

Spiritual Connections Episode Four: Bloody Mary

By

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FADE IN

INT. MARY'S HOUSE- HALLWAY

Drab walls and a tiled floor. A vase of decaying flowers stand on the window sill.

MARY, fifties, stands at the foot of the stairs.

"She yells."

MARY

Mother! You've been in this bloody downstairs toilet again, haven't you?

"A feeble, muffled response echoes from upstairs."

EDITH (O.S.)

Yes, dear. I nipped in this morning, when I came down for a drink.

MARY

Well, how many times have I got to tell you? Those things don't flush! The last thing I want when I've got a hangover is to be up to my bloody elbow in u-bend.

EDITH (O.S.)

Sorry, love. I keep forgetting.

MARY

Are you nearly ready?

EDITH (O.S.)

Give us a couple of minutes love.

MARY

Oh Mother, will you please hurry up? If you're going to insist on coming up town with me, you could at least have the decency to be ready when I am. I've got lots to do today, remember?

EDITH (O.S.)

I'm coming, dear. I've just got to brush my teeth.

MARY

Why in God's name you feel the need to brush your teeth when they've been standing in a glass of sterilising fluid all night, I'll never know.

EDITH (O.S.)

It's the taste of the Domestos, Mary. I can't be doing with it.

MARY

Oh leave it, Mother, we haven't got time. Can't you just suck on a Werther's or something? I'm running late as it is.

EDITH (O.S.)

Okay, dear. Just let me get dressed then.

Mary shakes her head and tuts.

INT. MARY'S CAR- LATER

Mary drives aggressively, EDITH, eighties, floral dress and cardigan, holds the sides of the passenger seat as if her life depends on it.

Loud reggae music plays on the stereo.

EDITH

Can't you turn this down a little, dear? I can't concentrate.

MARY

And what exactly do you need to concentrate on? I'm the one driving.

EDITH

I know. That's the problem. You ought to slow down a little, dear. You know all these speed humps play havoc with my piles.

MARY

I don't know why you had to come anyway. I'm only going to the supermarket. You only get in the way.

EDITH

Which one are you going to? There's that new Lidl just opened in Wilmot, you know?

MARY

Lidl? I am certainly not going to bloody Lidl. I wouldn't be seen dead in a place where the carrier bags cost more money than the meat.

EDITH

Which one are you going to then?

MARY

Mother, will you please be quiet? You're more irritating than shingles, and I'm a bit delicate today.

EDITH

You? Delicate? I've seen brickies more delicate than you.

MARY

And I've had more bearable shingles. Now please, be quiet!

Mary turns up the volume even louder.

Edith holds her hands over her ears.

INT. SUPERMARKET- LATER

A huge sprawling expanse of aisles. Easy listening music is piped in at low levels, as shoppers amble around.

Mary marches along the aisle as Edith pushes the trolley, struggling to keep up.

MARY

Will you get a move on, Mother? If you must demand to push the trolley at least have the good manners to keep up with me.

EDITH

I'm sorry, Mary. I'm going as fast as I can. I'm getting on a bit, you know.

MARY

Well let me push the trolley. You can meander around to your heart's content then.

EDITH

No. It helps me keep my balance, dear.

MARY

Your balance would be fine if you didn't keep quaffing all my bloody vodka at night. Now I'm not telling you again, shut up and keep up.

Edith mutters to herself. She fishes around in her pocket, finds a boiled sweet then pops it in her mouth.

Mary stops to peruse items on a shelf.

Edith watches, as she places a catering size box of cling-film in the trolley.

EDITH

Why do you need that amount of cling-film, dear? It's very expensive. There's a value one there for fifty pence.

MARY

I'm not having cheapo stuff, Mother. You get what you pay for. I wouldn't want it to rip, would I?

Edith shakes her head as they continue walking.

EXT. CREM DE LA CREM FUNERAL PARLOUR- DAY

Two black hearses stand outside the large brick building. The front window is dressed with thick red curtains.

A woman exits through the big wooden door onto the street, dabbing her tears away with a tissue.

INT. CREM DE LA CREM FUNERAL PARLOUR- RECEPTION

SAM, sixties, wearing a black suit and tie, sits behind the reception desk adorned with vases of flowers and leaflets.

IONA, Thirties, appears from a door marked 'Staff'.

She puts on her coat.

IONA

Right I'm off, Sam. Thanks for letting me nip out.

SAM

Not a problem, Iona. You take as long as you need.

