

A SKETCH COMMISSIONED BY
MARTENSDALE COMMUNITY CHURCH
TO ILLUSTRATE ROMANS 4:1-12

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PRODUCTION NOTES

In keeping with most His Company sketches, the first production of *None of That Matters* was staged without set—just the two characters on stage. Because the venue had no “backstage,” both characters entered down the side aisle (in character, of course), from the back of the sanctuary—which seemed especially fitting for the character of Mr. Smith. An on-stage entrance should work just as well.

As the cover states, this sketch was commissioned by the pastor to illustrate his Sunday morning message on Romans 4:1-12, but it will work just as well for any occasion in which the concept of God’s grace, through Christ, needs to be illustrated.

COSTUMES & MAKEUP

Miss Jones: a business suit

Mr. Smith: rumpled, perhaps torn clothes (e.g., jeans, sweatshirt). He should have a growth of unkempt beard, and it helps to redden his eyes—as if from either too little sleep, or too much alcohol.

PROPS AND SET

A checkbook, carried in an inside jacket pocket, for Miss Jones.

No set is required.

CHARACTERS

Mr. Smith: Daniel Smith, a reprobate.

Miss Jones: a representative of billionaire Silas T. Worthington.

1 **SCENE**

2
3 *The Time: Today*

4 *The Place: Anywhere*

5
6 *House lights down.*

7 *Stage lights up.*

8
9 *Enter a man, approximately middle-aged. His clothing is*
10 *disheveled and well-worn. His hair is uncombed. On his face is*
11 *the blank stare of someone without direction, without hope. He is*
12 *past weeping; now he is just numb.*

13
14 *Enter a woman, middle-aged or slightly younger. She is dressed*
15 *in a business suit, tailored, immaculate. Her hair is neat as a*
16 *pin, perhaps pulled back from her face, giving her an almost*
17 *stern appearance. Her manner befits her appearance. She is cool,*
18 *measured, utterly business-like. Her face is expressionless; she is*
19 *humorless.*

20
21 *She approaches the man, stopping a few feet away from him.*

22
23 **Miss Jones**

24 *(an inquiry that is mostly a statement of confirmation)*

25 You are Mister Smith.

26
27 *The man glances up (or turns around), seeing her for the first*
28 *time. He opens his mouth to speak, but then draws back. We can*
29 *see him wither with fear, like a trapped animal without defense.*
30 *He knows he is in trouble—but he also knows that he is a poor*
31 *liar.*

32
33 **Mr. Smith**

34 *(haltingly)*

35 Maybe.

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Miss Jones
(sternly)

The truth.

Mr. Smith
(after a pause; stammering)

Who are you?

Miss Jones
My name is Jones. Please identify yourself.

Mr. Smith
(now imagining the worst)

Were you—sent?

Miss Jones nods, almost imperceptibly, in the affirmative.

Mr. Smith
(pleadingly)

Look, I said I'd make the payment—and I will. But I'm tapped out.
Nothing. Can't you see?

Miss Jones
Mister Smith—

Mr. Smith
Besides, it's not my fault. Just a run of bad luck, that's all.

Miss Jones
(is that so?)

Really.

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Mr. Smith

You gotta give me more time. I'm good for it—
(*turning away; dejectedly*)
—well, I will be.

**Miss Jones is silent as Mr. Smith curls in on himself with shame.
Finally, she speaks.**

Miss Jones

Mister Smith, I—

Mr. Smith

(*resignedly*)
It's not true. None of it. I don't have a cent to my name.
(*with a heavy sigh*)
What difference does it make. Whatever you're here to do to me—I
deserve it. The things I've done—the things I haven't done. I've been
lousy at everything I've ever tried—lousy husband, lousy dad, lousy
man. What little I had I've gambled away. Anything left went to booze.
My family lives hand-to-mouth—or worse. My kids are ashamed of
me—and I don't blame them. I couldn't be any more worthless.

Miss Jones

(*after a pause; icily*)
None of that matters.

Mr. Smith

(*in desperation*)
Then what does? What will?
(*mustering his last measure of resolve*)
There has been good in my life.

Miss Jones

Really.

