

MUSTARD CRAVAT
by Tami Canaday

Setting: A restaurant containing two tables that seat four people each. The tables are perpendicular to each other. There is a crisp white tablecloth and a floral tea setting for two and a plate of sweet cakes on each table. The tables and the chairs are exactly alike.

Characters:

Agusta
Amber
Richard
Randy
Tim

Scene: At each table sit a man and a woman. Agusta and Richard sit at the front table. Amber and Randy sit at the back table. Both women sit facing the audience. The men sit to the right of the women. The women are dressed similar to each other but not exactly the same. Likewise, the men are dressed similar to each other, but not the same.

Note 1: The play starts with the sounds of a busy, upper end restaurant, which fade away as the lights go up.

Note 2: Agusta and Amber will speak and move simultaneously, until Tim enters the stage and speaks. Richard and Randy will do the same.

(Agusta and Amber pick up their tea cups and sip the tea. They put their cups gently down)

AGUSTA and AMBER

The tea here at Downings has always been, well, what brings me here.

RICHARD and RANDY

Tea's tea.

AGUSTA and AMBER

Not necessarily, oh, stuffy man. Try the tea. At least, try it before you make your simple, holy pronouncements, please.

RICHARD and RANDY

It's not a bit hot? With the steam rising like curly cues?

AGUSTA and AMBER

Why steaming tea is for the cocksure.

(Richard and Randy grab their teacups and drink like manly men. They scald their mouths, but won't let on)

RICHARD and RANDY

(grimacing)

Almost a hero, hey? Damn good...no silly coward in Downings.

(Richard and Randy each take one more little sip. They put their teacups quickly down)

RICHARD and RANDY

There.

AGUSTA and AMBER

(unimpressed)

Hmmm.

(a very slight beat)

AGUSTA and AMBER

I'm afraid, I'm convinced, you are not going to drink any more, are you? To enjoy the fine, redolent pleasure of tea? Even with the steam...

(Agusta and Amber graciously pick up their cups. They drink their tea with great gusto)

RICHARD and RANDY
(taken aback)

I say, rather slatternly, I say.

(Agusta and Amber put their cups down.
They delicately wipe the corners of their
mouths with their napkins. They put their
napkins down in front of them)

AGUSTA and AMBER

Oh?

RICHARD and RANDY

I see. Perhaps, it's the steam, the heat...the physical act of disregarding the danger.
Yet, it is never a question of stern concentration to go to the rounded edge of a teacup.
That, dear one, is too much of a self-aware. Still, the anticipation and the pull of a
deliciously, slight bitter taste is almost enough. But I must say, it truly, is not. Funny, it
could be the aftermath, that's quite rosy rimmed. No. It's this...the trace left on my lips,
after I have sipped.

(Richard and Randy pick up their teacups
and sip their tea. Tim enters the restaurant)

AGUSTA and AMBER

I told you, you would enjoy, didn't I?

(Agusta and Amber pick up their tea ups)

RICHARD and RANDY

And enjoy, I do.

(Tim stops at Amber and Randy's table.
Randy and Amber put their tea cups down.
The following lines follow rapidly one after
The other)

TIM

I'm sorry I'm late.

AGUSTA

To the small pleasures.

(Agusta tips her teacup to Richard)

RICHARD

(smiling)

To our strolling down the seashore and never coming back.

RANDY

My good man, I am afraid I do not know what you are chattering about.

TIM

What?

AMBER

Oh, don't be such a dreary goat. Here, please have a seat.

(Amber indicates chair. Tim sits
at Amber and Randy's table)

AGUSTA

To the smooth shaved face of my lover.

(Agutsa and Richard happily
clink their teacups)

TIM

I've never met anyone in a place like this.

(indicates sweet cakes)

Yeah, I bet those are only available on the cook's special days. You know, when he's in a good mood.

AGUSTA

To cultivating our future home. With a terrace.

RICHARD

To watching the night snowfall against a street light from wedded bed.

AGUSTA

To losing what we've never wanted to possess.

RICHARD

(taken aback)

Oh, my. May I write that one down?