

## **T.I.P.S. (TO INSURE PROMPT SERVICE)**

by Marisa Torre

The lonely summer before gr 9 Marianita almost dies having her first period but is saved by Anitamarie's ghost who becomes a new BFF protecting Marianita from the League of Reapers and the dark evil forces of High School.

ages 9-18 and parents  
family dramedy and occult fantasy

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### **T.I.P.S. (TO INSURE PROMPT SERVICE)**

The lonely summer before grade 9 Marianita almost dies having her first period but is saved by Anitamarie's ghost who reluctantly becomes a secret new BFF protecting Marianita from the League of Reapers and the dark evil forces of High School.

Anitamarie (Anita) was 14 yrs old when she died in 1813 birthing her first child. Anita is visible only to Marie in her 1813 dress and has a strong French accent.

**MARIANITA** (Marie) is a well-adjusted 14 year old girl facing many firsts:

- Her first period
- Her first part-time job at her Dad's bistro
- Her first year of high school
- Her first year without her grade school BFF
- And the first summon to her doppelganger ghost

**ANITA-MARIE** (Anita) is a newly summoned ghost also facing many firsts:

- Her first awakening
- Her first freedom from working at her father's pub
- Her first year of the future
- Her first year without flesh and physical matter
- And the first summon from her dreaming doppelganger mortal

The two girls have many other parallels even 200 years apart as they both:

- Are Francophone in an Anglophone world
- Lost their Mothers at 6 years of age
- Were brought back to their father's Anglophone life
- Work in the food-service industry for their fathers
- Experience a form of biological maturity at age 14
- Experience each other's profound loneliness, their life and death

LEAGUE OF REAPERS fight Anita to take Marie's life to allow an evil replacement.

#### **CONSTANTINE CALLAS**

Marie's Toronto born-and-raised father owns the Constant Bonne Cuisine bistro. He was a business major at McGill University in Montreal when he met his Quebecoise-born-and-raised wife/Marianita's mother.

They fell in love and he stayed to live in Montreal when Marianita was born. When his wife died Marie was 6 yrs old and he moved with her back to Toronto. He opened his own bistro and has married Marianita's step-mother, Kate. Now, as Marianita is turning 14, he is very short-staffed for his busiest season ever and has to insist that Marie work at the bistro.

He has an otherwise affectionate relationship with Marie.

He speaks English to her and she speaks French to him.

KATE is Marie's Toronto born-and-raised new step-Mom, cares for her very much, but doesn't speak French, has a polite but detached rapport with Marie

Seasonally changed Characters: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS and TEACHERS  
BISTRO STAFF and CLIENTS  
HISTORICAL GHOSTS /REAPERS

EVERY episode the LEAGUE OF REAPERS is intent on taking Marie's life as owed to them for their own malevolent purpose and Anita fights to keep her alive. First season Marie has NO idea the danger that follows her.

MAJOR weekly conflict would alternate from;

- school-life issue with a minor bistro-life issue and then
- bistro-life issue with a minor school-life issue.
- simple issues, usually based on Marie's loneliness, but engaging and relatable to a teen-age and parent audience.

School-life issues follow the school calendar for events and a season per grade:

- First day of school; new schedule, new teachers and subjects, lunchroom
- Making new friends, getting to know teachers, work-load
- Extra curricular activities - sports, school play, concert etc
- First school dance, cute boys, snarky girls, difficult teachers
- Thanksgiving weekend, Halloween, Christmas, exams, March Break etc

Bistro-life issues include her family dynamics and her progress as an employee.

- Marie begins to interact with customers
- some are rude, difficult, some are cute boys, some are strange,
- once or twice a season she gets followed or frightened
- Anita gives TIPS how to do the job, handle the customers, co-workers
- pops in and out of material things or offers a rescue.
- can be used for events like poetry readings, live music, comedy night etc

Anita helps Marie not just with advice, but to find information to her advantage;

- popping in and out of lockers, lap-tops, desk drawers, cell phones
- hears what they say behind her back
- helps her be cool at parties, sport try-outs, auditions etc
- helps Marie remember information while writing her exams.

Marie starts to make friends and have dates Anita doesn't approve of because they will betray her. Anita warns her but Marie doesn't believe it until she needs a rescue.

Anita walks among them in 1813 clothes, but only Marie can see or hear her. Sometimes Anita's motives are selfish, to live as a teen-ager through Marie, and sometimes she's also just there to ease her own loneliness.

