

RESONANCE

The weathered cork was thick and swollen from long years spent at sea, as were the young girl's fingers. She twisted and rocked it gently, the worn edges crumbled against her raw fingertips. A gentle salt spray wafted through the air as she listened to the waves lapping against the dark, jagged rocks of the shoreline.

"It's a wonder you didn't smash against the rocks," Carly said to no one as the smooth bottle fumbled in her sweaty hands. She held the bottle up to the light, but she could only make out the edges of something. Like cotton maybe? Or wool? The sea green of the glass was somehow weathered from the inside, obscuring its contents, but something deep inside her had to know.

She wiped the sweat from her brow as she sat the bottle aside, wiping her hands on her bright shorts. Her parent's umbrella did much to shield her from the strength of the mid-day sun, but even in the shade she felt the warm embrace of full-summer.

"Carly," her mom called from the picnic table. "Put that down and come eat something, I won't tell you again."

"But Mom... I almost have it!" Carly yelled back, anticipating the sweet sound the cork was going to make when it finally popped out of the bottle's mouth.

"Carly!" Her dad said firmly. "Come eat or it goes back into the water."

"Uggghhh... FINE!" She sat the bottle down gently onto a wadded, orange towel next to her little beach chair.

She looked out over the water as she stood and stretched. There was no way of knowing how long she had been preoccupied with the thick, green glass bottle. Hours maybe?

As she turned away she heard the bright *TINK* of glass against stone. Looking down she found the bottle had rolled a few feet away.

“And where do you think you’re going?” She asked as she crouched down, as if she addressed a mischievous puppy.

One more try, she thought, as she gripped the bottle in the crook of her arm. Taking a deep breath, she tensed all of her little muscles. Her little fingers dug in to the sides of the cork. She held her breath and pulled as hard as she could. *POP!* She nearly dropped the bottle as the cork shot out like an old, brown bullet.

Her wide eyes softened as she let out her breath, and with her exhale came a gentle wind whipping across the mouth of the bottle. A deep, solid note sprang to life, vibrating the bottle against her arm. It grew louder as the wind continued to blow, swirling around her playfully. She felt the tone so deeply within her it was as if the note resonated with her soul. She shivered at the unsettling feeling.

She stood still, enveloped by the once playful wind as it swirled around her. It tugged at the loose fabric of her shorts, whipping them against her legs. She was reminded of the *CRACK* sound a flag makes during a storm. But there was no storm. Only the clear sky above and the furious wind that surrounded her.

The note of the bottle suddenly deepened, harmonizing with itself ominously. Carly tried to cry out to her parents, to scream, but the wind defeated her weak cries easily. She felt as if she

were being pushed from two different directions. Sand and pebbles rose to pelt her legs. She felt her heels gently begin to lift from the rocky ground.

The next moment a calm washed over her as she stood firmly on the ground. The raging of the wind slowed, and the note faded in the stillness of the air. The stifling heat of the day returned. The chill at the back of her neck a foreign memory. Looking around her, it was as if she had imagined the whole thing, even though she could still feel the sting of sand against her bare shins. Everything was as it had been. Her mom sat playfully on top of the picnic table, talking to her dad as he poked at the grill.

Carly looked down at the bottle. Empty. Confusion plain on her face she looked around to see if anyone else had witnessed the freak occurrence. There were families all around, playing and laughing, but no one so much as looked in her direction.

“Carly,” her dad called. “Pack it up, it looks like there’s a storm rolling in.”