

Jars

by Joel James Davis

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She kept them all in jars.

Marbles. Paperclips. Coins. Buttons. Rainbow-colored pipe cleaners twisted into the concentric circles of hell.

She kept them all in jars.

Like she had been kept.

She was short, much girth, a corpulent woman of sixty. Her head was flat, her ample backside smooth and round like the inside of the jar that had contained her for more than thirty years.

One spring day she went to the market and bought jars of food. Plastic jars, glass jars. Large jars, diminutive jars. The vast shopping basket became a mound of jars. Almost at the checker, an unbalanced glass jar of golden honey succumbed to gravity and plummeted. A short man, maybe fifty-five years old, appeared from nowhere and saved the jar from permanent damage.

She looked to thank him. Their eyes volleyed back and forth something foreign.

Smiles and blushing ensued.

Exchange of telephone numbers, additional smiles, butterflies fluttering.

At home, her mind saw the man over, over, over. He was the first man not to mind her shape. She was elated.

She exited her basement storage and said to the jars, as was tradition, *Goodbye to you all!* as she terminated the light. Just then the phone rang, echoing like a hollow scream for

help. It was the man from the market. *Are you free?* he asked. *When? Tonight. Hold on, please.* Sweaty palm over the mouthpiece, she took deep breaths. *Is this actually happening?* She asked herself.

Yes, I'm free.

They went out that night and twenty-one straight nights. Three weeks of pure joy for her. This was the man she had dreamed about since her husband had died eighteen years prior.

He deluged her with gifts and, of course, jars. Jars of all sizes. He had never seen her collection, but her knew the jars were her passion. Right then it seemed an appropriate time to include him in that intimate part of her life.

Her jars.

That night she asked him to wear the suit, tie, aftershave she had gifted him. When he arrived, she told him of her surprise and to close his eyes. Holding hands, they descended into the basement where she turned on the light to expose the rows and rows and rows of jars.

Floor to ceiling.

He kept his eyes closed as she led him to the ladder.

Open your eyes! she cried.

He first noticed the frowns on the faces of her eight children as they looked out at him through their respective jars. They were nicely dressed and shaped like their mother. The man saw her deceased husband suspended in a clear, thick liquid inside his own jar.

She then led the man up the ladder into his very own jar. She screwed down the top and could smell him through the small air holes.

I love you! she said. *You've made me so happy!*

She kissed his jar, waved to him and each of her frowning children. *Goodbye to you all!* she said as she killed the light and walked upstairs.