HALLOWEEN EPISODE or HOLIDAY SPECIAL

This time Anitamarie's dream brings Marianita to 1813 Paris, in her clothes of today, where Anita is now 16 and living with both her parents, all alive and well. Her father is an affluent tea merchant and her mother a courtesan chanteuse who entertains the nobles at the palace 'tea garden', which resembles the Constant Bonne Cuisine bistro, but in 19<sup>th</sup> Century clothes and décor. Anitamarie is happy at first that her people can see and hear Marianita until they question her clothes and speech and decide she must be stoned as a witch.

More to follow...

SERIES OPENER SCENES :

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

On the front veranda, KATE, 32, new wife and step-mother, watches MARIANITA (Marie), 14, new step-daughter, slowly get out of the back seat of a family car laden with luggage.

Marie closes the car-door and stands on the sidewalk. She watches the car slowly drive away, waving sadly.

A same-age young girl leans out the car window waving back to Marie as the car goes down the residential city street, until it is out of sight.

Kate watches her standing sadly on the sidewalk until Marie turns and runs into the house.

Marie, on the brink of tears, just wants to get past Kate and into the house so she can run upstairs to her room.

Kate tries to say *something* but just lets it go then reluctantly follows her in.

INT. MARIE'S ROOM - DAY

Marie enters her room, makes a half effort to close her door, plops to sit on her bed and drops her head to the pillow to curl up on the bed.

She's just about to break out into a full sob when she sees Kate approach her door and regrets not taking the time to close it.

Kate politely KNOCKS on the door before she enters and catches Marie immediately sit up and wipe her face.

KATE

Listen, I know this isn't a good time, but I promised your Dad I'd tell you he wants to see you right away.

MARIE

It's Ok.

KATE

You're not gonna like what he has to tell you

MARIE

Not that again.

KATE

Yeah, but, this time he has no choice. We've tried everything to avoid it.

(off Marie's sulk)

I can give you a ride there

MARIE

(gets up)

It's just around the corner, I think I can manage.

KATE

I was gonna make lunch, I got your favourite sausages.

MARIE

(steps toward the door)

I can eat there

Kate is desperate to make Marie understand.

KATE

Look, I'm sorry about your friend. I know it sucks, you've been friends since grade 1 and she spoke French and now you have to start high school alone and it's scary. I know that

MARIE

(stops and winces and exhales)

KATE

(to the back of her head)

But, I dunno, you've still got us, and then you'll make a new friend and besides you guys can still text and talk on the phone all day and all night, just like before

MARIE

No. Her phone was on her Dad's business, now that he's gone to work in New York...

KATE

-it's disconnected.

MARIE

She won't get another one til  
they get settled

KATE

(quietly) Shit.

MARIE

(still facing the door)  
I gotta go.

Kate

(nods helplessly)  
I'll be there soon.

INT. BISTRO - DAY

A few tables have people eating and others are cluttered  
with tableware and leftovers from customers who have left.

Marie speaks to the EMPLOYEE behind the counter who sends  
her to an office door.

INT. BISTRO OFFICE - DAY

MARIE

(animated and upset)  
Papa, je ne veux pas travailler!

CONSTANT

Honestly Marianita, I have no  
choice! Another staff just bailed  
on me today. Until I can hire and  
train some new people I need you  
to help out and that's it.

Marie rants under her breath in French that she's too young,  
she just doesn't want to and he can't do this...

CONSTANT (cont)

It's just simple stuff; cleaning,  
sweeping, washing, so the rest of  
us can do the serving and cooking.

CONSTANT (cont)

(gets in her face, tames her  
Franco-rant)

Look, I know this sucks for you.  
Trust me, the last thing I want  
around me is a mopey, pissed-off  
teen-ager that hates my guts for  
screwing up her summer.

(off Marie's eye rolls)

I'll pay you 10 bucks an hour ...  
give it a try at least. It's  
something to do now that your  
friend is gone.

(off Marie's shrug)

You can use the internet in my  
office, you don't have to be here  
til 11 in the morning -and all  
the brioche you can eat

MARIE

avec du café?

CONSTANT

Avec espresso!

Marie smiles at her Dad's effort but quickly remembers the  
prospect of a friendless summer and blanks again.

