** THEY HAVE  
16 ABSOLUTELY NO MEANING TO ME NOW.

17  
18 **ALEX:** SAME HERE! IT'S ODD, BUT IT'S ONLY THE GIVING AND THE  
19 LIVING THAT MEAN ANYTHING TO ME NOW. AT THE TIME, IN CHURCH,  
20 WHETHER IT WAS MY PLEDGE OR SOME OTHER APPEAL, I USED TO TRY TO  
21 MAKE EXCUSES FOR GIVING LESS, AND NOW I SEE WHAT A BLESSING IT  
22 WAS TO BE ABLE TO GIVE MORE. I CAN'T REMEMBER, AT ALL, HOW MUCH  
23 I HAD. **(PAUSE)** ALL THAT STAYS WITH ME NOW IS HOW MUCH I GAVE.

24  
25 **BOB:** TELL ME ABOUT IT! I ALWAYS THOUGHT STEWARDSHIP TIME IN  
26 CHURCH WAS A HASSLE. NOW I SEE IT WAS A HUGE OPPORTUNITY TO  
27 SAY, "HERE I AM LORD. I'M WITH YOU. THIS ISN'T JUST WHAT I HAVE,  
28 IT'S WHO I AM!"

29  
30 **JOAN:** DO YOU REALIZE, EVERY SINGLE DAY, WE WERE COMPLETELY  
31 SURROUNDED BY MIRACLES...

32  
33 **ALEX:** AND WE NEVER NOTICED!

34  
35 **JOAN:** NOT NEARLY ENOUGH. AT LEAST I KNOW I DIDN'T.

36  
37 **BOB:** **(LONG PAUSE)** EARTH WAS SO SPECIAL. **(CONTEMPLATIVE**  
38 **PAUSE)** I NEVER REALLY KNEW THAT UNTIL I CAME HERE TO HEAVEN.  
39 **(LONG PAUSE)** HEY I GOTTA RUN! HOW ABOUT WE GET TOGETHER  
40 TOMORROW!

41  
42 **ALEX:** THAT'D BE SUPER!

43  
44 **(EVERYONE STARTS TO GET UP FROM THE TABLE, AND GRADUALLY**  
45 **WALK OUT OF SIGHT, BUT THE DIALOGUE CONTINUES AS THE VOICES**  
46 **TRAIL OFF IN THE DISTANCE)**

1 **JOAN:** YEAH! I'M GONNA MAKE A LIST OF MORE GREAT STUFF!

2

3 **ALEX:** DON'T FORGET GARLIC PIZZA DELIVERED ON A RAINY NIGHT!

4

5 **JOAN:** RIGHT!

6

7 **ALEX:** BEATLE MUSIC!

8

9 **JOAN:** DEFINITELY!

10

11 **ALEX:** FALLING IN LOVE!

12

13 **JOAN:** TOTALLY!

14

15 **BOB:** SLEDDING!

16

17 **JOAN:** YUP.

18

19 **ALEX:** JUMPING IN BIG PILES OF LEAVES!

20

21 **JOAN:** OH YEAH!

22

23 **BOB:** TWO WORDS – HOT FUDGE!

24

25 **JOAN:** ABSOLUTELY...

26

27

28

**THE END**

29

30

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