



AFTERNOON TEA

by Alaric Greene

A SMITH SCRIPT

This script is protected by copyright laws.  
No performance of this script – IN ANY MEDIA – may be undertaken without payment of the  
appropriate fee and obtaining a licence.

For further information, please contact SMITH SCRIPTS at [info@smithscripts.co.uk](mailto:info@smithscripts.co.uk)

# Afternoon Tea

## By Alaric Greene.

### CHARACTERS

Ida Patterson  
Major Simon Hopton  
Tilly Templeton-Greene  
Rev Wendy Wilkins

*The lights come up to reveal a comfortable, if somewhat cluttered, sitting room in a secluded cottage on the edge of a village in mid Devon. Ida Patterson, a lady in her mid seventies who's been shielding since the start of lockdown, has just finished laying out cups, plates and cutlery, sandwiches and scones on a small round table for afternoon tea and is eagerly awaiting her guests. There are two doors, one, which is open, on the back wall leads out to her kitchen the other, closed, door leads to the hallway, front door and the stairs to the first floor. There is a two seater sofa facing forward and a low armchair with its back to the audience on which is Jasper, an unseen cat. There is a window in the fourth wall.*

**Ida:** There! Oh, this is going to be lovely. I'm so excited. It's my first tea party since this wretched lockdown thing happened and we've seen no one have we Jasper. Well, I know we've seen either Mr or Mrs Brown through the window when they dropped our shopping off but this is the first time we're going to have company, actually in the cottage since....goodness, I can't remember when. When was our last little tea party Jasper? Was it the middle of March sometime? *(Pause)* Silly me. I don't know why I always expect you to answer me in words. You're a cat! I *know* you're a cat but I so yearn for the sound of another human voice that's in the same room as me. I mean shouting at Mrs Brown down the garden path is all well and good but we all know that my hearing's not good anymore and I have to turn up my hearing aid so much that everything gets distorted and we get all that loud whistling. So today is a very special day for us isn't it Jasper. Our friends will be here soon.

*Major Simon appears at the open kitchen door and gives a subtle cough. He is dressed in a uniform from the English Civil War. Both Simon and his clothes are grey in colour.*

**Ida:** *(Turning)* Simon! Oh my dear old friend. I didn't hear you come in, I'm so sorry. Too busy talking away nineteen to the dozen to Jasper. Look Jasper, Simon's here.

*Sound effect of an unhappy cat hissing/meowing.*

**Simon:** *(as he steps into the room)* Ida. It's so good to see you again, you look lovely. As fresh as a daisy as always. I'm not sure that Jasper's so pleased to see me though, look at his tail thrashing from side to side. He seems quite put out.

**Ida:** Oh he's such a silly boy. You know it's only jealousy don't you. Stop it Jasper! He's got used to having me all to himself for the past goodness knows how many weeks. Well, apart from the Brown's once a week and they never came any further than the front gate so we've been quite isolated. Oh dear, listen to me, chuntering on like a thing possessed. Now, let me look at you. So smart. And that lovely sash brings out the colour of your eyes. You always look so smart in your uniform.

**Simon:** Ida, please, You'll make me blush. I just thought that as we hadn't all been together for so long that I ought to make some sort of effort. So I gave myself a bit of a dusting down and, even though I do say so myself, I think I come up to the mark pretty well. Don't I?

**Ida:** Oh yes, quite dazzling Simon. Every inch the dashing Major. I suspect a certain young lady will be fluttering her eyelids at you this afternoon. You rogue you.

**Simon:** *(blustering somewhat)* Ida, I can assure you that no thoughts like that ever crossed....

**Ida:** Now don't put yourself down dear. You and I both know that Tilly has a soft spot for you. I think she's quite taken with the idea of an older gentleman but it's up to you to make the first move my boy. I know she's terribly modern compared to you but, after all, she's been brought up properly and she's certainly not what *my mother* would have called 'fast'. She's waiting for you to ask her to step out with you.

**Simon:** Do you really think so? She always seems so confident. Knows exactly what she wants, where she wants to go. That sort of thing.

**Ida:** Yes, but that's just a front. She's not going anywhere, we both know that. She's as much anchored to you as you are to her. And both of you love my little cottage. And I *do* have a spare back bedroom.....

