

WISHES

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Synopsis

A man finds a bottle; a genie grants him his wishes...
to his horror.

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Cast of Characters

MAN.....any age; any race.

GENIE:.....ideally, this person will be of some distinctive physical size or shape. Huge would be good; tiny would work. Lacking an actor with one of these characteristics, just cast a young woman, dressed in other-worldly garb.

WOMAN:.....attractive, whatever that might mean, and age appropriate for the person playing MAN.

Scene

A beach. As most community theatres would prefer not to bring in five tons of sand, the beach can be implied with some drift wood and/or beach balls.

Time

The present.

AT RISE: It is early afternoon; a pleasant summer day.

(Discover the MAN walking along a beach. We hear the sound of crashing waves and squawking sea-gulls. There is drift-wood about the stage. The MAN mimes skipping a stone over the water. As he walks, his eye is caught by....a bottle.)

MAN: Whoa. That looks like a verrry old bottle. You don't suppose....(He picks the bottle up and looks at it closely.) You don't suppose there really could be.....(He pulls the cork.)

(At this point, we want the GENIE to come out of the bottle. This would involve whatever stage effects are available to the theater. The very best would include dry-ice fog coming from the actor's sleeve but appearing to the audience to be pouring out of the bottle, plus flashing lights and thunder and a few chords of suitably weird music. Or, to give something of the same effect, the lights should flash on and

off, go to full black-out and then a Strobe light will flash into the audience. In any case, we are looking for something which will give enough "cover" so that the GENIE can slip onto the set. At the least, there should be a black-out. When the lights come back up, we discover the MAN cowering on the beach-sand-floor and the GENIE exulting in her/his/its freedom.

GENIE: Wow! Wow, wow, wow!!! Out! I'm out of that freaking, miserable bottle. Oh, how good it is to stretch! (Looks down.) And, you, sir...why are you cowering down there? Have you never heard of the drill?? Come, get up. Let's get this part over with so I can go about my business.

MAN: Drill? You mean, the part about getting three wishes?

GENIE: That's right; we're on the same page here, Governor. Get up, man, get up. Let's see what you truly want.

MAN: (gets to his feet) Gee; I know I've got to be careful. If I said, "I wish I had a cold bottle of beer" why, that would count as one of the wishes.

GENIE: (produces bottle of beer from voluminous sleeve or pocket) You're right; it would; and it did.

MAN: Wait! Wait!! That wasn't fair! It wasn't a real wish...

GENIE: Hey, Bwana, When I hear the word "wish," that's good enough for me.

MAN: OK, OK. It's your game; your rules. And I've still got two left. What do most people wish for?

GENIE: Well, Senor, there are the usual requests for lots of money...

MAN: Ha. I bet I know how you grant that one. You give the poor bastard 500 pounds of kopecks or rubles or Confederate dollars. "Lots of money" but totally worthless! Right! Am I right?

GENIE: (smiles) I must say, Herr cork-puller, that you learn pretty fast.

MAN: Fine; I'm getting the hang of this now. Just for back-ground information, what are some of the best wishes you've heard. (rushes) Not that I'm going to make one...

GENIE: To tell the truth, Monsieur, I'm not sure what's important for you humans. But, off hand, I'd say that the ability to become invisible is popular.

MAN: Sonofagun; that could be sooooo much fun. I could slip into Brittny Spears dressing room.... I could sit in on the next meeting of the Federal Reserve Board. Yeah; that's a good one. What else?

GENIE: How about the ability to fly?

MAN: Sure; I used to dream I could do that, when I was a kid. What a feeling! But, to tell the truth, I'm a bit afraid of heights. What else?

GENIE: Would you like to know what people are thinking?

MAN: Ah, that's a goodie. Every time I've been on a date, I've wondered what the woman was really thinking about me. And if I'm applying for a job, it sure would be great to know what answers those HR freaks wanted to hear. I just might wish for that. Just might! I haven't decided!

GENIE: Come on, Effendi....I've got places to go. Make up your mind.

MAN: OK...and this is just one wish...I wish I could know what people are thinking.

GENIE: Fine. You got it.

MAN: (pause) Got it? Got what?

GENIE: Oh, it takes a while to kick in. But pretty soon, you will know what people are thinking. Look; here comes a good-looking woman. You get to try it out.

MAN: OK; here goes. (to WOMAN) Hi. Say..I know this is pretty forward...but I wonder if you'd do me a favor?

WOMAN: Well, that depends....

(We hear a faint voice; her voice; saying something unintelligible. This should come from a speaker mounted as closely as possible to DSC. Her dialogue, and that of others whom we will later hear, is pre-recorded, of course.)

MAN: (cheerfully) Oh, it's just (thinking rapidly) that I've got this cold bottle of beer and I wonder if you'd tell me what you think of the flavor.

GENIE: Good one, Sahib. And don't worry...she can't see me or hear me. Here. (and the GENIE produces two glasses)

WOMAN: It's unopened, isn't it? I don't want to taste something awful.

(We hear her voice again; slightly louder, saying "Is this guy for real?")

MAN: Sure; right. Totally unopened. Pure as the driven snow; no problem-o.

WOMAN: OK; I'll try a sip.

("Problem-o? What kind of geeky talk is that?")

MAN: (slightly taken aback) Oh, it's just an expression.
Doesn't mean anything, really.

WOMAN: I beg your pardon?

("What's happening here?" Her voice, the recorded voice, is getting louder with each bit of dialogue.)

MAN: (remembering that he isn't supposed to know what the woman is thinking) Here; let me open this bottle. And, as you can see, I have two, nice clean glasses.

WOMAN: Terrific.

("Well, he is kind of cute. Maybe this won't be so bad.")

MAN: (brightens) No; it won't be bad. I mean, I'm sure the beer won't be bad. (he pours the beer.)

(At this point, we hear a man's voice from the speaker. The volume is low so we can't make out what he's saying but it is clearly a new voice coming to the party.)

WOMAN: Hummm-m-m; not bad.

("But what kind of guy has one cold bottle of beer on the beach?" Man's voice "Mable, you're getting fat.")

MAN: (distracted) Yes...glad you like it.

(Man's voice "Yes, Mable, too damn fat." Woman's voice, "What am I doing here, on a nice day like this, with some no-personality jerk?")

WOMAN: Do you come here often?

("This is getting pretty weird; I'll make a little small talk and then beat it." Little girl's voice, "I don't like

spinach!" Another woman's voice, "Why, oh why, did I ever have kids?" Different man's voice, "I do want to get into her pants." From here on, we hear 5, 6, 7 different voices, vocalizing those unspoken thoughts which we all have. "Yeah, well, I'll do it because you're the boss...but you're still a dumb son of a bitch." "Should I let him touch my breast? Will that satisfy him?)

MAN: (turns to GENIE) Hey; what's going on? I'm hearing all these voices!

GENIE: (smiles) That, patron, is what you asked for, isn't it? You wanted to know what people are thinking? Now you know. (maniacally) People near and far; people you know; people you've never seen!

(Voices merge into cacophony. We hear some phrases in Spanish, German, Chinese (using whatever talent is available in the cast and crew) and the occasional English word "Bastard" "Come on, come on, do it." "Should I cook peas or beans?" "First, I'll hit him in the nuts...." "I still don't like spinach.")

MAN: (covers his ears and screams) Stop! Stop!!! I can't stand it! I wish it would stop!
(Silence from the speaker.)

GENIE: Well, Mister cork-puller, you've had your three wishes.

BLACKOUT