

## ***You Will Be Peter***

by

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### **Six Stone Jars**

All six travelers arrived in the village of Cana late that Wednesday afternoon. As they traversed the final hill, the valley revealed more orchards and crop fields. *Galilee really is beautiful*, Simon confirmed. *Hopefully, its vineyards produce wines that are just as fine*. He was still smiling as they grew closer to the houses huddled together on the hillside.

As they approached the village, the sounds of children's laughter and joyful conversations were intermixed with the loveliest music. Even the braying donkey sounded happy.

Simon was marveling at the masonry workmanship of the larger buildings, carved from limestone and granite, when Jesus announced, "It appears that we've arrived in time." The rabbi's smile revealed that he wasn't surprised.

The traditional wedding procession from the bride's father's home to the bridegroom's was underway. While the minstrel troop played at the front of the convoy, a squad of servants handed out dates to children along the road and wine to those of a more seasoned age.

A young girl, her dark, curly hair protruding from behind a white bridal veil, walked alone. Some of her relatives carried sprays of flowers, while others bore lit torches.

*Wonderful*, Simon thought. He loved his Jewish customs and celebrations.

Dusk was starting to creep in, as the parade's onlookers clapped and praised the bride's semi-concealed beauty. Jesus, Simon, and the others applauded before joining the back of the line, proceeding on to the bridegroom's home, where the young man would carry his betrothed over the threshold of their new marital home.

Upon arrival, Jesus gestured for his disciples to remove their sandals at the outer door, before proceeding onto the courtyard, which was being used as the reception hall.

From the first step in, Simon was impressed by the stone courtyard, which had been decorated for the great celebration. Adorned in ornamental rugs and cushioned couches, low tables were arranged for the guests to dine; each person would be expected to lay on one elbow with their feet positioned away from the table.

While servants scurried to and fro, carrying food and drink, Simon and his brethren washed their hands and feet, complying with the precepts of the ancient law. Upon drying their extremities, each was officially welcomed with a cup of water drawn from one of the large stone jars.

The sweet notes of a talented musical duo permeated the warm air, the harp and flute creating a simple but elegant symphony.

Quenching his thirst, Simon looked around. *Flowers*, he noted, *there are flowers everywhere*. He nodded his appreciation. *They've turned this courtyard into a garden*.

Beyond a table overlaid with bowls of fruits and nuts—even a stack of sweet date cakes—Simon spotted the intricately decorated Chuppah. Ivy, flowers, and greens were wrapped around four legs that had been fashioned from cedar timbers, approximately eight feet in height. It was just wide enough to host the bride, bridegroom, and officiating rabbi. The entire wooden frame was covered in a canopy of flowers—yellow, white, pink, and red—which had been strung together to create breathtaking strands of garland.

The sight of it instantly brought Simon's thoughts back to his wife. *No*, he scolded himself, quickly pushing the melancholy out of his head. *I'm here now, and I need to be here...and she understands*.

Catching the first whiff of roasting lamb, Simon turned to see Jesus and an older woman locked in a lengthy embrace. He needed no introduction to understand the scene. *She's his mother*. Mary was beauty in its purest form. She was not tall, but above medium height. Her oval face was slightly bronzed by the sun. Beneath black, slightly arched brows sat a pair of gentle, olive-colored eyes. Her hair was light and her nose slender, much like her hands. *But there's something more*, Simon thought, considering it. *She has an unmistakable aura*, he finally decided, *a striking beauty that can only come from within*. He studied the embracing pair further, while they swayed in each other's arms. *And she must be the most beautiful woman, having given birth to the Messiah*.

Breaking from the hug, Jesus and Mary held hands, exchanging a long, blissful look that revealed more about their sacred bond than any words ever could.

Jesus then turned to face his disciples. “Mother,” he said, “I would like you to meet my students.”

Without thinking, Simon was the first to step forward.

Jesus smiled. “Mother, this is Simon Peter.”

*Rock?* Simon swallowed hard, as he considered the peculiar title.

“Simon,” Jesus said, “this is my mother, Mary.”

It was the second time in the simple fisherman’s life that he could feel the air leave his lungs, only to remain lost while he fumbled for the right words. *Silence.*

Mary was gracious, even angelic. “I hope my son is taking good care of you?” she jumped in.

Simon smiled. “He is,” he managed.

As though offering her blessing, she nodded once.

John was the next to step forward, while Simon’s mind spun in circles. *What must it be like to be the mother of the Messiah?* he wondered, seeking out one of the servants for another cup of water. *And what will it take for the rest of us to truly follow him?*