

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 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 mother?

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 rolls her eyes.

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 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 seen shingles with more personality than you. 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 rush around.

Mary marches along the fruit and veg aisle, as Edith, pushing the trolley, struggles 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, and 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

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, which is adorned with vases of flowers and leaflets.

IONA, Thirties, appears from a door marked 'Staff', putting on a duffle 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.

He is disturbed by a door slamming down the corridor.

He hears a voice yelling to him from a distance.

JOEY (O.S.)

Mr Jackson! Mr Jackson!

Sam emerges from behind the desk, and 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?

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.

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 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, and 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, and 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 girls feigns a smile.

CHECKOUT GIRL

That's twenty six pounds and four pence, please.

Mary opens her purse, counting out the money.

MARY

Ten, twenty, 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.

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

MARY (cont'd)  
You really are a waste of skin,  
mother. A 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.

The boot is slammed, and 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  
Are 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, and 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 clammers 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

Just shut it and get walking, you  
old hag.

Mary hands Edith the shopping bag as they walk across the carpark in silence, then onto the highstreet.

EXT. HIGHSTREET

Mary and Edith continue the silent trek, trudging the busy streets. A few more paces, and 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 at 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, and she is greeted by Edith.

EDITH

Can I help you, dear?

Iona coughs, clearing her throat.

IONA

I hope so. Are you Mrs Allcock?

EDITH

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

IONA

I'm 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, and 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, and begins dialling 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 as Edith re-enters the room with a mug of really strong tea.

Edith 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. 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 and 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, leaning on the worktop. She takes a sip of her drink.

Edith opens the back door, and takes a step outside, yelling.

EDITH (O.S.)

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

Iona's expression drops. She thinks out loud.

IONA

Mary? God no, please.

She looks around the room, noticing 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

Hellllllllo.....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 was 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, falling into his arms.

SAM

Aren't you a member of the AA?

MARY

Not you as well! Why can't people  
get off my case? I like the odd  
drink. So bloody what?

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, and takes 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  
concieved, 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 daughters 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

Yes, 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 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