

Can I Have a Title Here?

by S.H. Gall

At the company luncheon, the dessert course came first. The servers were tense and unresponsive and we knew something was off.

After the pudding or mousse came an undressed salad. Several minutes later came dressings — balsamic, ranch — with ladles. Shortly after came the bread basket, so that we could use the plate of butter pats which was there when we sat down.

Finally, the entree came. It was enormous. A head of broccoli, a heap of potatoes gratin, spinach slopping over the plate, and a whole chicken baked with some sort of herb rub. Every plate cleared was still covered in food.

All along, in the corner of the ballroom, a bungee cord rested on a toddler's rocker.

Everyone agreed it was strange from all angles. Even small blackened Minnie, for whom I'd inadvertently saved the seat adjacent by placing on it my hat and bag. She ate all of her broccoli, requested two coffees, never removed her own hat.

At luncheon's end, there was a makeshift raffle. The emcee conducted a quiz comprised of seven questions. The only way to answer was to be the first to stand and shout it out. The attendee with the most correct responses won the prize.

We never got to question seven. By question five, there was an all out melee with people tripping over themselves to be first, and then toppling those near them with zeal bordering on hysteria. I gave a deep sigh of relief, dodged the madness by crawling under chairs and tables, and retrieved my bungee cord and toddler's rocker.

They were never mine, but people forget that bungee cords are for tying things down, not for jumping off tall structures to an uncertain fate. And toddler's rockers belong to no one, or everyone. There's no in between.

