

Recitation A

A Lucky Traveler

A woman was walking along the Thames River in London one day late in June, 1937. Suddenly, she threw a bottle into the calm water. It was a whiskey bottle and its cap was tightly closed. The bottle contained no liquid, just a note.

That same bottle was found on March 16, 1949, on a beach near San Francisco. Twelve years is a long time for a bottle to float on the sea, but a scientist later calculated the route the bottle followed.

First, the bottle traveled into the Straits of Dover and onward to the North Sea. After that, it crossed the North Atlantic. Hundreds of kilometers of Norwegian coast were likely seen by the bottle. The brave bottle then made its way through the Barents Sea, north of Russia. Then out into the East Siberian Sea it sailed. Finally, across the Bering Sea and down the western coast of the United States, the little bottle went, until its 20,000-kilometer trip came to an end on that California beach.

Now, back to March 16, 1949. The little bottle had not been broken during its journey. However, the spirit of Jack Wurm, a 55-year-old man with no job, was broken. His restaurant had gone out of business, and Jack had no money. He saw the whiskey bottle while walking on the beach that day. There was something inside, but he couldn't get the cap off, so he broke the glass on some rocks. Inside the bottle he found this: 'I don't want any confusion. I'm leaving half my money to the lucky person who finds this bottle. You must share half of it with my lawyer.' The letter was signed, 'Daisy Alexander, June 20, 1937.'

Daisy Alexander was a lovable, strange old woman who died in 1939 with no family. Her ancestors, however, had started the famous Singer Sewing Company.

Jack picked up a bottle ... and six billion dollars at the same time.

(324 words)