

THREE FOR TEA

by

Brandi Self

Writerbself@yahoo.com  
Los Angeles, CA 90020

INT. HOUSE - CHILD'S ROOM - DAY

KATHLEEN, 30s, rough around the edges, jolts awake, disturbing the child's tea set on the small table she is seated at.

CHILD (O.S.)  
One cube or two?

She looks up at JOEY, 20s, punk rock with piercings, CHRISTOPHER, 30s, ratty clothes, and a wide-eyed CHILD, 7, with angelic curls.

KATHLEEN  
What?

CHILD  
One cube or two? You can't have tea without sugar. Sometimes I do it without milk, but never without sugar. That's the best part.

KATHLEEN  
I uh... huh? What is this?

JOEY  
We're dead.

KATHLEEN  
Dead?

CHRISTOPHER  
Kicked the bucket, tits up, snuffed out, departed, we've bought the farm, taken our last bow.

JOEY  
Pretty chill, huh?  
(to child)  
Two, please.

She drops cubes into his cup. Into the stuffed animals' cups.

CHILD  
Molly Wop and Justine and Mr. Snuffinupulus like theirs with sugar, too. And they like their tea verrry hot. Sometimes it burns their lips and they make a noise like, "ow, I don't like that-- "

KATHLEEN

(to herself)

You took too many Ambiens,  
Kathleen, that's it. You know that  
shit's made you loopy before.

CHRISTOPHER

There's no talking yourself out of  
it, not at this point. It's a done  
deal.

JOEY

Yeah, might as well just accept it.

CHILD

Kathleen went vroom vroom in her  
car, right through a red light, and  
then landed on her back on the  
hill. It hurt a lot.

KATHLEEN

Oh. Yeah. I remember now. They  
were... chasing me and I... I flew  
out the window. I guess I didn't  
make it. So, I'm dead. And we're--

CHRISTOPHER

Here.

(raises tea)

Having tea with a seven-year-old in  
the afterlife.

KATHLEEN

The afterlife.

(looks around)

Wow.

JOEY

Not what you expected, huh?

KATHLEEN

Not even close.

(laughs)

So, this is what everyone's always  
so bent out of shape about? Scared  
to death of? What's the big deal?

CHILD

(holds up doll)

Nu Nu Nina wants to say, "yay, it's  
a party, and don't forget, Mommy's  
bringing snacks!"

KATHLEEN

Mommy?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, it gets weirder, thanks for asking.

CHILD

(screams)

Mommy! Cookies!

On cue, MOTHER, 30s, pressed and aproned hurries in with a tray full of cookies.

MOTHER

Here I am! How's the tea party?

CHILD

It's the most super duper party I've ever had.

KATHLEEN

(grabs a cookie, takes bite)

Oh my god, these are still warm. And is that bacon? Bacon and chocolate, together, this is amazing.

Joey reaches for a cookie. She pushes him out of the way.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

Watch out.

She grabs all the cookies. Stuffs them in her pockets. Joey picks up the small piece that's left.

JOEY

Thanks a lot.

CHILD

And everyone's here. All my friends and even Christopher, Kathleen, and Joey.

MOTHER

(looking through them)

Well, hello Christopher. Kathleen. Joey. Are you having a good time?

Kathleen waves her hand in front of Mother's face as she chomps on the cookies. Mother doesn't flinch.

KATHLEEN

She can't see us. Oh, this is  
hilarious, so we're her--

CHRISTOPHER  
Imaginary Friends.

JOEY  
Imaginary Friends.

CHILD

(holds up a tiny pitcher)  
More milk?

JOEY

(holds up cup)  
Please.

KATHLEEN

Top me off, too, will you?

The child pours as Kathleen pulls Mother's apron open.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

Look what we've got here.  
(pulls out cigarettes)  
Ho ho, jackpot.

She lights one. Takes a drag. Plops down on the bottom bed as  
the mother leaves.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

Can you believe it, we've got it  
fuckin' made, man.

CHRISTOPHER

Let's not get carried away.

The child dances around, humming as she adjusts her friends.

KATHLEEN

Why not?  
(pats bed)  
Soft beds - I'm calling bottom, by  
the way. Cookies. Smokes. Maybe  
anything. You know kids get  
whatever they want. Yeah, I could  
definitely get used to this.  
(takes a drag)  
So, how'd you two end up here? Let  
me guess, drug overdose for you,  
right, Spike?

JOEY

I don't do drugs.

KATHLEEN

Yeah, right. You're an addict, I can smell it on you. Kid, I'd watch your stuff around this one.

JOEY

You got me. I even stole from my parents for it once.

KATHLEEN

What was it, H? Meth? Or were you a clothes-stripping, flesh-eating, bath-salt type of guy?

JOEY

Candy.

CHILD

I love candy!

KATHLEEN

He means nose candy.

JOEY

Wrong, Jolly Ranchers. I had a sweet tooth and my parents didn't like sharing.

CHILD

Mommy says that sharing is caring and that it makes things more fun in the long run. It rhymes so you don't forget it and if you say it altogether--

KATHLEEN

Can it, kid.

(to Christopher)

What about you, Bummin' Bobby? How many illegal or immoral things are in your past?

CHRISTOPHER

And why would you assume there's any? I had a rough year, okay? I lost my job. My apartment. Why are you so concerned about what we've done anyway?

