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FREE SPACE

By Tara Meddaugh

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Amelia spends her days under the watchful eye of her mother, doing the same nothing she has done for years. Yet when Bingo arrives at her local community center, a talking Bingo chip convinces Amelia that forming her own game is the way out of this life and away from her controlling mother. However, as her mother begins acting like a newly arrived sister, and the chip becomes increasingly dominating, Amelia discovers her new life is nothing as she imagined.

THE DOG TOENAIL (excerpt from *Free Space*)

Setting: Ricky is a hardworking, kind and straight-forward young man at the local cannery. When Amelia comes to visit him, she confesses to a mistake her family has made. Ricky attempts to make her feel better about this.

RICKY

Mistakes happen though. To you and your mom, and it happened here at the cannery once—a lady came in a few months ago and said that she found a dog toenail in her can of corn! And that was not on the label. She was gonna sue us or something, but then the foreman gave her a free case full of canned corn and also some canned peas, because she said she really liked peas a lot better than corn anyway. I told her if she just got the canned peas instead of the corn in the first place, she wouldn'ta had this problem and it woulda saved her some time that morning. But she just kinda smiled and said everything always works out for the best. And I think it did for her, because she was beamin' as she packed her car up with that case of cans, and I don't think she was thinkin' anything about that dog toenail at all anymore.

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