

“BOTTLE TALK” by Alexander Lee-Rekers

SARAH, REN and ALBERT sit somewhere outdoors on a cold night. Each of them are rugged up, and they pass a bottle between them as they talk.

SARAH: How'd you like your speeches?

REN: I liked 'em fine.

ALBERT: And the cake? We took ages picking out the cake.

REN: I didn't get any. That's okay, though. People seemed to enjoy it.

SARAH: We did. Your loss, my friend.

ALBERT: *(Taking the bottle.)* And how about the wine? This most excellent vintage of, well, probably a few weeks ago?

REN: Not sure. Pass it here?

ALBERT hands over the wine. SARAH takes a long drink and winces.

SARAH: That's the best pinot money could buy. Provided that you only had eight dollars to spend.

ALBERT: You can taste every one of those dollars in that bottle. Literally. It tastes like you're sucking on old coins...

SARAH: How long before you need to go?

REN: Soon.

SARAH: Can you spare a few more minutes?

SARAH pauses, looks at the bottle in her hands.

REN: I can give you 'til the bottom of this bottle.

ALBERT: We'll sip it slowly, then.

SARAH: So we've given you everything in life. Friendship, experience, laughter, tears-

ALBERT: A disastrous first kiss-

SARAH: All the inspiration you'll ever need to be a writer. Question is ... are we ever going to see you again?

ALBERT: I hope not.

REN/SARAH: Excuse me?!/I'm sorry?!

ALBERT: Not because I won't miss you! I just hope you get out and stay out. Of our home town. This is all coming out wrong.

SARAH: Don't look back.

ALBERT: That's what I meant.

REN: I'm going to miss you both so much.

SARAH: We'll be here. Not that you're allowed to look back at us.

ALBERT: Do us that favour. And the one day, when you're rich and famous, and you've woven us all into your grand narratives, you'll reveal the inspiration for your two greatest characters. And we'll get some literary fame by association.

SARAH: That reminds me: can I be taller in your stories? And fix my nose.

ALBERT: Mine too. Make it so I don't snore so much.

REN: Why don't you both come with me? (*Pause.*) It's not far, and I know you won't be studying or anything but you could both get jobs and then when I finish first semester we could all find an apartment together. We've talked about doing that for our whole lives!

ALBERT and SARAH look at each other. SARAH takes the bottle from REN'S hand and drinks half the remaining wine. Then she hands it to ALBERT, who polishes it off.

SARAH: Bottle's up. We'll walk you home.

REN: I keep thinking about everybody in my life, and how I might be seeing some of them for the very last time and not even know it.

SARAH nods.

SARAH: That's not how it'll be with us.

ALBERT: Especially since we're driving you to the airport tomorrow. Let's go...