

Tea for one

Resource 4

Characters:	Café owner Customer Grower Importer Packager Shipper Wholesaler	Props:	Small table and a couple of chairs Newspaper Cup and saucer A tea bag \$2 (made up of 2 x 50 cents; 3 x 20 cents; 3 x 10 cents; 2 x 5 cents) Large name tags (Importer, Grower etc.) to pin to actors
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A customer is sitting at a table in a café reading a newspaper and looking towards the counter every so often.

- Customer:** Don't you love the weekend! I've got all Saturday morning to sit here and read the paper and enjoy my cup of tea. Ahhhh, tea!
- [Slightly impatiently, directed at the café owner who has come over to his/her table with a cup of tea on a serving tray, but just stands there] ... Well come on then, give me my tea.
- Café owner:** It's not your tea yet. You have to buy it from me. That will be \$2 please.
- Customer:** Two dollars for a cup of tea! That's expensive, isn't it?
- Café owner:** Well, I have to pay my staff, buy all the tea bags, pay the rent on my café, not to mention paying for the electricity and gas.
- Customer:** OK, OK, I get the picture. Keep your tea, it's all yours.
[Wholesaler pushes the café owner aside and takes the cup of tea.]
- Wholesaler:** Oh no it isn't! S/he has to buy it from me.
- Customer:** Who's that? *[indicating the wholesaler]*
- Café owner:** S/he's the wholesaler who buys packaged tea bags in bulk. I buy the limited amount of tea I need in my café from him/her.
- Customer:** So where does s/he get the tea from?
[Importer steps forward and pushes the wholesaler aside and takes the cup of tea from him/her].
- Importer:** From me! We grow very little tea in Australia. Most of it comes from countries like Sri Lanka, India and China. I run a company that imports tea bags from these countries and I sell it to him/her *[points to wholesaler]*.
- Customer:** *[turns to importer]* Oh, I see. So you're the one who really owns the tea.
- Shipper:** Oh no s/he's not! S/he just sits behind a desk in an office and orders and buys tea. I'm the one who has the difficult job. My ship takes the tea from Sri Lanka all the way across the Indian Ocean to Australia.
- Customer:** So it's really you I should be giving my \$2 to *[tries to give the shipper the \$2]*. Here you are.
[Packager pushes forward, puts out his/her hand to stop the \$2 being handed over and takes the cup of tea.]
- Packager:** Not so fast! Before s/he ships the tea across the ocean, it needs to be packaged and processed into tea bags. My company, based in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, takes the dried tea leaves and packages them up into the small tea bags that you are familiar with *[holds up a tea bag]*.
- Customer:** So the tea is yours. Well, here's the \$2 to pay for it. *[Customer holds out his/her \$2 again, this time to the packager.]*
[Grower steps forward, pushes the packager aside and takes the cup of tea.]

Tea for one (continued)

Resource 4

- Grower:** Oh no you don't! Where do you think s/he gets the tea to put in the tea bags?
- Customer:** Let me guess ... from you!
- Grower:** Exactly! From *me*! I'm the one who grows the tea bushes in Sri Lanka and I'm the one who picks the leaves. It's because of my small tea farm in Sri Lanka that you are able to enjoy your cup of tea in Australia on this Saturday morning.
- Customer:** At last! *[a look of relief]* Now I know who the tea belongs to and who I should be paying. Thank you very much. Here is your \$2. *[S/he pays the Grower who holds the \$2 in coins in an open palm.]*
- [The packager intervenes and the others follow suit, walking up to the grower and taking their share of the coins and returning to their position in the queue.]*
- Packager:** *[As s/he takes a coin from the grower's hand]* That will be 50 cents for packaging your tea into that tea bag.
- Shipper:** That'll be 35 cents for shipping the tea bag.
- Importer:** Twenty-five cents for importing it.
- Wholesaler:** Twenty cents for buying the tea bags in bulk and storing them.
- Café owner:** Sixty cents for taking the tea bags to my little café so that you *[turns to the customer]* can buy a cup of tea.
- Customer:** *[frowning, trying to make sense of everything, turns to the grower]* But hold on just one minute — the tea belonged to *you*. It was your tea that I bought. I don't mind paying you \$2 because you grew it. But I'm not giving my money to this lot! *[waves arm across to indicate the others]* How much have you got left?
- Grower:** Ten cents.
- Customer:** Ten cents. Is that all? It doesn't seem very fair.
- [As each person says the following lines, s/he pops his/her head out of the queue.]*
- Packager:** It's the way of the world.
- Shipper** We've all got to make a living.
- Importer** I've got a family and I'm trying to pay off our house.
- Wholesaler:** This is not a charity you know.
- Café owner** You can always go and drink your tea somewhere else if you don't like it.
- Customer:** But it isn't fair! It was his/her tea, and s/he gets the smallest amount!
- All:** *[All poking their heads out of the queue]* But nobody said it would be fair!
- Customer** Oh! *[All freeze, then exit.]*