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Message in a Bottle sample
NOT FOR SALE

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Level 2 - A1/A2 Starter (2) Graded Reader from I Talk You Talk Press

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Message in a Bottle
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Chapter One

Henri Olivier is a very rich, retired businessman. He is 85 years old. He has a private island in the Atlantic Ocean near Gran Canaria. He doesn't have many friends. He doesn't like parties. He stays on his island. He has a housekeeper. She cooks and cleans the house. The housekeeper's husband looks after the garden. Henri likes his house. It is very beautiful. Every room has long glass doors with a balcony outside. When the weather is good, Henri sits on the balcony outside his office. The balcony outside his office is high above the sea. Henri can look down to the ocean. He cannot see any land. Henri thinks his balcony is like a ship. He reads books. He looks at the ocean. He looks at sea birds.

Henri has a son. His name is Etienne. Sometimes his son comes to visit him on the island, but Henri does not like his son. When Etienne comes to the island, he always asks for money. His father always gives him some money, but Etienne always wants more.

One day in August, Etienne comes to the island. The gardener and his wife are not there. They have gone to visit their daughter.

"I want fifty-thousand Euros," says Etienne.

"No," says Henri. "I will give you five thousand Euros. And that is the end. I will not give you any more money."

He hears his son talking on his phone. His son says, "I hope my father dies soon. I want all his money."

My son does not love me, thinks Henri. When I die, I don't want my son to get the money. I must make a plan.

Henri talks on the phone to his lawyer in Madrid.

"Mr Berger, when I die, I don't want my son to get my money."

"OK, Mr Olivier. Who should get your money?"

"I don't know. But I don't want Etienne to get it. I want to give it to a charity. I want to give it to an animal charity."

"OK, Mr Olivier, but I need your signature. You must come to Madrid and sign the papers."

"OK, I can do that."

"How is your health?" asks Mr Berger.

"It is not so good, but I can go to Madrid. I will visit your office next week."

Henri puts the phone down.

The door opens. Etienne walks into the room. He has a bottle of wine. He has been drinking a lot.

"Who were you talking to?" asks Etienne.

"I was talking to my lawyer."

"I heard you. When you die, you are giving your money to animals. Animals? Are you crazy? You stupid old man!"

Etienne walks over to his father. He stands very close.

"Call Mr Berger. Tell him you made a mistake."

Henri looks at his son.

"No, I will not do it."

"Do it!" shouts Etienne. "Do it now!"

Etienne throws a photograph of the family across the room. It breaks on the floor.

Henri looks at Etienne. "You are a bad son. Your mother..."

Etienne walks to the glass door. He looks at the sea outside. Then he looks at his father.

"But my mother is not here. She is dead. She has been dead since I was a child. And you were a bad father."

"Etienne, stop it! Do you want me to die?"

"Yes, I do," says Etienne.

"You will not get any of my money," shouts Henri.

"Oh yeah?" says Etienne. "You have to see Mr Berger."

"I will go next week."

Etienne runs to his father and pushes him hard. "No you won't," he shouts.

Henri falls onto the floor.

"My back! My back!" shouts Henri. "I can't move!"

Etienne laughs. He sits down at his father's desk. He looks at his father's papers. "Your business!" he says. "You made so much money! But you plan to give it to animals and not to me!" He throws everything from the desk onto the floor.

Etienne takes his father's smartphone. He opens the glass doors and walks out onto the balcony. He throws the phone down into the sea.

"You're not going anywhere. Hurry up and die." He laughs and walks to the door.

"Etienne!" Henri shouts. "When will you come back?"

Etienne looks at him. "Maybe next week."

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“But I can’t move!”

“Good. You will die quickly,” says Etienne.

-----END OF SAMPLE-----

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