

2022

Heart of Jars

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It was another late-night working at the museum, everyone had left, and she still had another box to go through and catalog before she could go home. Holding her clipboard, she had most of the boxes filled out.

Kelly loved her job but tonight she wasn't too happy with her boss. Mitch had been a pain in the ass since she had rejected his advances. He would assign her to work late hours or on projects that were meant for new hires.

Like tonight, this job fell into both categories. She told herself to suck it up and finish the job. It was the last item that was donated by an anonymous donor. It wasn't unusual except this piece looked ancient. As in, it is very expensive and old. Her fingers grazed over the smooth cold surface of deep black, yellow and reds, pictures on the sides.

"A pithos?" she stayed on top of artifacts that were moved around in the antiquities department. Kelly didn't recognize this one. It could have been a knockoff. Most likely a fake or a copy. Yet she couldn't take her eyes off it. There was something about this large jar that wasn't like anything she had seen in a while. She could have just left it and waited until tomorrow to do an in-depth recording of it.

Two hours later she sat in her office with the large Greek amphora sitting on the floor in front of her. It was slightly under five feet tall, she carbon dated it, and it was 800 BC, this piece was in pristine condition and was unheard of. No cracks, chips, or any other faults. It looked brand new but dated back to 800 BC. How? She had rechecked the box it came in, not tell tales of where this came from or who donated it to the museum. There had to be a trace somewhere.

She did have a tracking number and the company who dropped it off. They were going to be her first call in the morning. Kelly needed to find out who sent this here and why. How did it manage to stay in such pristine conditions? Why donate? Why not try to sell it to the museum?

Getting up she walked around her desk and stood next to the amphora. “Where did you come from?” she asked it. No answers.

“Okay so you’re going to play hardball?” she laughed.

She walked around it again, must have been a hundred times already tonight. “Damn Kelly, you’re really losing it,” she shook her head. Crossing over to the overstuffed chair in the corner she sat down and eyed the amphora. It was a long day and before she knew it, she had fallen asleep watching the amphora waiting for answers.

“Kelly?” Mitch shook her arm. “Kelly? Did you sleep here?”

“Wa? What?” she blinked her eyes open. The amphora was still sitting in her office.

“Did you go home last night?”

She shook her head no, “I was cataloging the new arrivals. I must have fell asleep.”

“Oh,” he looked at the amphora. “Is this one of them?”

She nodded as she got up and went over to her desk. “Yes, there is no info on its origin. I carbon dated it last night, 800 BC.”

His eyes narrowed, “really?” Mitch circled the amphora. “Really?”

“That’s what the tests said.”

“There’s no chips or cracks.”

“I know.”

“Who donated it?”

“Don’t know but I’m going to find out.”

“Keep me posted. Keep this piece in here until we find out more about it.”

She nodded as she picked up the phone and began calling her contacts.

It was lunch time, and she was no further ahead. The mysterious amphora was even more of a mystery.

“What did you find out?” Mitch poked his nose in her office.

“Well, the delivery people have no idea where it came from just that it was on their doorstep with an envelope of cash, ten times worth the delivery costs and instructions to deliver it here. No one showed up on their surveillance cameras, no trace of the donor.”

“Alright, let me make a few calls around to the people I know. Maybe someone will know something.”

“Sounds good.”

“We have another shipment from China that just came in this morning can you handle that?”

“Sure,” she got up and headed down to the receiving area. The rest of the afternoon was spent cataloging the two crates that were on loan by a billionaire tycoon, a friend of Mitch’s.

“Hey Kelly, do you want to grab a drink tonight?” one of the other technicians ask as she was leaving.

“Thanks, are you headed over to Sandro’s?”

“Yes.”

“Okay, I might see you there.” She headed back to her office to get her coat.

“Hey, do you have a minute?” Mitch stood in the doorway.

“Yes, what is it?”

“I’ve been on the phone all day. No one knows anything about this mystery amphora.”

“What does that mean?”

“Just that. It’s a mystery. Can you run the carbon dating process again?”

“Can it wait until tomorrow?”

“I’d prefer if you did it tonight.” He pressed his lips together.

“Alright,” she hung her coat back on the coat rack.

Mitch hovered over her shoulder.

“Look I can run it another three times but it’s not changing this amphora is 800 BC years old.”

“I see that.” He caressed the handle.

She walked over and ran her fingers over the top, the mouth of the amphora. It felt cool and smooth. Just like the rest of the jar.

“What’s that?” his eyes went wide.

“What’s what?” she looked at him.

“Can’t you hear it?”

“Hear what?”

“Someone is humming or singing.”

She stepped away from the amphora and looked around. It was just the two of them in the lab. No one else was there.

“It’s gone now.” He looked sad and confused.

She turned back to the amphora. Touching the side, “I suggest we put this on the second floor.”

“Wait, its back!” he looked wide eyed around the room. “Can you hear it?”

“Hear what?” she strained her ears trying to hear what he was hearing.

“It’s getting louder.”

“What is?” she whispered.

“The singing. It’s singing.”

“What are they singing?”

“I don’t know. It’s a different language.”

Kelly stepped back from the amphora and walked around the lab. She couldn’t hear anything. “Are you still hearing it?”

He shook his head, no. “It stopped.”

“That’s strange.”

“Wait, come back over here and touch the amphora again.”

“What?”

“Just humor me.”

She did as he requested. His eyes lit up. “I hear the singing again.”

She took her hands off the amphora.

“It stopped.”

Kelly touched the amphora with one finger.

“I hear it.”

She lifted her finger.

“It stopped.”

Kelly touched it again.

“I hear it, what the hell? Is this some kind of joke?”

“You tell me? I don’t hear anyone singing.”

“This is bizarre. You’re not doing this?”

“Doing what?” She felt annoyed.

“Kelly,” he reached out and touched her hand that was resting on the amphora.

Her eyes went wide; she could hear the singing. “What the hell is that?” she gasped.

“You hear it too?”

“Yes.”

He let go of her hand and it stopped. She reached out and touched his hand and could hear it again. It was getting louder.

“Okay that is really freaky,” she looked at him wide-eyed.

She pulled her hand back and stepped away from the amphora. Mitch stood there, still holding the handle. His brown eyes stared out in the distance, they flashed and turned a glowing yellow.

Swallowing hard she backed up into a chair and sat down in it. “Mitch?”

“Female human, you awoke me from my slumber.”

“I’m sorry,” she whispered. “Who are you?”

“Pandora.”

“As in the Pandora?” Kelly raised an eyebrow. “What do you want?”

“I’m hungry.”

“I can order pizza?”

“Pizza? What is that? No, come here.”

Kelly got up and walked over to Mitch. “I can get you anything you want; most restaurants are still open for at least another hour.”

Mitch looked at her, surveying her up and down. “No that is not necessary, and I really don’t know what you mean by that.” Mitch shoved his fingers into her chest, Kelly screamed and

tried to get away, but it was no use. She watched as he pulled her heart out of her chest, it was still beating as he took a bite out of it. Falling to the floor it was the last image she saw before everything went dark.