CONSTANT

And when it's not busy, you can  
take off for a while.  
C'mon, you can start by clearing  
those tables before the lunch  
rush starts. Kate will be here  
soon to cook. The summer will be  
over before you know it; you'll  
have some money, make some  
friends -you'll see.

Marie tries to hide that it's of no consolation to her,  
shrugs and plods out of the office.

INT. BISTRO - THAT NIGHT (closing time)

Marie is bussing the last table.  
Employee prepares the bank deposit at the cash register  
and Constant pops out from the backroom

CONSTANT

C'mon depeche-toi with that last one, I wanna run the dish washer before we go.

Marie pockets the loonies, gives the table a final wipe and brings the load of dishes to him.

She walks over to the employee at the cash register leans on the counter and slides the 'TIPS' jar from one hand to the other.

MARIE

My Dad said I could keep the tips on the tables when I clean them.

EMPLOYEE

(looks up agreeably and nods)  
Yeah. I get the tips added to the bill and the counter staff gets the tips in that jar before they leave.

MARIE

(nods and thinks)  
Why do they call it 'tips'?

EMPLOYEE

(looks up from cash)  
I don't know

Counter staff, ready to go, comes over to count the tips

MARIE

Hey, why do they call it tips?

COUNTER STAFF

I dunno.

Employee zips up the bank bag and finishes the paperwork as Constant comes over to take the bag.

MARIE

Why do they call it 'tips'?

CONSTANT

(thinks and shrugs)  
I don't know.

MARIE

Huh, qui sait?



INT. MARIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Marie plods, tired, into her room and sits on her bed.

She pulls out her cell phone to look at it, then slams it closed again and starts to cry.

It suddenly occurs to her that there might be an email and goes directly to sit at her computer to check. After a few quick clicks we can see from her expression that there's nothing and she tears up again. Eventually, she gets up to prepare for bed.

She pauses to pull out her tips and scowls at them. She puts the money on her desk and sees a red mark on the chair cushion she had just been sitting on.

She touches it and it stains her finger, still wet. She's confused.

It occurs to her there might be something on her rear-end. While she's at the mirror to look behind her she sees the same sort of red stain on her bed where she sat. She looks horrified and goes to her bathroom.

INT. MARIE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Marie looks at her underpants, horrified. There's no doubt about it. It's her period. She goes instinctively for her phone, flips it and has already speed-dialed when she remembers and slaps it shut as the operator starts to answer "I'M SORR-". She breaks out into a full-out sob sitting on the toilet.

INT. MARIE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

The rim of the toilet is imprinted on the back of her legs as she flushes a toilet-bowl full of blood and then reads the instructions on a box of feminine napkins.

INT. MARIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Her hair is now wet from a shower, she's changed into a clean short pajama and her eyes are puffy and blood-shot. She reaches for a framed picture of her mother and hugs it to her chest as she lays down on her bed, sobbing.

INT. MARIE'S ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Marie is asleep.

Kate has come in to check on her and turn off the light.

She can't see the stain on the chair at the computer, and the blood stain on the bed is under Marie's leg.

Kate tries to take the frame away from Marie's sleepy clutches but she knows it's her Mom and it won't budge without waking her so Kate just leaves it.

She turns off the light and closes the door quietly behind her when she leaves.

And we see what Marie is dreaming:

EXT. 1813 TEA GARDEN - NIGHT (DREAM)

Marianita is in the same clothes of earlier that day.

She is all by herself, bussing a table, but instead of the square plastic container of the bistro, she is putting dishes into a round straw basket.

She looks up to see where she is;

Another bistro, outside on a summer night, about the same size as her father's bistro.

All the tables and chairs are fashionably draped in fancy fabric with fancy lacey ties, candles have dripped wax around the holders and bolted to the middle of each table is a small, locked box with a slot on top and written on the side "To Insure Prompt Service"

Marianita brings the basket to the counter in front of a wall of fancy boxes labeled as "tea".

She sees a newspaper on the counter and reads the date, Aug 20, 1813.

She sees an elegantly engraved wooden sign  
TOWNSEND TAVERN TEA GARDEN Purveyors of Fine Teas

With one step she is all the way across the room. She parts the curtains in front of a door marked PRIVATE.

She opens the door and with another step she is at the top of a long stairway.

She takes another step and...

