

# DISRUPTIONS OF AN IMPRESSIONABLE TEA

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### Disruptions of an Impressionable Tea

Cast (In order of appearance):

Patricia Benton, pretentious church lady, mid 60s.

Arthur Benton, her husband, likable, witty, 70ish.

Sherri-Leigh Benton/Wilson, the Bentons' extrovert daughter, late 30s.

Brendon Wilson, their unkempt son-in-law, late 30s.

Kyle Wilson, their 'way out' grandson, early teens.

Rev. Daniel Vincent, upright, pleasant, late 50s

Mrs Shortt, by-the-book house keeper, 70ish.

Beth Crighton, neighbour, scandalmonger, mid 60s.

Scene:

*The upper middle class living room in the home of Arthur and Patricia Benton. There is a smart lounge suite, consisting of a settee, centre stage, and 2 matching arm chairs, one down stage left, the other downstage right, with an ornate coffee table which has a small flower arrangement in the middle, down stage centre. 2 small tables are between the settee and the 2 arm chairs, adorned with suitable ornaments. There is a telephone table and telephone centre stage left. 1 or 2 landscape paintings adorn the walls. The exit to the front door is upstage left, the kitchen exit is upstage right and the bedroom/TV room exit is centre stage right.*

*When the curtains open, Patricia is plumping up chair cushions and checking and re-checking the living room to see that all is perfectly in place for the Reverend Elliot's expected arrival for tea. Arthur Benton is seated in an arm chair centre stage right. He is relaxed and reading the news paper.*

Patricia (*Fussing*): Have I checked everything? Is there anything I've missed? (*Looking at Arthur*) What do you think Arthur? Does everything look alright?

Arthur (*Peering briefly over his news paper, nonchalantly*): Fine, fine! (*He continues reading*)

Patricia (*Upset*): Is that all you can say? (*Arthur doesn't respond*) Reverend Vincent is coming for tea today – in case you have forgotten!

Arthur (*Without looking up*): No, I haven't dear.

Patricia (*Up tight*): How can you be so nonchalant? (*Noticing Arthur is slouching*) And do sit up straight!

Arthur (*Indifferently*): Why? I'm quite comfy thank you.

Patricia (*Scolding*): Well at least sit up while the Reverend is here. After all, we are prominent members of Greenvale Methodist Church and we have reputations to uphold!

Arthur (*Lowering the news paper, amused*): Really Patricia, if I didn't know better I would've thought the Queen was coming to tea!

Patricia (*Annoyed*): Reverend Vincent is our new minister and it is imperative that we make a good impression! You could try to show some enthusiasm!

*Arthur grins broadly, mockingly.*

Patricia (*Annoyed*): Oh very funny Arthur! A little support from you would be appreciated! (*Looking at her watch*) Goodness, look at the time! I must go and change!

*She hurriedly exits to the bedroom/TV room. Arthur remains seated.*

Arthur (*Shaking his head*): All this fuss for a new minister! (*He chuckles, imagining*) I wouldn't want to be here if it actually was the Queen coming for tea!

*Pause.*

*The telephone rings. Arthur rises, crosses to the telephone table and answers it.*

Arthur: Benton residence good day... (*He listens*) Oh hello Reverend...(*Listening*) You're going to be a little late?...(*Listening*) Not to worry...(*Listening*) Yes, I'll tell her. Good bye (*He replaces the receiver*)

*Patricia enters, dressed in a very smart outfit and her best jewellery.*

Patricia (*Checking that her necklace is in place*): Who was that on the phone?

Arthur: Reverend Vincent. He's ... (*Stops short, noticing that Patricia is dressed to the nines!*) Good heavens! Are we having tea or going to the opera?

Patricia (*Put out*): I'm only trying to look my best! It wouldn't hurt you to be a bit more appreciative you know!

Arthur(*Sighing*): Yes, dear!

Patricia (*Looking at Arthur's clothes disapprovingly*): I do hope you're going to change?

Arthur: What for? I'm perfectly happy the way I am!

Patricia (*Agitated*): Do you want the Reverend to get the wrong impression about you? You do have better clothes!

*Arthur waves her away, amused, then returns to his chair. He stops before he sits.*

Arthur (*Remembering*): Oh, the Reverend is going to be a bit late. I said we don't mind.

*(He sits and resumes reading his news paper).*

Patricia (*Fretting*): Oh dear! I hope not too late. I do so hate it when plans go awry!

*The front door opens and closes off. Brendan, Sherri-Leigh and Kyle Wilson enter. Sherri-Leigh wears leggings and an ill- fitting top, Brendan is in holey Jeans, old navy T-shirt with a weird rock band printed on the front and his shoulder length hair is unkempt. Kyle is dressed in black jeans, black T-shirt and black ankle boots with silver studded straps. His black hair is spiked stiff with hair gel. A 'skull' earring dangles from one ear. Ear phones hang around his neck.*

Sherri-Leigh (*Brightly*): Hello Mom! Dad!

*Brendan and Kyle greet.*

Arthur (*Pleasantly, folding his news paper*): Hello, hello!

Patricia (*Unpleasantly surprised, looking at Brendan and Kyle disapprovingly*): Oh! This is a...er... surprise! You should've told us you were coming...

Sherri-Leigh (*Cutting in*): Don't worry mom, we can't stay. Brendan and I are on our way to see that new mall down town. Kyle doesn't want to go so we thought we'd drop him off here for the afternoon! It's okay isn't it?

Patricia (*Concerned, flapping*): I...well actually ...er...

