

MASON JARS

CHARACTERS

MEEMAW: A widow in her early seventies. Suffers from dementia.

CHARLES LEE: A college professor, soon to be Meemaw's grandson-in-law. Thirties.

A note on casting: each character may be played by an actor of any race, but the actors should be different races.

SETTING: A farmhouse in rural Georgia. Meemaw's kitchen.

TIME: June 2022.

AT RISE: MEEMAW sits on the floor of the kitchen, every jar she owns laid out in front of her. Old jam jars of all shapes and sizes, canning jars, Ball jars. Some drinking glasses have snuck into the mix. She sorts through a bin of lids, matching lid to jar, one by one.

CHARLES LEE

(off)

Knock knock.

(He enters, carrying several full grocery bags.)

Meemaw? Are you sure you want to be sitting on the floor?

MEEMAW

I am not too old for this.

CHARLES LEE

No, ma'am. You don't look a day older than twenty-nine.

MEEMAW

You get a gold star for trying, Charlie.

CHARLES LEE

I just thought you might like a chair.

MEEMAW

Nope.

CHARLES LEE

I went and picked up everything you asked for, on the list you gave Laura--

MEEMAW

Where's Laura? You tell that girl she can take my truck and she can take my gun but she cannot make me sell my house.

CHARLES LEE

Laura really wanted to make it out, but she's tied up with the vendors.

MEEMAW

I will die in this house.

CHARLES LEE

She's doing a cake tasting.

MEEMAW

My own granddaughter blew me off to go eat a cake?

CHARLES LEE

Not a whole cake. Little slices of different flavors of cake, with different flavors of frosting. To decide which one we want for the wedding.

MEEMAW

You just gonna let her pick?

CHARLES LEE

She's the bride. Thought she should be the one to choose the cake.

MEEMAW

You're doing a groom's cake, then?

CHARLES LEE

My old fraternity brothers said they'd make brownies.

MEEMAW

You know, I cannot stand red velvet.

CHARLES LEE

We will absolutely keep that in mind. But I think her mind's set on carrot. She likes a carrot cake.

MEEMAW

Your guests'll probably be about fifty-fifty on that.

CHARLES LEE

She gave me your shopping list. I got everything you asked for. Four dozen mason jars and a twelve-pack of Coca-Cola.

MEEMAW

Where's my Coca-cola?

CHARLES LEE

I'll be right back with the Cokes. They're still out in the Prius.

MEEMAW

That's right. Your sissy-boy car. Did I ask for four dozen?

CHARLES LEE

Yes, ma'am. Apparently there's a supply chain issue on them because so many people have been canning lately. Prepper stuff, you know. Publix put a limit on them; two dozen per customer. So I bought two dozen, put them in my car, then went back inside and bought two dozen more.

MEEMAW

They didn't recognize you?

CHARLES LEE

No, ma'am. The second time, I wore a hat.

MEEMAW

I have another list somewhere. Things I forgot to ask for.

CHARLES LEE

Okay. Okay. I'm just curious, is all. About your project. Now, Laura had me keep those receipts, in case you change your mind. It looks like you've got plenty of jars at home.

MEEMAW

No. No, no, no! They all need to be the same size or it won't work!

CHARLES LEE

I think one of those might be a whiskey glass.

MEEMAW

No! I know I forget things. But I'm not stupid and I'm not useless, Charlie. I know how to take things apart and put them back together.

CHARLES LEE

I'm not correcting you, ma'am. But my name is Charles Lee. My mother was a decent Southern woman. Gave me two names.

MEEMAW

That's right. Charles Lee. You know, I still watch the news.

CHARLES LEE

Meemaw, we've talked about this. All the news does is make you angry.

MEEMAW

The news doesn't make you angry?

CHARLES LEE

Laura's got half a mind to take your satellite dish.

MEEMAW

Like hell she will.

CHARLES LEE

Meemaw, what are the jars for?

MEEMAW

You'll need these in Alabama.

CHARLES LEE

Mississippi, not Alabama, remember?

MEEMAW

Quit asking me if I remember things.

CHARLES LEE

Ole Miss made a good offer. Tenure-track. And rent's real cheap. It's a great place to start a family.

MEEMAW

Is it now? Because if my kids looked how yours and Laura's are gonna look, I damn sure wouldn't want to live in Mississippi.

CHARLES LEE

College towns are different. Progressive. What are the jars for?

MEEMAW

Laura ever tell you about Pickles? The cat, Pickles. We put off having her spayed until we could afford it. And we let her be a barn cat because it seemed like she wanted to be a barn cat, and you can guess how well that worked out. When they're in heat, the tomcats just follow them around. She was barely older than a kitten. She wouldn't have survived. The lid of the jar makes a seal. And the hose makes suction.

CHARLES LEE

You must've read that Times article. On those old time abortion kits made out of mason jars.

MEEMAW

What article?

(Charles Lee is silent.)

We saved enough money to get Pickles spayed that spring. And she lived to be fifteen years. An old, old cat. I'm an old woman. So I'll keep one, for the barn cats. And four dozen oughta be enough for you to take with. To your college town in Mississippi.

CHARLES LEE

Meemaw. What do you think I'm going to do with four dozen mason-jar abortion kits?

MEEMAW

Who said they were for you?

CHARLES LEE

Laura and I are already talking about starting a family.

MEEMAW

You should turn on the news and ask her again. If she doesn't want them in the house, that's fine. You can hand them out like Halloween candy. But quiet-like. Don't get yourself caught.

CHARLES LEE

You're asking me to break the law.

MEEMAW

I need that thirty feet of hose. Will you get it?

CHARLES LEE

...Okay. Okay, I'll get it. You need anything else from the Home Depot?

MEEMAW

You must really want me to like you, Charlie. Well. I do like you. So long as you don't knock up my Laura unless it's her idea. Lord knows her grandfather-- God rest his soul-- couldn't get that through his head. Gave me one after the other, like they were Christmas presents. A child is a gift, but I didn't need eight. Don't ask me which one I'd kill.

CHARLES LEE

Look, if you fall again, and we have to call someone? Don't show these jars to any police.

MEEMAW

I know how to take things apart. And how to put them back together.

CHARLES LEE

Okay, then. I'll go get you that thirty feet of hose.

Charles Lee exits.

MEEMAW

Charles Lee! Don't you leave here with my Cokes!

END OF PLAY.