

BOTTLED UP

By Bradley Hayward

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ISBN 1-60003-640-6

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CHARACTERS

MASTER: Very depressed about life, male or female

GENIE: Hopped up on sugar and caffeine, male or female

SETTING

A blank stage.

AT RISE: It's a blistering hot day and sunlight blazes somewhere outside. MASTER enters with bottle of Coke and a lawn chair. HE looks like HE's having a bad day, or rather, a bad life. HE opens the chair and takes a seat. HE wipes sweat off his forehead and then slumps down in the chair. HE sighs and then unscrews the cap on his Coke.

MASTER: What a day. What a day.

(Suddenly, the light flares so bright that HE practically becomes invisible. When the lights return to normal, GENIE has appeared by his side. SHE is brimming with energy.)

GENIE: Hello, master! How can I be of service to you?

MASTER: Whoa, what?

GENIE: Hoo doggies, it feels great to be outside again!

(SHE stretches happily.)

When you've been cooped up as long as I have, there's nothing quite like a good stretch to get the blood pumping!

(SHE starts to run in circles around MASTER.)

Better than chocolate, I tell you.

MASTER: Excuse me?

GENIE: Better than chocolate!

(SHE does a cartwheel.)

MASTER: Who are you and where have you come from?

GENIE: Don't be silly. You know who I am!

MASTER: Is there a mental hospital around here?

GENIE: I'm your very own genie!

MASTER: You must have escaped.

GENIE: You bet I escaped.

MASTER: I'm calling the police.

GENIE: From a bottle!

MASTER: What?

GENIE: I'm a genie and I came from where all genies come from.

MASTER: Where's that?

GENIE: I already told you. A bottle!

MASTER: What bottle?

GENIE: Your bottle!

MASTER: I don't have a bottle.

GENIE: Of course you have a bottle.

MASTER: If I had a bottle, I would tell you I have a bottle.

GENIE: Then tell me you have a bottle because you do have a bottle.

MASTER: Now it doesn't even sound like a word.

GENIE: What doesn't?

MASTER: Bottle.

GENIE: *(dances all over the stage)* Bottle, bottle, bottle, bottle, bottle. You're right! It sounds like gibberish. Bottle, bottle, bottle, bottle, bottle!

MASTER: Will you stop that?!

GENIE: Would you like to make a wish now?

MASTER: Get a life, lady.

GENIE: That's why I'm here. To get *you* a life.

MASTER: I don't understand.

GENIE: I'm a genie and it would be my pleasure to grant you three wishes!

MASTER: My only wish is that you would go away.

GENIE: Very well.

(SHE waves her hands and the lights flare again. When they return, SHE is gone. MASTER is confused, but just shrugs his shoulders.)

MASTER: Nothing but wackos in this town.

(HE holds the Coke bottle up to his lips and is about to take a sip when HE is interrupted by GENIE's off-stage voice.)

GENIE: Please don't drink me.

MASTER: Who's that?

GENIE: Me.

MASTER: Me who?

GENIE: Your genie.

MASTER: I don't have a genie.

GENIE: Look in your bottle and see for yourself.

(Hesitantly, HE looks inside the Coke bottle. HE sees her and gasps.)

MASTER: Great Scott! There's a person in my bottle!

GENIE: I'm not a person. I'm a genie.

MASTER: It must be the heat. That's it. I'm having a heat stroke.
Fluids. I need fluids!

(HE goes for another sip.)

GENIE: I said don't drink me!

MASTER: Then get out of my bottle!

GENIE: But you just wished me into it.

MASTER: Now I'm wishing you out of it.

GENIE: Very well.

(The lights flare. When they return, GENIE is sitting on MASTER's lap. SHE playfully tweaks his nose.)

Hello!

MASTER: Get off me!

GENIE: Is that your third wish, master?

MASTER: My third wish?

GENIE: If you ask me, you wasted your first two wishes. Into the bottle! Out of the bottle! Most people ask for millions of dollars or their very own backyard Disneyland. But not you. You seem more concerned with my whereabouts. Then again, it's not my place to judge. Your every wish is my command.

MASTER: Are you for real?

GENIE: I'm as real as that wart on your nose.

MASTER: *(covers his nose)* Please don't look at my wart.

GENIE: I can take care of that if you like.

MASTER: Are you really a genie?

GENIE: Indeed I am, master. So what will it be? Do you wish me off your lap or do you wish to have your wart wiped?

(HE jumps up and GENIE falls onto the ground.)

MASTER: Now see here!

GENIE: Yes, master?

MASTER: If you really are a genie, then I wish to retract my first two wishes.

