

GRANOLA
CRUMBS

AND

PAINT
CANS

BY BARBARA JACOBSON

As an artist I can be very messy. Our children think it's normal to look into drinking glasses before filling them to make sure there's no paint, and we often have palettes and brushes beside the dishes in the drainer. Because I work on big projects that require a lot of materials, the mess can be really big. Through it all, my husband, Mark, is understanding and supportive. He helps me gather and move my materials, and he walks around them without complaining when they pile up.

Mark likes to get up early every day to watch the history

programs on television while he eats handfuls of dry, crunchy granola. A couple of months ago I realized I often find little pieces of granola on his chair. At first I thought, "That's mildly annoying." I even commented on it one day in passing. I felt a little silly mentioning such a small thing, but I did it anyway.

A few days later I spied another speck of granola on Mark's chair. I picked it up and, with a smile, thought, "He does so much for me, I can forgive this." All my thoughts of my munching, TV-watching husband were kind and sweet. I felt awash with benevolent, forgiving feelings.

I determined that I would never mention the daily granola problem. Yes, because I was a great wife, I would



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

Give each family member a pencil and paper. Have them write down things that bother them, without sharing their ideas aloud. Read the article as a family. Discuss Matthew 7:3–4. Have them decide which of their concerns have eternal significance and which are like a "speck of granola." Conclude by singing verse five of "Truth Reflects upon Our Senses" (*Hymns*, no. 273).



just pick it up and never say a thing. I congratulated myself for how good I was being. I was totally unaware of my own self-righteousness.

As I walked into the kitchen with my speck of granola, I found masking tape stuck to the floor. Also, plastic palettes and brushes were lying about. Distracted by what I was looking at, I bumped into the three large walls of scenery I'd been painting for the ward's upcoming dance. I stood there and thought about how, for the past three weeks, whenever we wanted to use the stove, get into the refrigerator, or wash dishes, we had had to move the scenery from one side of the kitchen to the other.

It wasn't only the tape and backdrops that contributed to the mess. We hadn't been able to use the kitchen table for those three weeks either. Gallons of house paint, sponges, paint pens, glaze, brushes, and tools covered the table,



STRIVING FOR UNDERSTANDING

"If we will strive to love with understanding, the Spirit will teach us 'all things what [we] should do' (2 Nephi 32:5) to

achieve an eternal marriage pleasing to the Lord. Under the influence of the Spirit, our sympathy and love for our eternal companions will deepen, and we will come to know a happiness and contentment in marriage that the world will never know."

Elder Marlin K. Jensen of the Seventy, "A Union of Love and Understanding," *Ensign*, Oct. 1994, 51.

which years ago comfortably seated our family of eight.

As I looked back with wonder at the speck of granola in my palm, I could almost hear the scripture from Matthew as though it were being read out loud in a Church video.

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but

considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

"Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?" (Matthew 7:3–4).

I wondered how, with a beam in each eye, I could have seen such a small mote of granola at all.

I called my husband at work and told him about my experience. As we laughed together I thanked him for his tolerance and patience with me. It might have been a little thing, but it taught me a great lesson. ■