IONA

Thanks, Sam. You know I wouldn't go if it wasn't important, don't you?

SAM

Of course I do, love. Stop worrying. You are okay, aren't you? You look like death.

IONA

Well that's fitting seeing as I work in a Funeral Parlour isn't it? Yeah I'm fine. I'm just a bit nervous about this afternoon, that's all.

SAM

Well whatever it is, I'm sure you're worrying over nothing, love.

IONA

You're probably right. I always imagine the worst. That way, you're never disappointed, are you?

SAM

Give over whittling, love. Nothing's ever as bad as you first imagine. Trust me.

Iona smiles sweetly at Sam.

IONA

You sure you're going to be alright on your own for a bit?

SAM

I'll be fine. Besides, I'm not on my own.

Iona looks surprised at the news.

IONA

You're not?

SAM

No, love. I've got an agency worker in to cover you. He's in with Mrs Price preparing her for the Chapel Of Remembrance as we speak.

IONA

Oh okay. Well I'm off then. Wish me luck!

SAM

Good luck love.

Iona leaves the building.

Sam idly flicks through a diary.

A door slams down the corridor.

He hears a voice yell from a distance.

JOEY (O.S.)

Mr Jackson! Mr Jackson!

Sam emerges from behind the desk then heads towards the commotion.

JOEY, forties, wearing an ill fitting suit and bow tie, bounds towards him.

JOEY

Mr Jackson!

SAM

What is it Joey? What's the matter?

JOEY

The lady got a gherkin, Mr Jackson.
The lady got a gherkin.

SAM

A gherkin? What? Stuck on her body you mean?

Joey nods enthusiastically, showering saliva everywhere.

SAM (cont'd)

Oh dear! Come on then, I'd better have a look.

They enter a door marked 'Preparation Room 1' closing it behind them.

An awkward silence.

SAM (O.S.)
You mean this, Joey?

JOEY (O.S.)
Yeah.

SAM (O.S.)
Haven't you ever seen a naked body
before? That's not a gherkin!
That's her...

JOEY (O.S.)
Well, it tastes like a gherkin.

INT. SUPERMARKET

Mary and Edith natter as they peruse the frozen food
section.

MARY
Do you think I should get some
nibbles for later? You know, party
food.

EDITH
Are we having a party, dear?

MARY
Jesus, Mother. You really are a
bind. How many times have I got to
tell you? My bastard of a daughter
is coming this afternoon, isn't
she?

EDITH
Yes. I'm sorry, dear. My memory's
not what it used to be.

MARY
It's funny how you always manage to
remember where I keep the alcohol
though, isn't it? You just don't
listen, that's the problem.

EDITH
I'm sorry, dear? I didn't catch
that.

Edith reaches out to grab a jar of Pickled Gherkins from the
shelf above the freezer.

She unscrews the lid, the gently fishes a gherkin out of the
jar.

She sniffs it, then licks it.

Her face screws up into a look of disgust.

She puts the jar back onto the shelf, then pops the gherkin into her pocket.

Mary glares, then heads off along the aisle.

Edith ambles along, pushing the trolley.

She turns the corner into the drinks section, where Mary inspects various bottled spirits.

MARY

Ooh, now that's a good one. I might treat myself to that.

She places the bottle into the trolley.

MARY (cont'd)

And you can have this one.

She addresses Edith as if speaking to a child.

MARY (cont'd)

Look, Mother- your own bottle of vodka. That's nice isn't it? It's all for you!

Edith grabs the bottle and holds it close to her face, reading the label.

She looks down into the trolley.

EDITH

Why have I got value brand? Why should I have the value brand when you've got Smirnoff? You said that you get what you pay for.

MARY

I've got Smirnoff because I'm paying for it, aren't I? You'll never tell the difference anyway. You lost your sense of taste years ago, along with your dignity and your bladder control.

Edith nods, as if in agreement, then places the value vodka in the trolley.

They continue towards the checkout.

EDITH

Ooh Mary. We need to get some milk,
we've only got a bit left.

MARY

Now she tells me! Look at the size
of these bloody queues. Doesn't
anybody go to work around here? You
nip and get some milk, and I'll
wait in the queue, or we'll be here
all bloody day.

EDITH

Okay ,dear. Won't be long.

Edith shuffles away as Mary waits in line.

INT. SUPERMARKET- LATER

Mary places the bottles of vodka, the milk and the
cling-film on the conveyor belt.

