

The Genie

By Marilyn Reeves

Walking along the beach searching for sea shells I spotted a rather large bottle that had washed to shore. As I rubbed away the sand to better see its lovely patina, out popped a genie.

"Thank you for releasing me!" he said. "I've been trapped inside that bottle for centuries. In payment for my freedom, I'll grant you as many wishes as I can."

So as he hovered nearby, I sat on the soft, warm sand and tried to think of the things that I wished for the most.

"Well for starters," I said, "I wish that every child was born healthy and into a loving home. I wish that they could all grow up in a world where such things as neglect and child abuse didn't exist."

"Go on," he said.

"And I wish that every child had a mentor to help them discover where their best talents and interests lie, so that each person could do the work they enjoy the most and could make a meaningful contribution to the world.

"And I wish that everyone in the world spoke the same language and truly understood one another. Then there would be no more wars. War is a terrible thing!

"I wish that everyone had enough food to eat, and a lovely home to live in, and had enough money to meet their needs and fulfill their desires, but not necessarily excessive wealth or fame. It's very difficult for those who achieve that status to stay well balanced and not become self-destructive.

"And I wish that everyone could live a long and productive life without having to experience the ravages of old age. Losing one's beauty and one's mind – not to mention one's dignity – seem an unjust price to pay just for sticking around too long.

"But most of all, I wish everyone an abundance of love. Loving friends, loving family, and – above all – being blessed with a loving mate.

"If you could just grant all my wishes the world would be a much happier place, don't you agree?"

"So far all your wishes have been for the betterment of mankind. What do you wish for yourself?" said the genie.

"I wish I could undo every mistake I ever made, every hurt I ever committed, and go back and get it right the second time around."

"Well," said the genie, "your heart's in the right place, but none of the things you've wished for are within my power to grant. But keep on wishing, and ... have a nice day!"

And with that, the genie vanished from sight, leaving me wishing I had thought of some simpler things to wish for.