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Mr. Smith

(pleading his case)

I guess I wasn't always a bum. And when you dig down—I mean really dig down—I'm not a bad sort.

(beat)

I don't hate anybody. Never killed anybody.

(beat)

And I do love my family. I love my wife, my kids.

(darker)

There's just this... monster living inside me. I have to keep feeding it.

(mechanically; darker still)

I have to.

(snapping out of it)

But there's good inside me. Somewhere in there—there's good. Something worth—

Miss Jones

Worth what?

Mr. Smith

(heavily; resignedly)

I don't know. I don't know any more.

(weakly)

Just that there has been some good in my life.

Miss Jones

(after a pause; as before, icily)

None of that matters.

Mr. Smith

(angrily)

Then quit stalling. Do what you came to do. Just get it over with.

1 **Mr. Smith steels himself for the worst.**
2 **Miss Jones slowly reaches into her suit jacket.**
3 **Mr. Smith, believing she has come with a gun or knife—some**
4 **weapon of his demise—backs away from her, reacting with fear,**
5 **visibly trembling. Instead of a weapon, however, she withdraws**
6 **from her pocket a... checkbook.**

7
8 **Mr. Smith is at once surprised and relieved.**
9 **Miss Jones seems surprised by Mr. Smith's behavior.**

10
11 **Mr. Smith**
12 *(eyeing the checkbook; haltingly)*
13 What is that?

14
15 **Miss Jones**
16 *(with a warmer tone to her voice)*
17 I am here to help you.

18
19 **Mr. Smith**
20 *(cynically)*
21 Help me how?

22
23 **Miss Jones**
24 I represent a benefactor. Mr. Silas T. Worthington.

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26 **Mr. Smith**
27 That name's familiar. I've heard of him.

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29 **Miss Jones**
30 He is rather well-known. Mr. Worthington has sent me to help you.

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Mr. Smith

(haltingly)

You mean you're not going to kill me?

Miss Jones

(honestly stumped)

Why would I do that? You're already doing that to yourself rather well.

Mr. Smith

(eyeing the checkbook; eagerly incredulous)

Are you going to pay off my debts?

Miss Jones

Nothing so trivial. Mr. Worthington purchased your debt long before it was established. Your losses are owed to no one but Mr. Worthington.

Mr. Smith

Then why would he help me if I owe him so much?

Miss Jones

Are you prepared to buy your way clear?

Mr. Smith

I already told you—I can't do that. I haven't any way out.

Miss Jones

Then—do you believe that Mr. Worthington is your only hope?

Mr. Smith

I don't know where else to turn. I've tried everything else.

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Miss Jones

(sternly)

That isn't what I asked.

(holding up the checkbook; firmly)

Do you believe that Mr. Worthington is your one hope?

Mr. Smith mulls over the question.

Mr. Smith

(with tempered resolve)

Yes.

At this, Miss Jones hands him not a single check, but the whole checkbook. Astonished, Mr. Smith begins flipping through the checkbook.

Mr. Smith

(utterly confused)

But—these are all blank. And—what is this? I don't understand. They're all signed by Daniel Worthington. Who is Daniel Worthington? Is that Mr. Worthington's son?

Miss Jones

Yes.

(long beat)

That is you.

Mr. Smith

But my name is Smith. Daniel Smith.

Miss Jones

No. Your name is now Daniel Worthington.

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Mr. Smith

(utterly confused; shaking his head as if it clear it)

No—this can't be.

Miss Jones

You are now Mr. Silas T. Worthington's adopted son and heir. All your debts are now paid. More than that, Mr. Worthington's vast holdings are now yours. In the future all you need do is fill in an amount whenever you need anything.

Mr. Smith

But—I'm no good.

Miss Jones

(as she begins to direct him out)

You're right.

(beat)

None of that matters.

Mr. Smith

(brightly)

Was it my good deeds?

Miss Jones

None of that matters.

Mr. Smith

(darker)

But the things I've done...

Miss Jones

None of that matters.

They exit.

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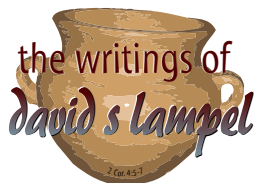
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