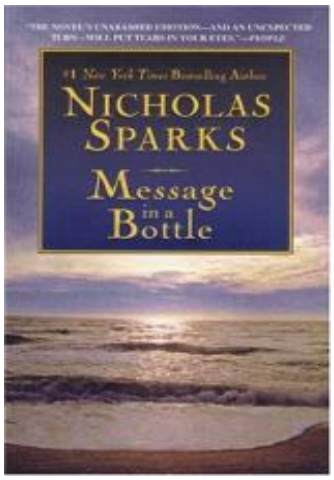
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# Message in a Bottle

by Nicholas Sparks




## About the Book

Thrown to the waves, and to fate, the bottle could have ended up anywhere. Instead, it is found just three weeks after it begins its journey. Theresa Osborne, divorced and the mother of a twelve-year-old son, picks it up during a seaside vacation from her job as a Boston newspaper columnist. Inside is a letter that opens with:

*My dearest Catherine, I miss you my darling, as I always do, but today is particularly hard because the ocean has been singing to me, and the song is that our life together?*

For "Garrett," the man who signs the letter, the message is the only way he knows to express his undying love for a woman he has lost. For Theresa, wary of romance since her husband shattered her trust, the message raises questions that intrigue her. Who are Garrett and Catherine? Where is he now? What is his story?

Challenged by the mystery, and pulled to find Garrett by emotions she does not fully understand, Theresa begins a search that takes her to a sunlit coastal town and an unexpected confrontation. Brought together by chance -- or something more powerful - -Theresa and Garrett are people whose lives are about to touch for a purpose, in a tale that resonates with our deepest hopes for finding that special someone and everlasting love.

Shimmering with suspense and emotional intensity, **Message in a Bottle** takes readers on a hunt for the truth about a man and his memories, and about both the heart-breaking fragility and enormous strength of love. For those who cherished **The Notebook** and readers waiting to discover the magic of Nicholas Sparks's storytelling, here is his new, achingly lovely novel of happenstance, desire, and the choices that matter most?

## Discussion Guide

**1.** In the first letter, Garrett Blake mentions a dream he has of his deceased wife Catherine, in which he longs to be with

her, but cannot join her. Is such a dream realistic? Have you ever had dreams that seem to carry such symbolic meaning in your own life?

**2.** The sailboat that Garrett Blake restores is an important setting for many of the major scenes in the novel. He'd been restoring it with Catherine, it was there she first told him she was pregnant, it was also the scene of Garrett and Theresa's first date and Garrett's death. What does the sailboat represent? Could another setting have worked as well? Does the destruction of the sailboat at the end of the novel say anything important to you?

**3.** Garrett Blake is plagued by memories of his deceased wife throughout his courtship of Theresa. In the end, we learn that Catherine was pregnant when she died. How did this affect Garrett's relationship with Kevin?

**4.** When Theresa comes down to "meet" Garrett Blake for the first time, was she secretly hoping to fall in love with him, or was it as she implied, simply because she wanted to meet someone "who could love like that?" Was it right or wrong for her not to have told him about the messages she'd found right away? What would you have done in that situation?

**5.** When asked by his father, Garrett tries to deny his new feelings for Theresa, but his father doesn't accept his answer. Do you think he did this because he thought Garrett was lying, or because he wanted to believe that Garrett was lying? Is there a difference between the two? Was he speaking as a father or friend, or both?

**6.** Theresa regrets hiding the letters and knows she has to tell Garrett about them eventually. But Garrett learns about their existence before she does so and he storms out of the house, thinking that she's lied to him from the beginning. Why does Garrett change his mind about Theresa in the days following their argument? Did that discovery lead to Garrett's death, or would he have sent the final letter anyway? Did Garrett's discovery make him love Theresa more or less? Why?

**7.** Were you surprised when Garrett took the boat out, knowing that a storm was coming? What does this say about Garrett Blake? Had he not died, would he and Theresa have gotten married? If so, where would they have lived?

**8.** Garrett loved Catherine with all his heart. Had his love been romanticized by her loss? Did he love Theresa with the same intensity? Knowing that Catherine had been pregnant when she died, did Theresa's son Kevin add to their relationship or detract from it?

**9.** Was the fact that Theresa Osborne was able to find evidence of three letters plausible? Why or why not? What role does coincidence play in their relationship?

## Author Bio

Nicholas Sparks is the author of 23 books, all of which have been *New York Times* bestsellers. His books have been published across more than 50 languages with over 150 million copies sold worldwide, and 11 have been adapted into films. He is also the founder of the Nicholas Sparks Foundation, a nonprofit committed to improving cultural and international understanding through global education experiences. He lives in North Carolina.

## Critical Praise

"Deeply moving, beautifully written, and extremely romantic."

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