

“You never were. World without end, amen.” And with a practiced sweeping motion, Mora’s mother dismissed the heirloom platter and the fresh coconut cake it held straight to the summer asphalt.

*Any good. Never were any good. World without end, amen.* That’s what she’d meant to say. Her mother had fumbled her signature tagline “World without end, amen”. Maybe if the world never ended, she’d drop cake after cake and platter after platter, world without end, amen. At this, Mora chuckled. This particular platter had been special and she couldn’t imagine what she might do with the pieces. She had a house full of coasters, nesting tables and a nice lazy Susan that’d once held an Italian crème cake for her aunt’s 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary party. Now it was a rotating home to salt, pepper and napkins.

Mora watched the creamy icing fill the voids in the asphalt as flakes of coconut swirled round in the humidity. She’d messed up...she’d parked too close to the rhododendrons crushing a few of the virgin mauve blooms. Even as she did, nervous giggles escaped her lips. She knew what was coming. Now, she was minus one heirloom platter and plus some mosaic concoction to be determined; her house was full of them --“wrong” parking places. A forgotten bottle of French salad dressing, salted butter rather than unsalted or cool whip that was or wasn’t the extra creamy kind...she couldn’t recall. Numerous platters-to-mosaic beauties had resulted from flying insects Mora’d let in through the front door – not all of them stinging or even biting varieties. All of these transgressions had resulted in the “dropped platter”. Over the years, the precision with which her mother executed the drop had morphed into an almost like parlor trick where, with a single 90-degree lift, and a magician’s release, the platters fell dead center between her mother’s hands to the ground.

Mora looked at the ground. Somehow, the cake had mushroomed over the platter and contained the mess so that no broken pieces had escaped. This made for an especially easy cleanup. She sifted through the debris wanting desperately to lick the ruins as she pulled shards from the white cake, still warm from the oven. She cupped a small piece from the top and shoved it in her mouth. Delicious. She had to admit. Even without the maraschino cherry on top, it was delicious. *That was it. That’d been the final straw. The cherry on top.* She’d forgotten the cherry. *Damn!*

At home the oven warmed, the crème cooled in the refrigerator and a jar of maraschino cherries was visible from where Mora worked on a new mirror for her bathroom. She’d get it right this time. She’d bring the cake back just in time for dessert, before everyone was done eating crown roast with rosemary potatoes, before they were done wiping their mouths with the crisp linens and setting their silver at 3 o’clock. She’d be everyone’s hero this time. Arriving just in time with a fresh coconut cake, still warm, maraschino cherry on top. World without end, amen.

-end