

Potluck

By Jeffery Greb

“Oh! You’re early!”

“Yes. I thought I’d arrive before anyone else got here.”

“To help?”

“To help, yes.”

“Why that’s so nice. Especially since . . .”

“Since what?”

“You know, since we haven’t exactly seen eye to eye lately. Well, that’s all water under the bridge now! Let me take your dish. What is it? Some sort of a dessert?”

“A just dessert.”

“Well, what is it?”

“Try it and see. I made it with you in mind.”

“I couldn’t. Have dessert before anyone else even arrives?”

“Why not? As I said, I made it for you.”

“Because of our . . . troubles?”

“Exactly.”

“Well, since you put it that way, maybe just a taste. Oh my! You *were* thinking of me! You know how much I love almonds.”

“Yes. Those are European almonds I specially ordered, just for you. I also made an almond extract to fold into the cake batter.”

“It’s simply heavenly! It’s divine!”

“Have some more. Please. I insist.”

“Do you really think I should? I mean, no one else is here.”

“Why should that stop you?”

“Well, perhaps just a bit more.”

“I’m so pleased you like it. I counted on it. Come now, take a nice big slice.”

“Well, it is yummy, and if you’re sure no one else would mind.”

“How can anyone mind if they don’t know? That’s it. Don’t leave any on the plate. You don’t want the others to find out, do you?”

“I feel bad.”

“Why should you feel bad?”

“No, I mean I suddenly have a headache and feel woozy.”

“You know, I also counted on the fact that you’re the type of person to eat before your guests arrive.”

“I’m getting clammy.”

“Yes. Your blood pressure is rising. You’re about to have a seizure.”

“A seizure?”

“Yes. Don’t worry, it’ll all be over soon. The ‘European’ almonds are illegal in this country. They can give you cyanide poisoning. Can even kill a person, if they eat enough. I wanted you, for once, to understand how much you hurt people. Ah, there you go. It’s going to become very difficult to breath. Sorry, but I can’t stay. I really must be going. Go ahead and keep the dish.”