**Simon:** *(shocked)* Ida! I, I.....

**Ida:** Oh Simon, stop being so stuffy. It's 2020 after all. Anything goes nowadays you know.

**Simon:** Yes. *I do* know. And it's all so very different from when I was young. *Very different.* Reverend Mathews used to put the fear of God into us every Sunday

morning with his fire and brimstone sermons from the pulpit. I always knew, *knew*, they were all aimed at me. The man was a terror. And very hot on the sin of fornication.

**Ida:** Yes, I've read about him in the leaflet at the church. Is that why you refused to see him when..... well, you know?

**Simon:** Yes. Well, that and the fact that there wasn't much time to get him here. Apparently he was over in the next village 'comforting' a newly widowed lady. My brother said he could get him here but we managed to convince him not to try. He wouldn't have been welcomed. Especially not by me!

**Ida:** I'm sorry, in a way, not to have known him. I mean, Reverend Wilkins is lovely, don't get me wrong, but someone with a bit of fire and brimstone now and again might be just what this village needs.

**Simon:** Ha! Yes. Reverend Wilkins would *not* have been approved of by 'Fire and Brimstone Mathews'. Burning at the stake would have been too good for the likes of Reverend Wendy Wilkins. He was the sort to have devised a very special type of torture for the likes of her and her kind. "*A Woman*"? he'd have said "*a woman*"! "*Preaching in my church*"?! He would not like living nowadays. I know you'll tut Ida my dear but I have to say I'm very glad that the Reverend Abstinence Mathews is long gone from this parish!

**Ida:** We've known each other a long time Simon dear, nothing you say shocks me anymore. I've learned to live with, and accept, your somewhat narrow view of life today. I'm sure you'd like Reverend Wendy if you actually met her to talk to. She'll be able to pop in and see me again now won't she, why don't you be here as well. She'd be fascinated by all your stories of the village. Perhaps you and Tilly could have a little talk to her about your future together.....?

**Simon:** Hmm. Yes, well, we'll see.

**Ida:** Don't forget Simon, you've not seen each other for almost twelve weeks. Today could be, ooh, I don't know.....explosive?

**Simon:** Not a good choice of word Ida my dear.

**Ida:** Oh goodness. I'm so sorry Simon. I forgot. You know what I'm like. It's because we've all been shut up away from the world for so long. You *have* stuck to the deal haven't you Simon? At the start of this wretched pandemic, when they shut everything down, we promised didn't we, all three of us that we'd follow the advice. (*suspiciously*) Have you and Tilly been meeting in secret?

**Simon:** *(giving a nervous cough)* Tilly and I have *not* met Ida. Much as you'd, very obviously, have liked us to but, um, I, er.....

**Ida:** *(questioning)* Simon? *What did you do?*

**Simon:** Well, yes, I did make one little journey out but I *didn't* meet anyone, talk to anyone or, in fact, be seen by anyone. I Just made a quick, flying visit, under the cover of darkness to Torrington.

**Ida:** Torrington? But I thought you said you'd never.....

**Simon:** I know. But a lot of time has passed since, ...well, *then*. And I was aware of the anniversary in February and then the world changed and I had a lot of time to sit around and think so I made a midnight flit. Assuaged the feelings of unease. It actually helped I think. I was able to visit the graves of old, old friends and think of happier times.

**Ida:** How very brave of you Simon my dear.

**Simon:** Well. Feel I can properly move on now. No need to go back again. Didn't somebody once say that the past is a foreign country? They were right. Actually there wasn't much of Torrington that I recognised. Time moves on.

**Ida:** Well I'm glad. And there's no need to discuss it again. *(with surprise)* Oh, goodness. Look Simon, Tilly's here. In the front garden... *(calling through the window)* Tilly..... I'll just come and open the front door for you

*Ida exits into the hall and we hear the front door being opened. She re-enters the sitting room followed by Tilly a young woman of 24. She is dressed in 1920's style and her clothes and skin tones are, like Simon, grey in colour*

**Ida:** Tilly, dear, how long had you been out there? We didn't hear the car did we Simon?

**Tilly:** It's fine, I'd only been there a few minutes. I was enjoying your lovely garden, for a change, it's so beautiful at this time of year.

**Simon:** Hello Tilly, I can't tell you what a delight it is to see you again after so long.

**Tilly:** Darling Simon. I've been counting the days. And as handsome as ever.