INT. 1813 ANITAMARIE'S BEDROOM - (DREAM)

Marianita finds herself in a bedroom.  
A young woman is in bed sleeping with a swaddled infant  
clutched in her arms, the same way Marianita clutched the  
picture of her Mom.

ANITAMARIE is immediately standing in front of Marianita.  
For now we only ever see Anitamarie from the waist up.

ANITAMARIE (French accent)  
Oh, you are here.

She is very comforting and pleasant.  
But there's something that horrifies Marianita.  
With another step:

EXT. 1813 ROAD - NIGHT (DREAM)

Marianita is outside; a dark starry night, walking alone  
on a long road.  
First there is nothing but a span of empty fields on both  
sides and a long empty road ahead of her.

Then, on the same long empty road, but on both sides there  
are shops and cafes and parties, full of people enjoying  
each others' company  
But no one on the road itself except her.

Then the empty fields return and there are people walking,  
strolling together in couples on either side of the road.

It makes her walking alone more emphatic.  
She's sobbing and clutching herself when Anitamarie  
approaches her from behind.

ANITAMARIE  
Where are you going? I think you  
are supposed to be with me.

Marianita looks at her and sees that Anitamarie looks  
exactly like her.

INT. 1813 ANITAMARIE'S BEDROOM - (DREAM)

They take another step and they are back in the bedroom  
again standing face to face

MARIANITA

Are you me?

ANITAMARIE

I do not know. Perhaps you are me?

MARIANITA

I dunno, I think I'm dreaming

ANITAMARIE

Oh! Well then, look,  
(points to her self sleeping)  
I am dreaming too! That explains  
it! I can be who ever you want.

MARIANITA

Can you be my Mother?

ANITAMARIE

Oh, but I am already a mother!  
Come and look at my beautiful  
daughter.

(steps towards the bed)  
I just had her all by myself.

MARIANITA

-All by yourself?

ANITAMARIE

(Pauses sadly)  
Yes, I am alone now in the world.  
First my mother died en voyage from  
Paris to New Amsterdam when I was 6  
years old. My Father was killed in  
the rebellion, and my husband died  
in the war

(a beat)  
It's the middle of the night ...  
do you have people?

MARIANITA

(Struck sad and pensive)  
I have a best-friend, but she  
just moved away with her family  
to New York, and my Mom died when  
I was 6 too, now all I have is my  
Dad and my step-Mom...

ANITAMARIE

This is not better than to be  
alone?

MARIANITA

They're not for me, they're for  
each other. Susie was just for me,  
I was the only friend she had,  
and she was MY only friend, like  
sisters -better than sisters...  
You don't have a friend?

ANITAMARIE

I am too wealthy for the working  
girls and too working class for  
the society families...  
-but now I have my daughter, she  
will be with me forever!  
I have not given her a name yet  
come and see-

Anitamarie takes Marianita's hand and feels it cold and  
clammy, sees her pale and drawn.

MARIANITA

No, I think I wanna go back now,  
I'm tired.

ANITAMARIE

(Still cheerful and kind)  
Very well then, since you have  
come to my dream, I will come to  
yours

Anitamarie (Anita) steps towards her and they are back in  
Marianita's (Marie) bedroom.

INT. MARIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT- (DREAM)

ANITA

(looks around fascinated)  
Oh you must be from the future,  
perhaps this is what awaits my  
infant daughter when she has her  
own?  
(Sees cell phone and the laptop)  
What are these instruments?

Marie doesn't physically speak the words, she is getting weaker, but Anita isn't even aware she hears her thinking

MARIE (V.O.)

It's a cell phone and a computer,  
they're like communication devices

Marie opens the phone, brings up her father's number.

MARIE (V.O.)

See if I press here, it calls my  
Dad.

Marie almost drops it down on the desk, then goes to the bed and resumes her real-life sleeping position while Anita investigates some more.

ANITA

How very extraordinary.  
(turning to Marie)  
I must remember all of this when I  
wake to tell my daughte-

Anita sees Marie on the bed, in her pajama again, clutching the frame and notices an excessive pool of blood around Marie's legs.

Anita panics around the room then looks at the laptop and open cell phone on the desk.

She remembers in V.O. "communication devices"  
Anita yells at them for help!  
And of course gets nothing.  
She tries to remember what she heard Marie say.

MARIE (V.O. filtered)

*If I press here it calls my Dad.*

But Anita's fingers can't impact on the keys because she is not of physical matter and she panics again.  
She stares at the phone and 'wills' her hand to enter the cell phone.

