

3 : 46 PM

High Tea

A woman and her recently deceased ex-lover's ghost have their
100th afternoon tea.

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Version 0.3

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INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Toilet door shut. Flush of toilet. The door swings open. BELLA (30 yo) dashes out of the toilet into the bathroom. Her face glows with makeup and she is neatly dressed in a light pink chiffon lace skirt, looking as cute as a button. She washes her hands frantically, assesses herself in the mirror, tidying up some stray hairs. As she rushes out the bathroom she slips on some wet tiles, hitting her head on the bathroom cabinet. She touches her head and groans. A little blood but nothing too serious. She springs to her feet unfazed by the accident and rushes to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME

She looks at a clock on the kitchen benchtop. It is 3:45pm. She quickly takes a permanent marker and approaches a calendar.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Bella POV - Calendar at the month of February. There is a big 100 in the 14th of February 14th. Bella puts a cross through the box.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Bella picks up a tray with a fancy teapot, teacups and three tiered cake stand with an assortment of cakes, sweets and sandwiches. She rushes towards the brightly lit lounge room.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM - SAME TIME

Bella places the tray on a small circular dining table and takes a seat facing the front window. She beams with joy as she sees her ex-lover JOSEPH (35 y.o) waving at her through the window. She beckons him inside.

BELLA

Hey Joseph. Open as always!

Joseph steps inside the house. Joseph, much like Bella glows with a certain angelic nature. He wears a plain white t-shirt with casual white chinos. He takes a seat opposite Bella. Bella pours some tea in Joseph's teacup.

JOSEPH

So great to see you again.

Bella pours some tea in her cup and blushes. Joseph sees some mixed emotion in Bella's eyes.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Today's the big day. The big One-Zero-Zero. We've made it into triple digit territory.

Bella's eyes water as she places a sandwich into Joseph's plate.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Are those tears of joy or sorrow?

BELLA

(sniffles)

Both.

JOSEPH

Really?

BELLA

Bittersweet I guess. I'm just so grateful that God listened to my prayers and gave me this opportunity but it's our last tea together and that's just really hard to comprehend.

Bella sobs. Joseph places his hand over hers.

JOSEPH

(comforts)

Hey-hey-hey. It's all gonna be ok. I mean just look at the positive. At least I won't keep you or Andrew up at night by creaking doors, rocking chairs and ratting cupboards for the rest of my afterlife.

Bella giggles wiping away the tears.

BELLA

I loved you and I still do, but I had to move on. Yes, Andrew came into my life and we kinda rushed the wedding but I don't regret it.

Joseph takes a sip of tea.

JOSEPH

I respect what Andrew did for you
Bella but it doesn't change how I
feel for you. In my last breaths
all I could think about was you.
Your smile. Your grace. Your tea.

Joseph picks up a teacup.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Your special-tea.

GRACE

I don't for one second stop
thinking about you and if it wasn't
for that spirit you met we wouldn't
have seen each other ever again. I
guess it's just destiny - it's time
we go our separate ways now.

JOSEPH

When one comes down he must go back
up.

Joseph takes a bite of his sandwich.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

(mouthful of sandwich)

You know what I've always found
strange though?

GRACE

What?

JOSEPH

Out of all the dead people roaming
the afterlife he came to me. Plus
the one hundred teas. Why one
hundred. Why not three hundred? Two
thousand. Five thousand.

BELLA

Why would you want that? Our
meetings are meant to be a secret.
For them to go on for that long it
wouldn't be a secret - it'd be a
burden.

Joseph gulps down the last remnants of his sandwich.

JOSEPH

I understand. But you still love me
right?

BELLA

Please don't make it harder than it has to be Joseph. I'm married now. Committed. For it to stay like this I mean - think of all the school pick ups and swimming lessons that I'd miss. Valued time with my children. Andrew even.

JOSEPH

It's funny isn't it? When I was alive, I always thought once you died it was two options, hell or heaven.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

(sarcastically)

I should probably tell you they don't exist.

Bella takes a bite of her sandwich.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

I should consider how lucky I was to have this once in an after-lifetime opportunity thrust upon me by some weird spirit. I got the chance to meet you again. I've loved this time we spent together. It was great.

BELLA

I've had a wonderful time too Joseph. I won't deny it. But - it's just. Look. I'm sorry. I am sick of having to hide our meetings from Andrew, day after day. Having to find excuses for not attending parent teacher conferences or work functions. It's taken a big toll on my life - on me. I'm just thankful it all ends today. You know a clean slate for the both of us?

JOSEPH

I'm so sorry you've had to go through with all that but it's ending today. You should say goodbye.

Bella cries.

BELLA

Goodbye Joseph.

JOSEPH

No Bella. I mean say goodbye to
Andrew, your kids and this house.

Bella looks confused.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

I lied Bella. The spirit said that
when you drink your 100th tea with
your true love at 3:46pm her soul
will join you.

Bella's mouth drops. She is numb.

BELLA

No. No. No. Why should I do that?

JOSEPH

I know it's selfish but I really
love you Bella and I made a deal.

Joseph leans his chair to look at the bathroom. He points to
the bathroom floor. Bella sobbing, does the same.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - SAME TIME

Bella's dead body lying on the ground, blood pooling around
her head.

JOSEPH (O.S.)

A deal with the spirit. If one goes
down two must come up.

CUT TO:

INT. LOUNGE ROOM - SAME TIME

Bella is stunned. Water runs down her pale face. Her hands
clasp over her mouth in surprised shock with eyes wide open.

JOSEPH

It's too late to go back now.

Joseph takes a hold of Bella's hand and stands. Bella still
in shock stands.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Thanks so much for the tea Bella.

Joseph leads Bella out of the house. Bella takes one look back at the lounge room as the front door slams shut. The clock near the front door shifts to 3:47pm.

FADE TO BLACK.