

Story and Photography by Melody M. Nuñez

I close my eyes, take a sip of tea, and feel the warm liquid work its magic and awaken my senses. The ability to really see, hear, touch, taste, and smell is sometimes deadened by the frantic pace of my daily life. But my senses return with a single sip of spicy tea ... first, taste: the subtle spices of the tea combined with the sweet honey in my cup. Next, I hear the clink of china as I place my teacup back in its saucer, followed by the trill of birds calling to each other in the trees.

The gentle whooshing of the wind soothes me, and I imagine my body swaying gently to and fro—strong and supple as a tree. Feeling floods my body ... and the knots in my back untwist, life-sustaining breath flows in and out, and my heart beats to a familiar rhythm. I stretch like a cat and feel my whole body relax ... and now a fresh breeze caresses my skin, heated gently by the sun.

The bounty that awaits me in this garden is almost overwhelming. I'm surrounded by plants and creatures: light-green grass, glowing in the sun, spotted by fluffy dandelions, variegated tree trunks full of texture and curious shapes, towering sunflowers, scampering squirrels. A butterfly drifts past and lands on a flowering shrub nearby, basks in the sun for a few moments, and then flexes its colorful wings to take flight once more.

I revel in such peaceful surroundings, reminding myself that miracles still take place every day. I just have to stop rushing-rushing-rushing long enough to see all the amazing things that life is trying to show me.

I close my eyes again and take another sip of tea. When I've finished reflecting on the moment, I open my eyes to find my secret garden has vanished. I'm back in my home office, surrounded by the sounds of city life and neighbors.

My half-empty teacup is still in hand, and it's a comfort to know that with a simple cup of tea I can steal back to my garden once more. It lives forever in my mind, and I can return if I only take time to turn the key. ☼

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Tea for One in My Secret Garden