As it skims the other contacts they light up until she reaches "Dad" and concentrates.

It sends a surge of energy and we see the cell phone indicate "calling Dad".

She goes over to Marie to watch her sleep until her Dad enters the room, sees the blood and calls 911 on his cell.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The DOCTOR explains to Constant and Kate

DOCTOR

She's experienced a form of  
hemorrhaging called  
"Endometrionic Hyperplasia".  
It was lucky she got here when she  
did. If she lost even just another  
half litre of blood, it would have  
been fatal.  
She'll be fine now; you should go  
home and get some rest.

INT. MARIE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT- (DREAM)

Marie is sleeping and looking healthy again but with tubes  
connecting her to machines and intravenous fluids.

Anita, in her own bedclothes, appears at the bedside and  
Marie's dreaming self sits up to thank her.  
Anita takes her hand and shrugs, then motions for her to  
come with her

ANITA

Come, back for a moment. I want  
to introduce to you my daughter;  
perhaps you can help me name her.  
It will be a nice souvenir, no?

Marie nods happily and the dreaming Marianita slides off  
the hospital bed and into her day clothes of before by the  
time her feet reach the floor.

The girls take a step and they are returned to  
Anitamarie's room as before about to look at the baby.

INT. ANITAMARIE'S 1813 BEDROOM - DAY- (DREAM)

There is a CLAMOURING at the door!  
Knocking and rattling the door knob, they call out  
"Mrs. Townsend! Mrs. Townsend! Are you alright!?"  
Two women burst in and go straight to the bed.  
Anitamarie watches perplexed, she doesn't understand.  
She looks at herself on the bed then looks at herself  
standing; she looks at Marianita who is equally confused.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Woman shakes Anitamarie on the bed to wake her and the baby rolls, pale and ashen, lifeless. She gives it to 1<sup>st</sup> Woman who covers the face of the baby.

2<sup>ND</sup> WOMAN

Why, she's stolen an infant!  
Where else would she get a child?

Anitamarie goes directly to the child to take it away from her but can't.

Marianita can see that the baby is dead, but Anitamarie hasn't noticed yet.

While the women are calmly talking, dreaming Anitamarie is screaming at the top of her lungs:

ANITAMARIE

No! I do not steal this baby! She  
is mine!

(looks at Marianita)

Help me!!

Anitamarie continues to yell at the women and grab at the baby but it's no use

1<sup>ST</sup> Woman notices wetness on her fingers, when she looks at it, it is blood and she peaks under the covers.

We now see Anitamarie in full figure, that from the waist down, her bed clothes are drenched in blood.

1<sup>ST</sup> WOMAN

No, I think it is indeed of her  
very own bearing

ANITAMARIE

(still tries to grab the baby)  
Oh yes!! Yes!! Now give her back  
to me!!

2<sup>ND</sup> WOMAN

(Covering the baby)

Well then, perhaps she was not  
just fattened after all.

1<sup>ST</sup> Woman throws back the covers to reveal extremely blood-soaked bedding and hey gasp.

She places the back of her hand on Anitamarie's forehead, pulls the covers over Anitamarie's head and they leave the room.



Anitamarie screams at the women and chases them to the door as they leave with her baby

ANITAMARIE

Come back! She is mine, only mine!!  
I would not be so alone anymore!

Anitamarie is screaming and clawing the air, trying to get out, but she can't cross the threshold of the open door.

Marianita goes to Anitamarie to see what she can do, but there's a force that holds her back and she can't cross the threshold either.

Anitamarie has fallen to the floor, weeping, sobbing.

Marianita turns in defeat and goes to comfort Anitamarie.

Anitamarie sobs into Marianita's shoulder.

ANITAMARIE

I want to die! I want to die...

MARIANITA

I think you already did.

Anitamarie looks at her bed-ridden and covered self

ANITAMARIE

I am not asleep? I am not asleep?  
I am not asleep?

Anitamarie's words become Marie's and Marie awakens in her hospital bed

INT. MARIE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

MARIE

I'm not asleep. I'm not asleep

She's fully awake and panics when she looks around until she sees Anita's head asleep on her hand on the bed.

*END SCENE*

Submission Title: (T.I.P.S.) TO INSURE PROMPT SERVICE

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MARISA TORRE

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