

The cup of tea

I could feel the steaming cup of tea scalding my childlike hands as I held it carefully from the kitchen to the living room. With every step I took, the tea swished up and down in the intricate, ornate teacup, while I tried to steady it. I held it in front of me, as if I were exhibiting an exquisite object. Placing the teacup into my grandmother's gentle hands, I breathed out a sigh of relief, glad that I didn't drop the delicate cup as she thanked me. I climbed onto the wide, floral couch where my grandmother was seated as I heard her gingerly take a sip from the cup, the murky vapour trailed behind the teacup like a ghost as she placed it on the wooden table with a soft clunk.

"Kate, touch the cup and take a sip, tell me what the flavour is like" she instructed. I felt the smooth, glossy texture while I raised it to my lips. I swallowed the mousy coloured liquid as my mouth was filled with a sugary taste as the warmth of the tea slid down my throat.

"Hot. It tastes sweet." I replied.

"Tell me again what it feels like in a bit." My grandmother replied, offering me a slight smile as she picked up the book that was placed with its spine up towards the cream-coloured ceiling. I heard the tattered, tan coloured pages rustle softly while she flipped the frail object back to the page she was on.

I heard the distinct tick tock echo through the room with its piercing sound. My eyes averted themselves towards the lofty, dark oak bookshelf in which presented the thick volumes of different books with dull, fabric covers. Beneath the shelf, there were three teacups with coloured roses etched against the polished ceramic. Seeing the cups, I brought my attention back to the cup of tea that was still on the table.

I reached out my hands against the teacup, only that it wasn't so hot anymore. Instead, the heat had been replaced with a much cooler feeling. Bewildered, I pressed both of my hands against the cup, I picked it up and gently swished the auburn tea around, creating ripples of sepia-coloured waves, like the ones you see at the beach. I raised it back to my lips once again, gagging as my mouth was filled with something unpleasant and earthy.

My grandmother seemed to have understood where all my confusion had come from, as the corners of her lips had started to lift upwards, she took the teacup from my hands and signalled me to move closer to her.

"Does It feel the same as before?" She asked while I shook my head, puzzled why that was the case.

"The warmth in the tea won't always stay, once it cools down it won't taste as good. When it is still hot, there is a pleasing flavour, filling every inch of your mouth with a sweet taste, whereas when it is cold that feeling will be replaced by something bitter and dead. Same as lives. You should always enjoy the moments you share with other people despite feeling that it may not be so important," My grandmother explained slowly. "Always cherish the lives that still exist or when the tea is still warm, as you won't know when it'll end."

Her words rung against my head like a mallet hitting a drum as I stared at the chestnut coloured coffin where my grandmother was lying in. "You should always cherish the lives that still exist or when the tea is still warm, as you won't know when it'll end." But now, the tea has cooled down and my grandmother is no longer here. However, the memories she has shared with me will be remembered forever, despite her not being here anymore, she will never be forgotten. Just like the tea stains that are left in the cups after years of pouring it continuously into the same cups, creating rings of pale brown around the smooth, white surface.