The CHECKOUT GIRL, twenties, smiles politely as she scans
the items.

CHECKOUT GIRL

Have you got a Clubcard, duck?

MARY

No dear, I haven't.

CHECKOUT GIRL

Would you be interested in applying
for one today?

MARY

Would you be interested in hurrying
up and actually bloody serving me?

CHECKOUT GIRL

A few manners wouldn't go amiss.

MARY

No, and neither would a few GCSEs.
Maybe then you wouldn't be sat
behind the checkout at this
hellhole of a place. Can't you see
I'm in a hurry?

The checkout girl feigns a smile.

CHECKOUT GIRL
That's thirty-six pounds and four
pence, please.

Mary opens her purse then counts out the money.

MARY
Ten, twenty, thirty, five, and one
makes six. Oh! Have you got four
pence Mother? I've run out of
change, and I don't really want to
break into a fifty.

She holds a Fifty Pence piece out towards Edith.

Edith empties her pockets showing Mary the contents; a
button, a gherkin and a boiled sweet covered in fluff.

MARY (cont'd)
You really are a waste of skin,
Mother. An out and out oxygen
thief.

She turns to the checkout girl.

MARY (cont'd)
I haven't got time to be fanning
about. Lose the milk!

EXT. CARPARK

Mary struts along the carpark, Edith struggling behind with
the shopping.

Mary opens the boot of the car, then stands hands on hips,
waiting for Edith.

She slams the boot, then they get into the car.

INT. MARY'S CAR

MARY
Put your seatbelt on, Mother. I
don't want you damaging my
windscreen.

Edith obliges without any retaliation.

Mary turns the key in the ignition.

The car groans. She turns the key again. The car wheezes and
splutters.

MARY (cont'd)
 I don't bloody believe this. The
 car's bloody knackered now. God, I
 need a drink!

EDITH
 Aren't you in the AA, Mary?

MARY
 I've told you a thousand times, I
 don't have a problem, it just takes
 the edge off the day. You drink
 just as much. Probably more. Now
 get out.

EXT. CARPARK

Mary angrily exits the car then slams the door.

MARY
 Come on we'll have to bloody walk,
 won't we? Jesus, it must be getting
 on for at least a mile away.

Edith clambers out the passenger side. Mary grabs the
 shopping and locks the doors.

EDITH
 Why are you locking it?

MARY
 I don't want it to get stolen, do
 I?

EDITH
 But it won't start, dear.

MARY
 No need to rub it in. Just shut it
 and get walking, you vile old hag.

Mary hands Edith the shopping bag as they walk across the
 carpark in silence.

EXT. HIGHSTREET

Mary and Edith continue the silent trek, trudging the busy
 streets.

A few more paces then Mary stops in her tracks, placing her
 hands on her back.

MARY

I'm absolutely knick-knacked. I'm going to have to have a sit down for five minutes.

She looks around.

MARY (cont'd)

Come on, Mother. This'll do.

She points towards 'The Red Lion' pub, with it's huge sign which reads 'Double up on all spirits for £1'.

INT. IONA'S HOUSE- LIVING ROOM- LATER

BARBARA, fifties, sits on the sofa watching the news on the television.

Iona blusters in, then joins her mother.

BARBARA

Are you okay, love?

IONA

Yeah, I think so.

BARBARA

And you're sure that you want to do this?

IONA

Yes, Mum. I need to know, just to put my mind at rest.

BARBARA

Okay, if you're sure.

IONA

I am... Do I look okay?

Barbara leans back, looking her daughter up and down. She smiles.

BARBARA

You look beautiful, love.

Iona stands then heads to the door.

IONA

Thanks. I'll ring you as soon as I get chance. Love ya, Mum.

BARBARA

I love you too. You sure you don't
need me to come with you?

IONA

No, I'll be fine. Later!

Iona blows a kiss towards Barbara as she leaves the room.

EXT. MARY'S HOUSE

A large, crumbling house. The front gate groans and falls
from its hinges as Iona forces it open.

She treads carefully along the front yard, stepping over
weeds and bracken.

The net curtains twitch in the downstairs window as Iona
nears the front door.

She reaches out to press the doorbell, pausing to reassure
herself.

IONA

It's gonna be okay. Be brave.

She exhales and slowly raises her finger. Another pause.

She turns, ready to walk away.

IONA

Come on, you can do this.

In a burst of courage she confidently presses the doorbell.

Hearing movement inside the house she bites her lip.

