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## Appetite

Soylent is a food product (classified as a food, not a supplement, by the FDA) designed for use as a staple meal by all adults. Each serving of Soylent provides maximum nutrition with minimum effort.

*Taken from Soylent website.*

### A Time for Everything

- 1 There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
- 2 a time to be born and a time to die,  
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
- 3 a time to kill and a time to heal,  
a time to tear down and a time to build,
- 4 a time to weep and a time to laugh,  
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
- 5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,  
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
- 6 a time to search and a time to give up,  
a time to keep and a time to throw away,

7 a time to tear and a time to mend,  
a time to be silent and a time to speak,  
8 a time to love and a time to hate,  
a time for war and a time for peace.

*Ecclesiastes 5:1-8*

A time for eating and a time for drinking,  
This is the time for eating.

“Tea time!”

The delightful call summoned from the yard the family of five.

Three mostly-grown children and one grizzled father came stamping and shouting up the front steps, the mother herself already stationed within. In the cool dim dining room they gathered, eyes shining.

Tea time, the very best time of day: delicate meringue tarts, translucently thin slices of pear and cucumber, elegantly crimped meat pies, tall glasses of lemonade. Ten hands took and ate, five mouths puckered and drank. Then each turned to their side, picked up the small canister beside their seat, and released the watery mush from their mouths back to the world. The time when all the dreams of the world was satisfied, all the drooling and gazing and anxious imagining of every marvelous food. Tea time was the time without responsibility, the time when pleasure was the only goal, the time to eat.

Today, however, Tad’s canister remained empty.

As a soft green glob fell from his mother's lips into her canister, Tad swallowed. He had taken a bite of meat pie, and he could clearly envision in his mind's eye what should now be in his canister: a pellet of masticated crust and meat, brown and tan all over. But there was nothing in his canister. Its silver bottom gazed up at him un-blinkered.

No one noticed. Each was engrossed in the next bite, the next wave of pleasure. Tea time could last for hours. They were freed from the tyranny of fullness.

Tad took another bite of his meat pie and slowly chewed it until it was all mush. Then he swallowed. While brushing his teeth this morning, a still small voice had said to him, go without your soylent and try swallowing your tea snacks instead. He had found this inner voice novel enough to be listened to.

Tad felt a mounting warmth and pressure in his abdomen, an unfamiliar fullness. His typical daily dose of soylent was a single tall glass of frothy liquid—not enough to distend his stomach but plenty to feed his body. A simple, boring, effective way of nourishing his physical frame. It lacked any of the delights of meat pie—but of course the best food was not meant to be consumed. The best food was art, made for maceration but no more.

All day long, his family had been anxiously awaiting tea time. They had all been admiring photographs of their favorite foods and imagining in their heads the exquisite textures and fantastic tastes. Tad alone was quiet, careful, and surprisingly refined. He had the feeling that he would not be able to consume nearly as much today.

He had never heard his body speak so clearly to him. Typically lulled into a stupor by the easy, boring perfection of soylent, his stomach had nothing to praise and nothing to denounce. Not a gurgle, not an ache, not a twitch passed from it. With the admission of all of Tad's favorite

tea foods, however, it was releasing a symphony, and its four movements were all of joy: I am full, I am happy, this is good, you are well.

Tad stopped eating.

“I’m full,” he said.

His father was halfway through a slice of pear. He spat it into his canister and said, “What?”

“Food should be swallowed. I’m full now.” Tad did not know where these words were coming from; he only knew that he had to say them.

His father reached over to his mother and gripped her wrist. She too let the food in her mouth fall into her canister, and she turned her eyes on him. She said, “Tad, there’s still so much to eat! You have to enjoy yourself. It’s not healthy for a boy your age to restrict himself. Here, you love this.”

She thrust a plate of pickled anchovies toward him.

He wrinkled his nose at it. For the first time, the sight of perfectly good food sent a wave of disgust over him. A part of him feared that he would hate food forever. But still the small voice urged him on to say, “It’s not right. Food should be eaten and swallowed—for nourishment as well as for pleasure, within limits.”

“Unlimited pleasure is the whole point of food,” His older sister said through a mouthful of bagel. “Why would anyone give that up?”

“This isn’t right.” Tad felt his face flushing. His stomach was so heavy. His eyes burned. “This is a waste. This is not what God wanted food to be used for.”

“God?” His father sat upright, plate momentarily placed aside. “What does God care what we eat?”

A rich understanding welled up in him, better than the most decadent of cakes. “The food comes from the earth, to be consumed by people. People swallow the food, digest it, and return the waste to the earth. And when they die, their bodies return to the earth as well. What we are doing is wrong. We have to be part of the cycle.”

“We are enjoying ourselves,” his mother said very gently. “Tad, there’s no need to feel bad about enjoying yourself. Life is hard enough, isn’t it? It’s good to get pleasure from food and to be able to enjoy it as much as you want.”

“Maybe I’ll go to bed,” he said, faltering. Now his stomach was churning, no longer producing a symphony of all joy but instead one with minor chords.

His parents were already turning back to their food, reassured that he would be all right.

“Stop! Stop eating!” He pushed his sister away from the table. “This isn’t right.”

“What the hell,” his sister said. “That was my favorite!”

“Then you should eat it properly and let it nourish your body,” Tad took her by the shoulders and stared her hard in the eyes, trying to convey with the force of his grip and the intensity of his stare how urgent and true his message was. “This is gluttony. Your appetite is out of control.”

“Listen to me!” He said. “Can’t you understand? We’re doing it all wrong. This is nourishment, not soylent. Eating, really eating this is what is good—what pleases God. We can’t go on with this fake eating, all for our own pleasure. Can’t you see you’re just spoiling yourself and indulging yourself completely unnaturally?”

He rushed upon his mother and held down her hands so she could pick up no more food. “Swallow it,” he insisted. “Swallow what you are chewing.”

She jerked away from him. “Tad, what is wrong with you today? Go to your room. Just because you’re sick doesn’t mean you get to ruin everyone else’s tea time.”

He forced himself upon each member of his family in turn, earnestly seeking to stop their steady chewing and spitting. A dark tide rose in him, crushing his spirits—his mission was hopeless. Where was the small voice that spoke to him? Why did it not speak to them also?

You must go out and talk to others, it suddenly flashed into his mind. You must teach others who will listen. This is not right, and it cannot go on.

He laid his hands down by his sides. His family went on with their tea time. There were hours more for them to spend in tasting all their favorites. They would not be moved.

The voice had shown him what was right, and he loved it for its goodness. So he turned away from his family and from all the traditions of his old life, and he followed its command.