

SCENES FROM AN ISLE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEA  
By Jonathan Hogue

*A bottle washes up on shore.*

CARRIE  
Do you see that?

NAARAH  
Oh my God.

DUMAS  
How long has that been there?

TIM  
I think it just washed up

NAARAH  
That's so weird.

DUMAS  
Is there something in it??

TIM  
Somebody grab it before—

*The bottle is washed away.  
Beat.*

NAARAH  
well

*Beat.*

DUMAS  
It was probably garbage

TIM  
Probably garbage yeah

*Beat.*

CARRIE

I think I saw something in it.

DUMAS

I did too

CARRIE

Do you think it's a message? A note?

NAARAH

Why would there be a note

CARRIE

I don't know, it just looked like there was one

DUMAS

It could have been anything

NAARAH

But like even if there was a note, what would it matter what it said

CARRIE

It could be someone trying to send us a message

TIM

Or someone stuffed garbage in it and it fell in the ocean.

I used to do that whenever I'd finish my lunch and didn't want to / have to throw multiple things away, and like

NAARAH

/ You really thought there would be a fucking message in that thing?

CARRIE

I don't know, maybe

TIM

And like when you want to keep it all compact

DUMAS

I would do that too sometimes

NAARAH

Like, what the fuck would the message even say? "Stuck on a desert island? Call this number and I'll come save you" what a / fucking stupid idea

CARRIE

/ I don't know, I just thought it would say something maybe

NAARAH

I'm sorry, but that's just so fucking stupid

DUMAS

Hey hey hey

If it was a message, even if it didn't mean anything... it's something

*Beat*

NAARAH

Okay.

A note is something. Sure.

Like a seashell is something.

DUMAS

No.

Like a bottle with a message is something. It means something. A seashell is boring. But a bottle with a message is *something*.

NAARAH

What, are you looking for some sort of sign from God or something?

DUMAS

No. I don't know.

I'm just saying it wouldn't be *nothing*. It means *something*.

TIM

Haha, what if we got the bottle and opened it up and it was like a coupon for Arby's or some dumb shit

DUMAS

Oh God Arby's sounds so good

TIM

Dude, Arby's is the WORST though

DUMAS

Okay, but you would eat Arby's if there was an Arby's on this island

CARRIE

I don't know. Something about that feels like... we were meant to see that. Like, that we were / right here on this particular part of the beach at this time

TIM

Okay, maybe if we were here for like a MONTH and I was faced with eating Arby's or eating my own shit / then yeah maybe

CARRIE

I'm just saying – it feels like something at least that we saw it.

NAARAH

Okay, but then it floated away, so that fucking sucks

CARRIE

Maybe it will come back

NAARAH

Are you wanting like a fucking genie to come out of it?

CARRIE

Sometimes I feel like – I know this is crazy—but sometimes I feel like God puts me in the right place at the right time / to show me these little signs

NAARAH

/ Oh God

CARRIE

Like there was this one time—I know this is crazy—but I remember like a few years ago, I was in a TJ Maxx, and my mom was in the hospital with stage four lung cancer at the time, and we knew that any little complication with her treatment could kill her, and I was feeling super overwhelmed by it and was just kind of wandering the aisles looking for cheap candles, and then up in the rafters, there was this little um little blue jay. And my mom loves blue jays. And I swear that I saw that little blue jay, and I just felt in my spirit like God was saying “she's gone”. Like that little blue jay was her, saying that it was going to be okay. And then I got the call that she had passed right after that.

But like I wouldn't have noticed the blue jay in the TJ Maxx if I was like in a park or something. Because it was so weird to see it in the TJ Maxx. And I'm just saying, it's weird to see a bottle show up on the beach. And I don't know—I know it's crazy—but I just feel like that means something.

*beat*

TIM

It's actually super cliché

DUMAS

Dude

TIM

I'm just saying—like if God was gonna send us a sign, maybe he would have done something different that send us a message in a bottle like we're in some sort of fucking Treasure Island remake.

DUMAS

Or maybe we noticed it because we know the cliché. Like if it were a, I don't know, a loaded diaper or something, we would've just thought it was garbage / But because we got a bottle, we saw it and assumed that it meant something because we have an association with it.

TIM

/ I mean the bottle probably was garbage.

DUMAS

So if there was a message in it, then maybe it does mean something. Because it's almost ironic.

CARRIE

Because God knows what we would respond to.

NAARAH

Listen, if God is trying to get a hold of us or something, then She would have let us grab that stupid fucking bottle before it floated away. But She didn't. So it's garbage. Can we move on please?

DUMAS

But maybe the bottle alone meant something.

CARRIE

Like a sign of hope / that we're not alone in the sea

DUMAS

Maybe it's a harbinger of doom.

TIM

But what do we do with that.

NAARAH

If we don't know what to do with that then why the fuck does it matter.

*Beat.*

TIM

What if it's someone else on a different island, and they're writing a message on it hoping someone will come find them.

NAARAH

Now THAT would be funny.

TIM

I would write back like "sorry dude, sucks to suck"

NAARAH

You could be pen pals!

TIM

Until we starve to death.

NAARAH

Whoever keeps it going the longest before dying wins.

TIM

Win what?

NAARAH

I don't know.

YAHTZEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!!!

*TIM and NAARAH chuckle. Then, uncomfortable.*

CARRIE

Whatever it was... I don't know.

It makes me feel good.

DUMAS

I feel weird.

TIM

And I feel nothing.

NAARAH

Great! We all have feelings. Shall we move on?

*The bottle washes up on the beach again.*

*This time, it stays.*

*The four stare at it, wondering what to do with it.*

*Slowly, TIM picks it up. There is a message inside it.*

*He opens up the bottle and pulls out a rolled up piece of paper.*

CARRIE

...what is it?

*He studies the paper.*

TIM (gravely)

...Arby's coupons.