

# Bad Bottle

written by Holly

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So Ray, who, like, used to be my boyfriend a while ago, comes over to me looking all pale and stuff, and he says, "I'm going to give you something to hang onto, okay?"

And I'm a little fuzzed from too much partying the night before, you know, and so I don't think about the fact that Ray looks like shit on a shingle, and I say, "Oh, sure, man, no problem."

And, like, he says, "Great! You're a real friend, and I wish you were still my girlfriend, but . . ." and he's lying but I don't know that, 'cause I think he's finally over being mad at me, which, like, he isn't, but I don't know that right then, because if he'd been a real friend he would never have done what he did to me, but anyway, he hands me this pretty green bottle with this jewel-like stopper in the top.

And I take it, and I say, "Oh, this is really pretty, Ray, did you say I could have it?"

And he gets this, like, weird look in his eyes and he says, "If you want it, it's yours."

"Thanks," I say, "You really are sweet," and that's that. He starts to walk away, and I say, "But hey – what's it for? It feels a little... um, like, heavy."

And he says, "That's 'cause there's a genie in there, and I just got the bastard back in there, and no matter what you do, DON'T LET HIM OUT."

And I'm, like, laughing at him 'cause he's such a wiener, and he says, "No shit, Melody, don't let the m\*th\*rf\*\*\*er out, he's a mean drunk and he just about trashed me and he doesn't do wishes . . . like, he does, but they aren't the way you wanted them to be."

So then this bottle starts jumping around in my hand like anything, and I can just barely hold onto it, and I say, "I don't want your grody genie, then, you shitwad," and he says, "He's not my genie, he's yours, and the only way you can get rid of him is to give him to somebody else."

And now I'm hanging on for dear life, because the damned bottle is jumping around like a rabbit in heat, and I about can't even hold onto it, and the glass is this really thin, pretty stuff that you just know is going to go into a million pieces on the pavement if you drop it – and then the genie would really be out of the bottle, wouldn't he?

I try sticking him in my purse, but then it looks like my purse is having, like, seizures or something, and so then I go down to the pond behind the school and I try throwing the bottle in the pond, but it flies back to me – I about pee in my pants when that happens, you know? And so then I'm hanging on to this bottle and I'm thinking "This freaking genie is going to jump out of my hands and break his bottle and ruin my life, and then I remember that Ray has been pissed at me for two weeks because he found out I was dating Louie."

And then I remember Maura Lee Jenkins, who is sort of my friend, but who got nominated for Homecoming Court two days ago, and she's been just so sweet in my face with it – "Oh, Melody, I can't believe you didn't get nominated, you should have been, you know?"

And I think, "Yeah, Maura Lee, have I ever got a Homecoming surprise for you."

And I tell the bottle "Sit still for a goddamn minute, I'm

going to give you to the biggest slut in school.” And I go to her, and I say, “Oh, Maura Lee, I just found this little vase at Ogilvies’, isn’t it just too perfect? It almost matches that dress you got for Homecoming, doesn’t it?” Because she actually **brought her dress to school**, the bitch, and it has, like, no back, and these little spaghetti straps that are not going to hold in all her stuff, and it’s that rainbowey material, like a beetle’s back, you know?

And she says, “Oh, that would, like, be perfect for the single rose that each of us is going to carry, and it would make it, like, special, too.”

And I say, “Too bad this is the only one they had,” and I can see her getting all pissed.

And then I say, “But they had one that was red, too, which wouldn’t look too good with your dress, but I liked it and it would look just as good on my nightstand, and I guess I could let you have this one since you’re a friend and everything.”

And I give her the bottle. And she says, “Thanks. It’s really heavy, isn’t it?”

And I say, “Yeah, but I don’t know why – I haven’t opened it.”

So she’s standing there pulling on the cork when I leave, and I’m all the way around the corner when I hear her scream, and I’m not stupid. I just run like hell.

So I think I’ll skip Homecoming this year, after all, but I’m really looking forward to hearing all about it from everyone else.

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