

The Tea Party

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There was not tea enough in the cups to drink, so each member of the party had taken to small sips or dipping their tongues into the cups to quench their thirst. The reason for the small amount of tea in the cups was not a fault of the party's host, who had brewed a perfectly appropriate amount, but the fault of the cups themselves which were exceptionally small. This was a good thing, really, though no one could be exactly sure why, in fact no one knew where the cups had come from, perhaps the childhood tea set of one of the attendees or of the ghost that lived on the second floor of the house standing behind the party.

There were four people at the party: one with long blonde hair and blue eyes, and the rest with brown eyes and long hair, short hair, and practically no hair at all, respectively. None could be absolutely certain why the tea party had been called, only that their presence was an absolute necessity, so there they sat in the big back yard- it seemed to encapsulate each type of biome that could be found on Earth, likely just a trick of the eye for it was so clearly a backyard -holding on to their little cups, which made them feel oh so big and strong and powerful.

"I am the king of this world."

"You are not."

"I am the king of this backyard!"

"Eh-"

And so it continued, pouring too much tea

into too small cups, laughing at each other's brave attempts at propriety and staking grand claims into lands that cannot really be known let alone tamed.

The grass was wet and sticky with mud, but they all sat on a gray and teal quilt which managed to protect them nearly completely from the dangers of the wet, a fact they were all very grateful for considering they each donned their most glamorous clothes; no dress code was discussed, but one was obeyed. Two tiaras circulated the group each one finding the head of each partygoer no less than ten times before their stereo broke and, unconsciously following rules ingrained in them over a decade prior in games of musical chairs, everyone stopped passing the tiaras around without a word. The plastic one with the very large and very *real* purple gems landed on the head of the blonde woman and the one made of gold-plated glass landed on the head of the one with short hair and brown eyes. This made her nervous- she knew the tiara was made of glass and therefore was fragile. She became convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that if the tiara were to fall from her head it would not land, safely, on the soft ground but would keep falling forever and ever and ever until it shattered against either the Earth's core or the winding highway that runs all the way to Hell already ambivalent about religion, she didn't feel the time to become certain was at a tea party with a tiara on her head. This thought she said aloud:

“My brain keeps feeding me heavy thoughts and asking me to make decisions- Is God real? Who am I? What comes next? But I am here with all of you and I’d like to turn it off for a moment, my brain.”

Disgusted by the break from triviality at a party designed for the shallow- even the cups! -the one with long hair and brown eyes ripped the tiara from the other girl’s head and threw it across the yard. She sat back down, poured herself some more tea, and picked it up and brought it to her lips using two fingers. No one said a word and they all continued to sip, slurp, and shoot their tea. It was still hot. They had been outside in this way for hours, but the tea was still hot.

The only man of the group- the one with brown eyes and practically no hair at all -poured himself a cup of tea. With the size of the cups, it should take only about one second to fill it entirely with a small risk of overflow; he had been pouring tea for thirty seconds. The cup was nearly invisible behind the thick stream of tea pouring over its sides and into the saucer and out of the saucer and onto the quilt and into the grass. It was beautiful, like a waterfall, and the boy’s feet got wet and his ankles and calves and knees. It was like he was trying to build a swimming pool of tea in the backyard. The teapot seemed bottomless and it was quickly becoming possible that in a matter of minutes all four people in the backyard were going to be swallowed by the very thing they had been swallowing. The blonde-haired woman could not swim, so she began to scream instead. The tea the man spilt had reached her toes and she could not risk it going any further; she could not die today. Her screams made the other woman scream which snapped the one with practically no hair at all from his stupor and made him drop the teapot, which landed perfectly and without breaking or spilling another drop. Every woman, reeling from the shrieks they’d emitted, now had their hand over their mouth.

“Sorry.” The man said. “It’s just... did any of you

hear the tiara land on the grass? I can’t see it.”

He had not brought the tiaras, so no one could figure quite why he was so concerned about it, but they were friendly so they stood and all began to scour the backyard barefoot and terrified of being stabbed by a royal piece of glass. Luckily, no one was injured; unluckily, no one could find the tiara. They each had gone over the whole backyard and ended up at the spot they were all sure it should have landed in when the long-haired girl had thrown it, but the spot was blank.

