



Spin the Witch Bottle

“Up here, Joss?” Jeremy stretched as he positioned the bottle atop the bookcase, as close to the corner of the room as he could manage.

“Looks great. And it’s *Jocelyn*.” Jocelyn barely spared a glance. She was engrossed in setting up the Ouija board. She repeatedly turned the plastic pointer over in her hands.

“Since you’ll be channelling the spirit, I’ll need something of yours,” said Jeremy, “something personal.”

Jocelyn shot him a look.

He shrugged. “That’s what the book said.”

The two locked eyes, until at last, Jeremy’s non-chalance won out. Jocelyn removed her silver locket from her neck and waved it at him while she returned her attention to the Ouija board.

Jeremy’s mouth hardened into a line as he took the chain and locket. Jocelyn didn’t notice, absorbed as she was in anything but him. The locket rattled on the glass as he stuffed it into the bottle.

He stepped back to admire his handiwork. It was an old wine bottle, made of thick green glass. The symbols spanning its surface were painted on with white-out; they were designs straight from the book, *Occult Rituals* by Cornelius Malcolm, some old professor from NU. The book cost him thirteen bucks second hand — the bottle and white-out, two dollars from the discount shop.

“You ready?” asked Jocelyn.

Jeremy patted the cork in his shirt pocket. “Yep. Let’s do it.”

They settled cross-legged on Jeremy’s bed, with the Ouija board between them.

Aware of the length of her skirt, Jocelyn tugged the hem over

her knees. “I came to you because people say you know about this stuff, that’s all. No funny business, okay?”

Jeremy nodded solemnly, more to look the part than out of respect for what they were doing. “I’m glad you asked me. I’ve always wanted to be friends. Maybe ...”

Jocelyn rolled her eyes. “So how does this work?”

Despite himself, Jeremy glanced from Jocelyn’s bare throat, over her shoulder, to the bottle holding her locket. “After the séance begins, you know, when the pointer starts moving, I’ll start a chant. The spirit will then be drawn into the Witch Bottle,” he paused, “and then we get what we want.”

“And you’re sure that thing will hold a ghost?”

“Absolutely sure. I’m using Mexicatanian symbols.”

“Mesopotamian?”

“Whatever. It’ll work.”

“So I start by calling the spirit?”

“Yeah.”

“Wait. What about your parents? What happens if the séance is interrupted?” A frown creased Jocelyn’s brow.

“It’ll be fine. My parents won’t be home for ages. Nothing can go wrong.”

The lines in Jocelyn’s forehead smoothed as she clasped the plastic pointer—the planchette, the booklet said—with both hands.

Jeremy placed his hands over hers. Together, their hands were firebrand-hot and sweaty. Jeremy savoured the contact, although Jocelyn winced.

“Before we start, why do you want to channel your sister?” he asked.

“You don’t need to know. Just make sure this works.”

Jeremy squeezed her hands as she moved the planchette around the board. It gained momentum, seeming to move of its own accord.

“Call her now,” he said, husky and urgent, sparing another glance at the Witch Bottle in the corner.

“Deborah!” she called in a faux-spooky voice. “I call thee, Deborah. Come to me, I call thee!”

The planchette moved about the Ouija board in crazy arcs, jumping to random letters.

“Deborah!” Jocelyn called, again and again, as Jeremy began his own chant under his breath.

He muttered the ritual words, tuning out Jocelyn’s throaty calls and the slight heave of her chest as she was moved by the gravitas of the occasion.

A breeze moved through the room.

“Are you here, Deb?” Jocelyn asked.

The planchette slid to YES on the board.

With the fifth recital of Jeremy’s murmured chant, Jocelyn fell backwards, limp, mid-sentence. The Witch Bottle rattled on its base, twirling until it threatened to topple.

Jeremy was quicker than the spiralling bottle—leaping from the bed and withdrawing the cork from his pocket in one practised motion, he stoppered it. He stilled the Witch Bottle in two hands, staring into the nebulous swirl caught within, a whisper given form but not voice. It hovered about the locket.

“How does it feel in there, Joss?” He smiled. “Don’t worry, I’ll let you out when my folks get home, which should be hours from now.” The smile grew predatory. “It’ll be like having a blackout, the book said. You won’t remember a thing.”

After a moment, he left the bottle, and the spirit caught within, to sit on the bed with the prone form of Jocelyn. Even unconscious, she was breathtaking. Her chest fluttered delicately like a dreaming butterfly, although he knew she wasn’t dreaming.

“I’m afraid your sister won’t be joining us as planned,” he breathed into her ear. Fruity perfume and shampoo, her smell was divine. As he slid a hand along her knee and under her skirt, probing the warm pliancy of her thigh, a zephyr chilled the back of his neck. “But she can watch us if she likes.”

