

Tania has
an idea!



By Kanika G

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Tania has an Idea!

Tania was growing up. Certainly, she was getting older, bigger and taller. She was also learning new things and getting smarter. But, that was not all. She was becoming more thoughtful and considerate. She was shaping up to be a delightful little girl.

Tania had enjoyed celebrating her fourth birthday. She had loved all her birthday presents. She asked everyone in the family when their birthdays were. The next birthday was Mama's. In a week, Mama would turn 33, and Tania wanted to do something special for her. Tania did not yet get pocket money, so she could not buy Mama a gift. She decided to make one instead.

But what should she make? She observed Mama keenly for a few days. She noticed Mama loved drinking tea. Every afternoon Mama would put tea leaves in the pot and pour boiling water over them. Then she would let it brew for a few minutes. Next, she would pour the tea into a cup using a strainer. The strainer prevented

the leaves from getting into the cup.
Mama always looked very happy and
relaxed drinking her tea.

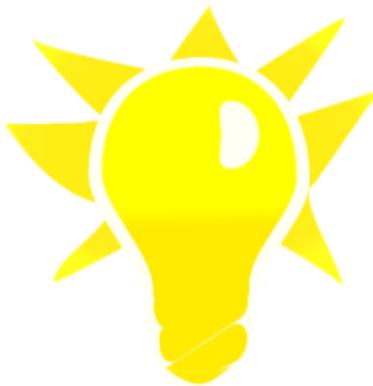


Sometimes, Mama would feel lazy and use a tea bag instead. It was quicker and easier, because she did not have to use the strainer or clean out lots of messy tea leaves. But Tania could tell that Mama did not enjoy the tea made with tea bags as much.

Tania asked, "Mama why do you like the tea from the tea bags less?"

Mama said, "The quality of the tea leaves used to make the tea bags isn't very good. Also they crush the leaves instead of leaving them as it is. I wish they would just put the good quality tea leaves into the bags."

Tania pondered over what Mama had just said. It gave her an idea. She would make tea bags for Mama with tea leaves, and give them to her for her birthday. Mama would love that.



Tania rummaged through her cupboard and found a clean muslin cloth napkin. It was a part of a pack of three and had never been used. Mama used the other two to pat Tania dry when she was an infant,

but this one lay forgotten. Tania washed it and put it to dry.

The next day was Saturday, and Mama was out shopping in the afternoon. So Tania decided to use the time to make the tea bags. She cut the cloth with her craft scissors into long rectangles. But the cloth pieces were quite crumpled and difficult to fold. Tania knew she was not allowed to use the iron, so she took the cloth pieces to Papa and asked him if he would iron them.



Papa asked, "What are these little cloth pieces for Tania?"

Tania said, "I want to make tea bags for Mama for her birthday. I'll use her tea leaves to make them. She will like that."

Papa took out the iron, and set it to heat. He said, "That's a great idea Tania. I am impressed. How are you going to make the bags?"

Tania said, "I'll fold the cloth and glue the edges together. Then I'll fill it with tea leaves...."

"Wait Tania!" Papa interrupted, while ironing the cloth pieces. "You can't use glue. It will melt in the hot water, and the tea bags will come apart, and the glue will make the tea taste awful."



"Oh!" Tania was disappointed. "I did not know that. What do I do then?"

Papa said, "You could stitch, instead of using glue."

"But Papa, I don't know how to stitch, and Mama says needles are too dangerous

for me."

"That is true. I can stitch them for you," offered Papa seeing the disappointed look on Tania's face.

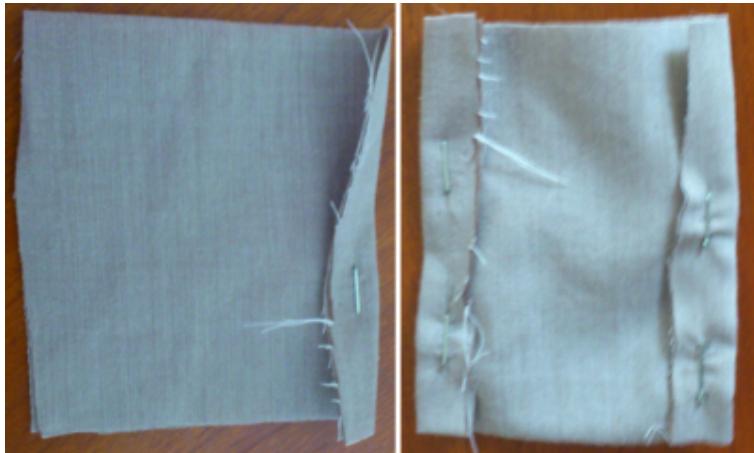
"No," said Tania. "I want to do most of this myself." She thought for a few minutes. Papa had finished ironing all 10 pieces of cloth. Tania suddenly jumped up and asked, "Can I staple them together then?"

"Yes Tania. That is brilliant. I'll give you my big stapler. Be careful and I'll supervise."

Tania was overjoyed with such praise from Papa. She carefully folded all the cloth pieces in half.



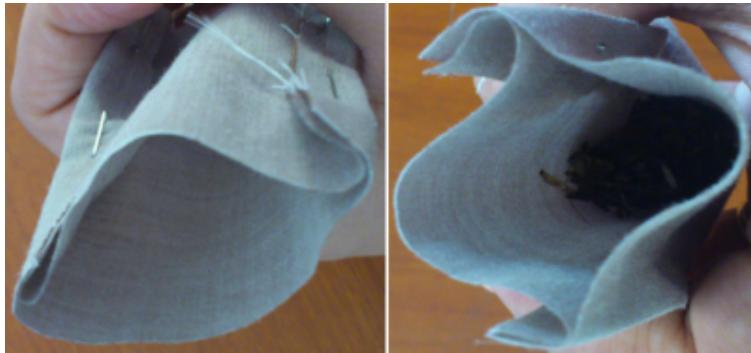
Then she folded the cloth on the sides and stapled it. She added more staples till the sides were properly closed.



Next she opened the top to make a wide mouth and filled it with Mama's favorite tea leaves. Papa said, "Tania don't fill up the bags. Make them only half full. One spoon should be enough."

"Why Papa?"

"When the bags are put in the hot water the tea leaves soak up the water and become bigger. You need to leave enough space for them to expand."



"I see!" said Tania and filled each of the bags till they were half full. Then she folded the top of each bag, put a piece of ribbon from her craft set and stapled it closed.



Tania finished making all 10 tea bags. Then she stapled over each ribbon twice to make sure it was firmly attached. After she was done she showed the tea bags to Papa. Papa gave her an envelope big enough to hold all ten tea bags.

Tania wrote a birthday message for Mama on the envelope. Then she filled it with the tea bags and sealed it. Mama's birthday gift was ready. Papa told Tania he was proud of her creativity and resourcefulness.



Tania can't wait to give Mama the gift. But Mama's birthday is still two days away. Looks like Tania will have to learn patience. Mama has just returned from her shopping trip. The next two days are going to be very challenging

for little Tania. But I am sure she will succeed in surprising Mama on her birthday.