“It fell through. It’s still falling.” The short-haired girl whispered.

“What?” The blonde-haired girl scrunched her eyebrows.

Unsure of if the blonde-haired girl had not heard or simply not understood, the short-haired girl moved on to murkier waters: “Do you believe in God?”

“Do you hear that?” Unbeknownst to them, the brown-eyed girl with long hair and the brown-eyed boy with practically no hair at all had wandered away, slowly moving toward a tall, brown fence. It was too tall like how tall and made them feel like they were children again staring up at their father. It was wonderful in the most literal sense of the word. The group reconvened right at the fence, pressing their ears against the wood. They heard quick pitter-patters, snorts, shrieks, and other noises that they could only describe as

“...squishy.”

They could not begin to decipher what was going on. Suddenly the one with blonde hair and blue eyes was running her hands over the fence, searching for something. It was only when she found it- two little holes spaced perfectly to accommodate for the eyes of a voyeur -that the others in the group realized they were at her mother’s house. The short-haired girl was the only that dared to wonder if the blonde-haired girl realized it.

Overcome with curiosity and the victory of

having discovered the small holes, the blonde immediately pressed her entire body against the fence as if trying to move through it and peeked at the other side. She stood just like that, watching, for what felt to the others like an eternity. At first she didn't say a word, just watched, but then she began to smile and the smile became a giggle and the giggle turned into uncontrollable laughter, this strong sound that cut through the quiet, patient anticipation in the others until it overwhelmed them and they were pushing each other and pulling the blonde woman out of the way. She tumbled and laughed even harder, clapping and overjoyed in a way no one could comprehend. What salvation, what joy, what drug must be hiding behind the fence?

The others fought to see through the two little holes, the two girls each sticking one eye up to the fence while the boy tried to pull them away, his efforts only doubling when he heard them gasp. The short-haired girl backed away from the fence slowly, horror in her eyes, her hand on her mouth covering a slight and inexplicable smile; the boy replaced her spot on the fence quickly, his shoulder pressing up against the long-haired girl's- she hadn't moved nor made a sound since she had first gasped. The boy only looked for a moment before he fell to his knees. He threw up, hurling his insides onto the grass in the direction of the blonde girl who laughed harder even as she backed away from him, and the short haired girl who watched unmoved as spots of vomit landed on her bare feet.

"Oh."

The boy looked up at her, her eyes still wide with the shock of what she'd seen, her eyebrows scrunched, but her lips turned upwards and upwards before parting to reveal the biggest smile he'd ever seen. It was beautiful and it was terrifying. He

looked away. The long-haired girl finally moved away from the fence and looked at her fellow partygoers, her fellow witnesses. She started clapping and clapping and clapping and clapping and she laughed. The blonde-girl joined her then the short-haired girl then, finally, the boy. They all clapped and clapped and laughed and laughed because they didn't know what else to do after seeing what they had seen except overwhelm their senses with a cacophony of joyful sounds to fool their minds into feeling happy. The clapping hurt after a while and turned their palms red, but they didn't stop.

On the other side of the fence there were sixteen piglets, a puddle of mud, and a grown-pig-sized trough full of slop. The piglets were too small to reach the inside of the trough, so they had taken matters into their own hands. It was a calm scene, despite the blood and the violence. Four small piglet carcasses were spread no more than a foot apart and the twelve remaining animals were devouring them, pink faces stained red, small hooves crushing organs and cracking bones. The snorts of the survivors- the victors -were full of glee, until the meat ran out and they were angry again, blowing air out of their nostrils like bulls ready to charge. The fighting began again until one piglet, slightly larger than the others, sunk its little teeth into the neck of another. It screamed and it screamed and it screamed and then it stopped, and the happy snorts began again.

The tea party was officially over, and everyone felt it. They stopped laughing, then stopped clapping, then, finally, stopped smiling. There was a silence now heavier than they knew they could lift, but they lifted it and carried it back to the big quilt with the little teacups. The tea the boy spilt had been swallowed by the ground. They all sat down again. They drank and drank and drank.