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Subject: Re: New Beginnings

Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Mon, 30 Jul 2012 02:37:54 GMT

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Wednesday, January 9th, just before 5 pm

Cassie deftly swept her hair up, and with a few hair pins had it neatly in place. Checking her appearance in the mirror one last time, she smoothed her kimono, and then headed for the kitchen. The plan was to do a simple tea ceremony tonight. Instead of the full-course meal and tea ceremony she had done back in November, this evening she was planning on serving miso soup followed by the tea ceremony.

Walking by the coffee table, Cassie picked up the vase that held the flower arrangement she had made for the ceremony. In keeping with tradition the arrangement consisted of one Mount Cook Lily and several sprigs of Toetoe. As she set the vase in the center of the kitchen table, she checked the timer on the stove. There was still about a minute left on it. The shiitake mushrooms were just about done soaking and then she could finish preparing the soup. While she waited she retrieved four of her tea cups from the cupboard, sitting them on the counter before going back to her soup preparations.

The soup was just about done when the door chime sounded. That's probably Cherie, Cassie thought, leaving the stove and heading for the door. The girl had enjoyed herself at the first Tea Ceremony, though she admitted not caring much for the green tea that was served, so Cassie had invited her again. This time though, Cherie was to be the Shokyaku, or guest of honor.

"Hi, Cherie," Cassie greeted her, pairing the greeting with a traditional bow.

"Hi, Ms. Cassie," Cherie replied, also bowing to her hostess. Cherie then stepped into the apartment as Cassie motioned for her to do so. The girl immediately slipped off her shoes, remembering the etiquette from the previous event she had attended. Al hope I remember what I'm suppose to do."

"You'll do fine. We can run through the sequence again if you'd like, though. We should have enough time before John and Anna arrive."

As Cassie finished preparations, the two of them went through the ceremony and what was expected of Cherie at each step. Everything was in order when the door chime rang. Anna was greeted in the same fashion as Cherie had been. It wasn't long before John had joined them.

Cassie had chosen to forgo the tradition of sitting on the floor around a low table on this occasion. Instead, she seated her guests around the kitchen table, Cherie directly to her right. She served the miso soup. Following the soup, the tea ceremony itself began. As she had done back in November, Cassie took a few moments to give a little background on the ceremony and explain to John and Anna the basic sequence of the ceremony.

During her speech, Cassie had retrieved a bowl from the counter. She now placed the bowl between her seat and Cherie. The girl took a sweet from the bowl and placed it on the kaishi, which Cassie had provided for each of her guests. After the serving of the sweets, Cassie began

the ritual cleaning of the utensils. Once that task was completed, she reached for one of the tea bowls and began to make the first cup.

Cassie first scooped some of the green tea powder out of the tea caddy. She then gently place the scoop down on the table and then added hot water to the tea cup. Picking up the tea whisk, she began to stir the tea using the movements her grandmother had taught her years ago. When it was finished Cassie placed the cup in front of Cherie with the characters of the cup facing the girl. Cherie picked up the cup and then rotated it ninety degrees before taking a sip.

"How is the tea?" Cassie asked her guest, using the approximate translation of the traditional question. For the benefit of her guests, she had taken the traditional exchange between host and Shokyaku into English. She felt that what she had come up with captured the spirit of the ceremony while allowing her guests to follow what was going on.

"It is excellent," Cherie replied, before she took another sip.

Cassie began preparing the second cup of tea, which she passed across the table to Anna. Anna took the cup and rotated it like she had seen Cherie do before taking a sip.

"The tea was very delicious," Cherie commented after Anna's first sip. Having finished her own tea, she turned the cup so the characters were facing inward and placed it on the table. "What is the name of the tea?" She asked.

Cassie answered that question as she prepared the third and final cup of tea for John. Cherie continued to ask the traditional questions, such as where the tea was from, about the sweets and the flower arrangement in the center of the table. Once John had finished his tea and placed the cup in front of him with the characters facing the center, Cherie asked to see the utensils used to make the tea.

"Has this been in your family long?" Anna asked Cassie as she examined the tea caddy.

"Only for a couple of generations. My grandmother got them on her eighteenth birthday."

"They're beautiful and it looks like you care for them well," Anna replied, as she carefully passed the item over to John.

John carefully took the tea caddy from Anna. "The characters on the cups, they mean harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility right?"

Cassie nodded. "My grandfather felt that those four characters captured the essence of the tea ceremony, so he put them on the cups."

"Your grandfather made these, then?" Anna asked having picked up her tea cup again, and turned it around to see the characters.

"Yes. My grandfather loved pottery. Still does in fact."

The conversation continued until Cassie had everything back in front of her. The four of them

stood, as the tea ceremony was over.

"I enjoyed myself this evening," Anna told her hostess. "Thank-you for inviting me."

"It was my pleasure," Cassie replied.

She exchanged good-byes with all three of them, and taking a moment to tell Cherie that she had done a good job. As they headed into the lift, Cassie bowed to each of them, as was tradition. As the door closed behind them, Cassie turned and headed for the table and started cleaning up.