The door creaks open.

She is greeted by Edith.

EDITH

Can I help you, dear?

Iona coughs to clear her throat.

IONA

I hope so. Are you Mrs Allcock?

EDITH

Yes dear, I am. And you are...?

IONA

I'm... I'm the long-lost daughter!
My name's Iona. Iona Wildthatch.
You're expecting me?

EDITH

Oh my dear! Of course. Please, come
in and let me have a look at you.

Iona smiles then steps inside.

INT. MARY'S HOUSE- LIVING ROOM

Edith leads Iona in and gestures towards the sofa.

EDITH

Sit down, my dear. Make yourself at
home. I'll get you a nice cup of
tea if we've got enough milk left.
Sugar?

Iona sits, grinning.

IONA

Yes. Two please Mrs Allcock.

EDITH

Ooh. It's rare to see a youngster
with such impeccable manners.
You're lovely.

IONA

Thank you. I'm sure you are too.

Edith leaves the room.

Iona pulls her mobile out of her pocket then dials a number.

She speaks into the phone in a whisper.

IONA (cont'd)

Hello Mum? It's me. I'm here.

(beat)

She seems lovely.

(beat)

Yeah. I don't know what I was so
worried about. She's a lovely old
dear.

(beat)

Oh, I've got to go, she's coming
back. Love ya. Bye.

She hangs up then slips the phone back into her pocket.

Edith re-enters the room with a mug of really strong tea.
She hands the mug to Iona.

IONA (cont'd)
Thank you.

EDITH
You're welcome my dear. I'm sorry
it's so strong. Out of milk, you
see.

An awkward silence hangs in the air for a moment or two.

EDITH (cont'd)
Well it seems really strange to see
you after all this time, dear.

IONA
I know what you mean. I'm still in
shock a little.

EDITH
Yes, I suppose you are. It hit my
daughter quite hard too.

IONA
Your daughter? I... I have a
sister?

Edith looks puzzled.

EDITH
A sister? No dear. Did you think *I*
was your mother? Oh no. I'm not
your mum, dear. I'm your
grandmother. My daughter is your
mother, dear.

IONA
Oh God. I see. I was a little
confused for the minute. I thought
you were a bit old, if you don't
mind me saying.

Edith chuckles as she takes Iona's hand.

EDITH
Come with me, dear. I'll go and
tell her that you're here. She's
busy in the back yard.

IONA

Okay. I'm dying to meet her. If she's as lovely as you, I'll be more than happy.

Iona stands.

Edith leads her out of the room.

INT. MARY'S HOUSE- KITCHEN.

EDITH

You just wait here, my love. I'll give her a shout.

Iona smiles then leans on the worktop.

She takes a sip of her drink.

Edith opens the back door then takes a step outside.

"She yells."

EDITH (O.S.)

Mary! Your daughter's here... Mary!

Iona's expression drops.

"She thinks out loud."

IONA

Mary? God no! Please!

Iona looks around the room. She notices two bottles of vodka on the side.

Her eyes dart towards the Welsh-Dresser, littered with copies of Mary's book.

She cranes her neck to peer out of the kitchen window.

Her mouth gapes open wide as she witnesses the sight of MARY, jet wash in hand, hosing down a glass coffee table in the garden.

IONA (cont'd)

No! God, please, no!

She drops her cup.

It smashes on the floor.

She turns and flees in tears leaving the front door wide open.

Mary and Edith enter the kitchen.

MARY
Helllllllo.....Oh!

EDITH
Has she gone? She was here a minute ago, dear.

MARY
Well she's not here now, is she?
And look at the state of my best mug...What was she like, Mother?

EDITH
She seemed pleasant enough, dear.
Looked a bit butch though. I think she might have been one of those vagi-terians.

EXT. WILMOT WELFARE CENTRE- EVENING

In the twilight, Sam stands in front of the building. He periodically checks his watch.

He strains to see up the driveway as he hears footsteps growing louder.

"He calls out."

SAM
Mary! Where the hell have you been?
The crowd are growing restless in there... And why aren't you in your car?

Mary staggers towards him, out of breath.

MARY
The bloody car's broken down,
hasn't it!

She loses her footing then falls into his arms.

SAM
Aren't you a member of the AA?

MARY

Not you as well! Shut the fuck up
and mind your own business.

SAM

No time to split hairs, Mary. Get
yourself in there before they start
rioting. It's chaos tonight. Even
Iona's blobbed it.