Arthur (*Cutting in*): Yes, of course it is! You two run along now and enjoy yourselves!

Sherri-Leigh: Thanks dad! *(She kisses Arthur on the forehead then gives Patricia a hug)* You're an angel mom! Kyle, see that you behave yourself here today okay?

Kyle *(Dutifully)*: Yes mom!

Brendan: Come on love, we'd better get going if we want to get a good parking! *(To Kyle)* Don't get up to any shenanigans now, do you hear?

Kyle *(Putting his ear phones in place)*: Yes dad!

Brendan: Let's get moving then!

Sherri-Leigh: Bye all! See you later!

*Everyone says goodbye. Sherri-Leigh and Brendan exit. The front door opens and shuts off. Arthur re-opens his news paper. Kyle is nodding his head in time to music from the ear phones. Patricia, perturbed, watches Kyle. She tries not to get into a tizz.*

Patricia *(Fretful)*: Oh dear! Oh my!

Arthur *(Folding his newspaper)*: What are you fretting about now Patricia?

Patricia *(Panicky)*: The Reverend is due here any moment! What will he think of us if he sees... *(Looking at Kyle)* He can't be in here! We'll have to ...hide him or something...*(Notices Arthur's frowning face)* Oh Arthur! Look at him!

Arthur *(Seeing Patricia's point, rising)*: Alright, alright! *(Going to Kyle, putting an arm around him)* Come on Kyle, let's go to the TV room, There's something I want to show you.

Kyle *(Removing the ear phones)*: Sure gramps!

*Kyle and Arthur exit to the bedroom/TV Room.*

Patricia *(Relieved, as they go)*: What a good idea! There're lots of DVD's to chose from Kyle, just take your pick and do enjoy yourself! *(Praying to God, after they've exited)* Please let him stay there while Reverend Vincent is here!

*The doorbell rings.*

Patricia *(Getting flustered)*: Oh! That must be him!

*She does a quick, final check of the living room, paying particular attention to Arthur's chair, putting his newspaper beneath the chair cushion quickly. She straightens her clothes, fixes her hair then exits to the front door. The front door opens off.*

Patricia (*Off, sweetly*): Good afternoon...(*She is cut off by girl's voice*)

Girl (*off*): Hello ma'am! Would you like to buy some biscuits from the girl guides for a good...

Patricia (*Off*): No! Go away!

*Front door slams shut off. Patricia enters, tense and uptight.*

Patricia: Really! Girl guides selling biscuits on a Saturday afternoon! And *this* Saturday of all days! (*She sits in the arm chair centre stage left, trying to calm herself down*) Oohh, my nerves...  
*The door bell rings off*

Patricia (*Rising, composing herself*): Please, let that be the Reverend!

*She exits. The front door opens off.*

Patricia (*Off*): Good afternoon Reverend Vincent! Do come in!

Rev. Vincent (*Off*): Thank you Mrs Benton. So sorry I'm late.

*The front door shuts offstage.*

Patricia (*Off*): Not to worry...and you can call me Patricia!

*Patricia and Rev. Vincent enter.*

Patricia: Welcome to our humble abode Reverend. Please, have a seat.

Rev. Vincent: Thank you! (*He sits on the sofa*)

Patricia (*Going to the bedroom/TV exit, calling*) Arthur! Reverend Vincent is here! (*She moves into the lounge and sits left of the Reverend*) He won't be long Reverend.

*Slight pause. Arthur enters.*

Arthur: Ah, Reverend Vincent. Welcome! Welcome!

*Rev. Vincent stands up and he and Arthur shake hands and then they sit, Arthur also on the sofa.*

Patricia(*Sweetly*): Reverend thanks so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to see us. We really appreciate it, don't we Arthur? (*Arthur opens his mouth to speak but Patricia carries on talking*). Of course we know how very daunting it can be when one is new to a church, and we wanted to make you feel welcome.

Rev. Vincent: Thank you very much for inviting me! I must say, things are vastly different here and will take a lot of getting used to...

Patricia (*Cutting in*): Well you won't have to worry about a thing! We will do everything we can to help you (*Looking at Arthur*) won't we dear?

*Slight pause. Arthur is unsure whether to speak or not. When Patricia doesn't say anything more he quickly responds.*

Arthur: Yes of course we will!

Patricia: Now, can I offer you...

*Kyle enters, ears phones on, oblivious to anyone, doing a 'head banging' dance to unheard music. The Rev., staring at Kyle, tries unsuccessfully to not look shocked. Arthur pretends nothing is wrong. Patricia is acutely embarrassed. She rises and quickly marches Kyle off.*

Patricia: Off you go Kyle, the TV is all yours! (*She exits with Kyle who doesn't protest*)

Arthur (*Calmly, shrugging*): Boys will be boys!

Rev. Vincent (*Trying to act normal, smiling*): Yes, of course.

*Patricia re-enters, still embarrassed.*

Patricia(*Flustered*): I'm so sorry about that Reverend. We're...er...just taking care of Kyle for the afternoon – he's from... nearby and er...well...the poor boy's not right, if you know what I mean!

Arthur (*Flabbergasted*): Patricia!! What the blazes...

Patricia (*Giving Arthur a look, cutting him off*): Shall we have some tea Reverend?

Rev. Vincent (*Trying to be pleasant*): Yes, that will be lovely, thank you.

*Patricia goes to the kitchen exit and calls.*

Patricia: Mrs Shortt! You can bring in the tea now! (*She resumes her seat*)