KATHLEEN

If I'm going to be around the both of you forever I want to know exactly what kind of crackpots I'm dealing with.

CHRISTOPHER

"Crackpots"? And here I was just thinking what a peach you are.

Kathleen throws the cigarette down. Steps on it.

KATHLEEN

Let's get something straight. Your business might be my business but my business ain't yours, you understand?

CHRISTOPHER

I'm terrified, literally shaking.

KATHLEEN

You should be--

JOEY

Will you two please just be cool, I'm trying to enjoy my tea.

CHILD

Justine is bored and wants me to start a game. She thinks games are fun and are what makes good friends.

JOEY

I'm down for a game.

KATHLEEN

Sure, why not?

CHILD

The game is riddles. I say them and you answer them. Three answers right and you win, right, Molly Wop?

(Molly Wop voice)

That's right.

CHRISTOPHER

Win what?

KATHLEEN

(pulls up a chair)

Who cares, entertainment is entertainment. Eternity's a long time, buddy, you better get used to filling your days. Go ahead, kid, shoot.

CHILD

Yay! First riddle: What has a face  
and two hands but no arms or legs?

KATHLEEN

A snake.

JOEY

A snake doesn't have hands. It's a  
clock.

CHILD

Clock is the answer we're looking  
for. One point for Joey!

KATHLEEN

Lucky guess for the high school  
dropout.

(holds for high-five)

Up top.

JOEY

I graduated.

CHILD

Next riddle, this is a good one:  
(spinning around)  
Where does Friday come before  
Thursday?

KATHLEEN

On Mars? No... Wait, it's a trick  
question, the answer's in the  
question. That's where it comes  
first, in the question you just  
asked.

JOEY

Is that the answer?

CHRISTOPHER

Alphabetically... it comes before  
in the dictionary.

CHILD

One point for Christopher, yay!  
(dances around)  
Yes, yes, you got a point. Woo hoo  
for you, you're great!

KATHLEEN

These are childish.



JOEY

Well, she is a child.

CHILD

I got another one. When you have me more, you can see only less. What am I?

CHRISTOPHER

"When you have me more, you can see only less... " Hmmm...

JOEY

Sunglasses? No. No. Argh, what is it?

KATHLEEN

It's nighttime. You're darkness!

CHILD

Good job, Kathleen. One point!

KATHLEEN

Alright, I'm in this. Come on, give me one I can wrap my teeth around. No way I'm letting these losers beat me. A game's a game, right?

CHILD

Riddle number...

(holds out four fingers)

Every morning I'm at your feet and all day I follow you even if you run so fast. The only time I get lost is when the sun comes out.

KATHLEEN

Running... feet... follows--

JOEY

It's on the tip of my brain--

KATHLEEN

I know, a shadow, booyah!

CHILD

You got it, two points! Two, two, look at you. Look at you, it's two!

KATHLEEN

One more and I win. Hit me!

CHILD

Riddle number five: What can you keep after giving to someone?

KATHLEEN

Whatever you want. What is that even supposed to mean?

JOEY

This a hard one.

KATHLEEN

That's because it doesn't make any sense.

CHRISTOPHER

A promise. Your word? You give it to someone and you keep it.

KATHLEEN

Corny.

CHILD

That's it, Christopher, two points. Aaand we've got a tie!

KATHLEEN

The next one's mine.

CHILD

This one's a real real special one. You ready? Two people plan a robbery. Promise to split it right down the middle. Even Steven--

KATHLEEN

What?

CHILD

Both go inside the bank, but only one leaves with the money--

KATHLEEN

What is this--

CHILD

Why did only one leave with the money?

KATHLEEN

How... how did you know that?

She looks around. Christopher and Joey are no longer there.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)  
 Hey, what happened to the two  
 idiots? Where'd they go?

CHILD  
 They've gone to Heaven.

KATHLEEN  
 Heaven?  
 (backs away)  
 No, no one said anything about  
 Heaven.

CHILD  
 Only one robber left with the money  
 because their partner killed them.  
 They got greedy. Didn't want to  
 share. That's the answer to the  
 riddle and that's what you did,  
 right, Kathleen? That's why they  
 were chasing you because you're a  
 thief and a murderer?

KATHLEEN  
 No. I mean, well... I deserved that  
 money, okay? I did most of the  
 work. The planning--

An uneasy tapping starts.

CHILD  
 When you shot him, his blood ran  
 all over your shoes, changing the  
 color as you went to grab the bag  
 out of his hands. He was still  
 alive though and he called out and  
 you ran.

KATHLEEN  
 He was messing everything up,  
 taking too long, and he was a  
 snitch, I could see it in his eyes.  
 He was weak. I wasn't going to go  
 back to jail.

The tapping grows louder, echoing around her.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)  
 What is that, what's going on? Who  
 are you?

Her eyes go down to the child's feet now furry hooves of the  
 devil... tap tap tapping. She covers her ears as the noise  
 becomes overwhelming.

KATHLEEN (CONT'D)

No, it can't be. I can't be here.  
Not *here*. Please... no!

The Devil Child's fiery eyes spin. She laughs, the whole place turning dark and unruly around her.

DEVIL CHILD

Welcome home, Kathleen. More tea?

THE END