MARY

Blobbed it?

SAM

Not shown up. Have you seen
anything of her?

MARY

No. Isn't it gay pride in Derby
this week? She's probably in the
Duke of York playing tranny bingo.

INT. WILMOT WELFARE CENTRE- ASSEMBLY ROOM

The room is packed out by a rowdy crowd.

They drop into silence as Mary and Sam enter.

MARY

Better late than never, eh people?
Sorry about that. Bit of car
trouble I'm afraid.

She staggers to her place at the front of the room.

Sam sits behind the desk.

MARY (cont'd)

Right, I'll crack on. Blah-blah
phones off, blah-blah healing book.
You get the idea.

Her head slumps forward.

Her breathing deepens.

She slowly raises her head.

MARY (cont'd)

Congratulations are in order!
They're popping the corks and
having a little celebration!

She grins inanely as she looks around the room.

MARY (cont'd)
 Who's had the good news this week
 then? The spirits are really
 excited. It's really great news.

The crowd look around checking for raised hands.

MARY (cont'd)
 It's a message for a lady... A
 young lady... And I'm drawn to you,
 my dear.

She points towards CHANTELLE, late teens.

Chantelle smiles nervously.

MARY (cont'd)
 You've had some exciting news this
 week, haven't you my lovely?

CHANTELLE
 Well, yes. I... I have, but I've
 not told anyone yet.

MARY
 What, not even your boyfriend?
 That's your boyfriend sat there,
 isn't it?

She nods towards LEE, early twenties, who sits beside her.

CHANTELLE
 Yeah it is, and no I haven't!

LEE
 Haven't told me what, Chantelle?

Chantelle pauses, stuck for words.

MARY
 Come on, love. It's great news. If
 you don't tell him, I will!

CHANTELLE
 I'm...I'm...

MARY
 She's preggers, dear. She's having
 a baby!

Lee breaks into a beaming smile.

LEE

Is that true 'Telle? Are we having a kid?

CHANTELLE

Yeah, it's true. I was gonna tell you later.

MARY

The spirits are absolutely made up for you, dear. They're telling me all sorts of things. Where it was conceived, what you're going to call him...

CHANTELLE

Him? It's a boy? How will they know what I'm gonna call him?

MARY

Because they're telling me that you're going to name him after his daddy.

Lee's eyes well with water.

He looks towards Chantelle, smiling.

He grabs her hand.

MARY (cont'd)

Winston. It's quite an unusual name for a little one. But, Winston it is!

LEE

Winston? Who the fuck's Winston, 'Telle?

CHANTELLE

I'm sorry Lee. I'm so sorry. He's my dealer. I...I couldn't afford my last hit.

MARY

Ooh, it's so lovely. Just think, in seven months time you'll have a lovely new coffee-coloured addition to the family.

LEE

You slag 'Telle. Not again.

CHANTELLE

I'm sorry Lee. I'm sorry.

Chantelle flees the room breaking into tears as she goes.

Lee sits silently in his seat.

MARY

Best of luck to you, dear.
Congratulations.

A number of the crowd look unsettled.

Mary's head drops forward again.

Her breathing shallows.

Lee ups and leaves.

MARY (cont'd)

I'm getting more family news. Quite important. Has anyone had an upheaval in the family?

No-one responds.

MARY (cont'd)

They're telling me it's very important. Have we got someone in the audience called M...Mary?

The crowd look around.

Still no response.

MARY (cont'd)

They're saying to me Mary, there's big news on the family front. They're saying your daughter's back on the scene, and there's going to be trouble.

Sam looks confused as Mary concentrates deeply to receive the message.

MARY (cont'd)

Your daughter's back and life's going to be in turmoil. Be prepared, Mary, they're saying. Any takers?

The assembly hall door bursts open violently as Iona staggers in, beer bottle in hand, her hair a mess and make-up smeared.

IONA
Mary! You bitch!

Mary looks aghast at the sight of Iona struggling to keep her balance.

IONA (cont'd)
I can't stand you as it is, but you
have to go one step further don't
you? How dare you be my mother?

MARY
Your...Your mother?

IONA
Yeah, Mary! You're my bleeding
mother. I was round your house this
afternoon. How the hell could you
do this to me? I hate you, you
fucking obnoxious witch.

Iona spins around quickly then grabs a waste paper bin.

She vomits and collapses.

SAM
Mary? Is this true? My God, that
means...

FADE OUT