

For many years the Tea Cup sat on the best shelf, much admired and much beloved, taken down for only the most important guests to sip their organic blended teas.

"Tea tastes better from this cup!" they would exclaim.

She remembered all the "*Not Yets*"—the times she'd questioned The Maker as he shaped and formed and fired the fragile clay form she once was. *Well*, she thought, *I'm happy those days are behind me!*

One day the Maker stood nearby. *He's watching me serve*, the Tea Cup mused as she served.

Out of the corner of her eye, the Tea Cup saw the Maker do the unthinkable. He stuck out His foot and tripped the owner, sending the Tea Cup to the floor and shattering her into dozens of pieces.

"How dare You?" Screamed the Tea Cup. "I saw what You did! I watched you trip my owner so I would fall and be smashed to ruin. You said You made me perfect and beautiful. Even my owner is crying over my destruction. She loved me! You have broken her heart and mine!"

The Maker looked at the Tea Cup, but offered no explanation as He walked away. Not even a "*Not Yet*".

The misshapen pieces of the Tea Cup sat a long time in a box in an upper workroom.

"My perfect, much admired form," she wept. "My beautiful, much beloved pattern," she mourned.

One day the owner sat down to repair the Tea Cup, fitting and gluing the broken pieces together. To the Tea Cup's horror there were cracks, crooked pieces, and gaping holes from missing pieces.

"The Maker would have done a better job," the Tea Cup wailed. "I'll never hold tea again!"

"Hide me! Don't let the important people see how low the Maker has brought me. Don't let anyone see the damage and ruin and uselessness I've come to!"

She sat on the worktable for the longest time, silent and alone. One day the owner put a candle in her cracked shell, placed her by a comfortable chair and began reading the Maker's Good Book.

The Tea Cup listened to her owner's prayers for healing, but her frail body weakened until she was confined to her bed. The family placed the Tea Cup on the bedside table so the Light of Hope could warm the air and cheer her departing soul.

Generations of family members placed the Tea Cup Candle in the window to light weary travelers home. Occasionally she'd recall the questions she had for the Maker and His "*Not Yets*", but the memories would quickly fly far away.

At the end of the Age the Maker came back for His Tea Cup. She felt the warmth of His smile melting her back to clay as He whispered, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter now into thy rest."

Sequel written by Nicola.