GENIE: I'm sorry, master. What's been wished cannot be unwished.

MASTER: But I didn't believe you were actually a genie. So those wishes don't count.

GENIE: Mistaken wishes are wishes nonetheless.

MASTER: Could you make an exception? For me?

GENIE: I'm afraid not, master. If wishes could be unwished, then what kind of world would we live in?

MASTER: You don't have to tell me that. My whole life has been nothing but unwishes.

GENIE: How do you mean, master?

MASTER: When I was a kid, all I ever wished for was a puppy.

"Please, Mom! Please, Dad! Can I have a puppy?" Finally,

one Christmas, they caved. Under the tree in a little box was a Cocker Spaniel with a bow on his head. He was the cutest thing I ever saw.

GENIE: So your wish did come true!

MASTER: Then he got run over by a dump truck.

GENIE: Did they get you another puppy?

MASTER: Oh, he didn't die. I wished and wished with all my might that he would live.

GENIE: And?

MASTER: He lived.

GENIE: That's terrific!

MASTER: But he only had two legs. Front left and back right. I wished as hard as I could that he would learn how to walk again. And he did. Right into a manhole. He broke his neck in three places. But he lived. The vet drilled some screws into his head and he was off and running. Right into an electric fence. Zap! He didn't have a chance with all that metal in his head. But he lived. He just kept on going. Hopping around on two legs, with a metal crown around his head and singed hair sticking out in all directions. He looked like Astro from *The Jetsons* with a bad case of rabies. His number finally came up when we were walking by the new mall and he got snagged by a fork lift. Now he's either on the second floor of Sears or *in* the second floor of Sears. Either way, it's tragic.

GENIE: What was his name?

MASTER: Lucky.

GENIE: And this experience made you believe that wishes never come true?

MASTER: No, it taught me that they do come true. My parents spent upwards of fifty thousand dollars on Lucky.

GENIE: Wishes often come at a price.

MASTER: And that price was my life! They frittered away my entire college fund on that mangy mutt, so now I'll be stuck working at Pizza Hut until the day I die!

GENIE: Why are you so angry? Your life isn't over.

MASTER: You try flinging pizza dough in the air for years on end and see how you like it! My life is nothing but drunken frat boys who come in for a slice, practically rubbing my nose in everything I'm missing out on. I'm trapped in a vicious circle and there aren't enough wishes in the world to get me out of it!

GENIE: I know exactly how you feel.

MASTER: Oh yeah? Have you ever had a frat boy pee on you?

GENIE: As a matter of fact, I have.

MASTER: Yeah, right.

GENIE: Just what do you think college boys do with bottles when they're done with them?

MASTER: Come to think of it, what are you doing inside of a Coke bottle anyway? Don't genies live in fancy bottles with shiny gems and diamond corks?

GENIE: Only in the movies. In real life, we genies take what we can get.

MASTER: Really?

GENIE: Whiskey bottles, detergent bottles, baby bottles.

MASTER: Shampoo bottles?

GENIE: Only pervert genies.

MASTER: And you prefer soda bottles?

GENIE: As far as I'm concerned, Coke is it. Although you might want to consider switching to diet.

(SHE pokes his belly.)

It's easier to keep it off than take it off.

MASTER: Hey, now. See here!

GENIE: Sorry, but it's true. Then again, you would have ended up with a different genie. And trust me when I say that you do not want a diet genie. All that Aspartame goes to their skinny heads and makes them screwy.

MASTER: Really?

GENIE: There's this one genie I know. She was so hopped up on simulated sugar that she granted all sorts of crazy wishes.

MASTER: Like what?

GENIE: Did you ever see the fourth *Indiana Jones* movie?

MASTER: *(makes a disgusted face)* Yeah.

GENIE: That was her.

MASTER: Ouch.

GENIE: It should have been called *Kingdom of the Adult Diapers*.

MASTER: But I thought you said it wasn't your job to judge.

GENIE: True, but we are allowed to nudge people in the right direction.

MASTER: In what direction should I be nudged?

GENIE: That depends.

MASTER: On what?

GENIE: What do you want?

MASTER: I don't know. Money, I guess.

GENIE: I can do that, but can I let you in on a little secret?

MASTER: What?

GENIE: (*whispers*) Money gets you diddley.

MASTER: But I'd be able to buy all the things that would make me happy.

GENIE: Things get you squat.

MASTER: Then I wish to be happy.

GENIE: Unfortunately I cannot grant emotions.

MASTER: Then what good are you? I might as well wish you back into the bottle and dump you in a recycling bin.

GENIE: As you wish.

(SHE starts to wave her arms around, but HE stops her.)

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