

Message in a Bottle: choosing between the past and the future

by Katie Galley
wire services editor

Message in a Bottle is a dramatic movie about an experience that touches everyone at one time or another: letting go. The movie opens with Theresa Osborne (Robin Wright Penn) going on a solitary vacation near the eastcoast shoreline. While running on the beach to forget some of her recent problems (a divorce from a cheating husband), Theresa finds a bottle in the sand with a mysterious letter in it. The letter is addressed to Catherine, and signed only by the letter G. The typed message is that of a human revealing his soul to another, talking about the circumstances that took Catherine away from G. The words are straight from the author's heart and immediately touch Theresa so deeply that she keeps the letter and shows it to all of her friends at the Chicago Tribune, where she works. The next day she finds the letter printed in the newspaper with a plea to respond to the contents.

Thousands of responses come pouring in to the newspaper about the letter. Most say how touching the letter

is, but two people say that they have found similar letters, and they send in copies of them. Theresa recognizes the stationery immediately. She then embarks on a journey to find G, telling everyone that the story simply intrigues her, but she secretly wants to meet this man. After days of research, Theresa locates the address of the man and is quickly on a plane to the Outer Banks, North Carolina.

In North Carolina she tracks down G, who we now know is Garret Blake (Kevin Costner), and convinces him to take her sailing. Garret tells Theresa that sailing and restoring old boats are all that he does. He tells her that he once planned on selling his own boats, but since his wife Catherine died he can't do it, as it was their dream together. All Garret does now is sail and take care of his father, Dodge (Paul Newman).

Slowly Garret starts to loosen up around Theresa and she starts to fall in love with him, but Garret can't seem to let go of Catherine. A week of fun times seems to have Garret falling in love with Theresa, though. Theresa eventually has to return to Chicago, and after a passionate good-

bye Garret promises to call her soon. Weeks go by and she hears nothing from him. Disappointed she tells herself that it's over. Then one day, Garret calls her out of the blue and says that he is coming to Chicago to visit her and her son.

Garret tells Theresa that he wants to be with her all the time, but that he could never live in Chicago, he belongs near the sea. Theresa tells him that she thinks there is more than that keeping him in North Carolina, it's Catherine. Garret returns to his home but Theresa says that whenever he is ready to leave the past behind, she will be there for him. In North Carolina Dodge yells at his son: "You choose — past or the future. Pick one and stick with it."

After months of contemplation Garret makes his choice and goes for a sail. For the rest of the story, either go see the movie or read the book by Nicholas Sparks. This film is not just for girls, though. Quoting a guy that saw the movie, "It was a chick flick, yeah, but the plot was great, and Paul Newman was hysterical, I wish he were my dad."



Robin Wright Penn stars as Theresa Osborne, a recently divorced mother who searches for the author to a message she finds in a bottle signed only by the letter "G" in *Message in a Bottle*.

An interview with Behrend's own Dr. Juan Fernández Jiménez

by Mike Coursey
staff writer

Dr. Juan Fernández Jiménez is a professor of Spanish at Penn State-Behrend. He has taken a group of Penn State students on a spring break trip to his home country of Spain last year. He will be taking another group again this March. I recently sat down and asked Dr. Fernández a few questions.

Q: Dr. Fernández, tell me where you are from.

A: I am from Escañuela, Spain.

Q: What was the size of your family?

A: We had a big family, I was the youngest of five children. One passed away a week after birth. I have one sister and two brothers.

Q: What was it like growing up in Spain?

A: I grew up in post Civil War Spain. We had some "lean times," but we managed. I went to elementary school until age ten, at age eleven I studied in Jaen.

Q: What languages do you know?

A: I learned Latin, Greek and French. I was fluent in Latin and French before I studied English at age 18.

Q: What were some of your hobbies?

A: I played soccer on a team in Jaen. I also played ping-pong and handball.

Q: Where did you continue your education at?

A: I went to preparatory school at a diocesan seminary, a boarding school, and I didn't get home as much.

Q: What kind of business was your family in?

A: My family owned some olive orchards, my father was one of six founders of an olive oil factory.

Q: Where did you pursue your undergraduate schooling?

A: I went to the University of Granada, Jaen campus. This is where I majored in Elementary Education, French and Business Administration, with an emphasis on tourist administration.

Q: Growing up under Franco's rule, did you notice anything restrictive in college?

A: I didn't notice much of anything,

but there was censorship in the newspapers.

Q: When did you first go to Madrid?

A: I first went to Madrid when I was 18, really big city.

Q: Did you go to a lot of bullfights as a child?

A: My father took me to a few, but I did not understand at first why the bull had to be killed.

Q: What is your favorite memory of Spain?

A: My hometown of Escañuela.

Q: What led you to the decision to move to the United States?

A: In 1967 I studied at the University of Lyon, in France. This is where I met a group of American students, who became good friends of mine. I went later to visit them in North Carolina. In 1970 I began teaching Spanish in Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

Q: Where did you work on your masters and Ph.D.?

A: I went to the University of North Carolina, at Chapel Hill, where I pursued my masters and Ph.D. I later taught at the University of North

Carolina, then at North Carolina State University.

Q: When did you come to Penn State?

A: I came to Erie in 1979, where I met my wife; Guadalupe Alvear-Madrid. We have a daughter together, Ana Catalina Fernández-Alvear.

Q: How often do you get back to Spain?

A: I get back at least once or twice a year.

Q: I noticed when I was in Spain last March, with you and the group, that most of the meals take two to three hours, why is that?

A: Because in our culture, every meal is a celebration, we don't like to rush through our meals, like eating fast food.

Dr. Fernández teaches Spanish and Iberian History at Penn State-Erie, his office is in the Academic Building, and he will once again take a group of college students on another tour of Spain this March. Good luck Dr. Fernández, and Buenos Dias!



Dr. Juan Fernández Jiménez is a professor of Spanish at Penn State Behrend. He was born in Escañuela, Spain.

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