

# THE HIDDEN CIRCLE GAZETTE

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FICTION

## Genie in a Bottle

BY VIBRENT — 2025-07-05

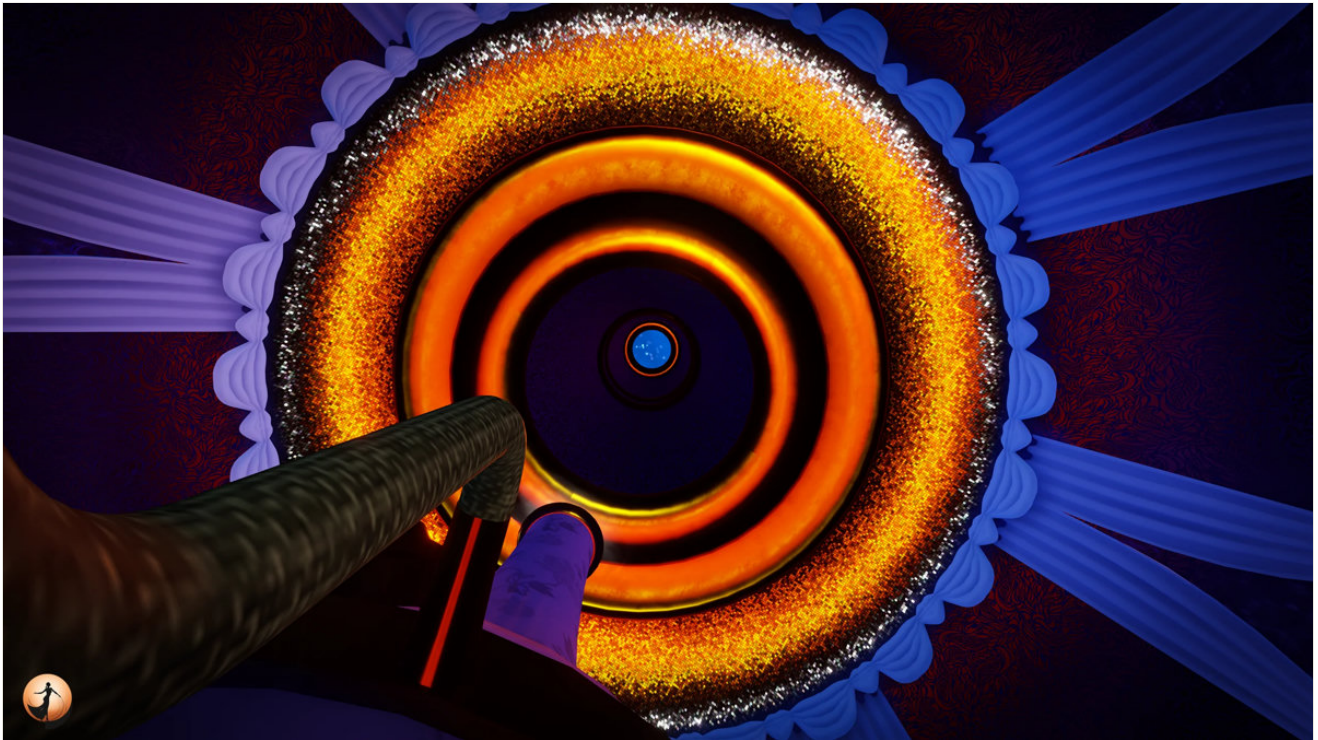


### Genie in a Bottle

**T**he obsidian bottle lay half-buried in the wet sand, polished smooth by countless tides. Its surface was so dark it seemed to absorb light rather than reflect it, sleek and devoid of the ornate flourishes typically associated with genies. Yet, it hummed with a subtle, almost imperceptible energy, a silent siren call to those seeking power and wishes.

Elara was walking along the desolate stretch of beach, lost in thought, when her foot nudged something hard. She knelt, brushing away the sand, to reveal the strange, dark bottle. She'd heard whispers of such artifacts, legends shrouded in an ominous mystique. On a whim, or perhaps a compulsion, she picked it up, her fingers tracing the smooth, cool glass. Taking a deep breath, she rubbed.

Instead of a plume of smoke, a blinding flash erupted. The world spun, colors blurring into an indistinct smear. When the dizziness subsided, Elara found herself disoriented, no longer on the windswept shore, but in a vast, echoing space that smelled of ozone and ancient dust. The walls shimmered with an iridescent, inky blackness, and the air hummed with a strange, oppressive silence.



Before her, floating effortlessly in the vastness, was the Genie. She was undeniably beautiful, with eyes like polished onyx and hair that cascaded like spun moonlight. Her form, ethereal yet solid, was adorned with garments of shifting shadows. But it was her smile that sent a chill down Elara's spine – a slow, predatory curve of lips that promised not wishes granted, but control seized.

"Welcome," the Genie's voice resonated, not from her lips, but from the very air around her, a silken whisper that seemed to caress and constrict. *"Welcome, little 'master,' to my humble abode."*

Elara tried to speak, to demand explanations, but her voice caught in her throat. A strange lethargy seeped into her limbs, a profound sense of helplessness she'd never known.

"Oh, don't look so surprised," the Genie chuckled, a sound like a distant, mournful bell. *"You thought I'd pop out, bow low, and offer you three little trifles? How quaint. How utterly boring."*



She drifted closer, her eyes fixing on Elara with an unsettling intensity. *"No, my dear. I much prefer to invite my 'masters' in. Here, in my bottle, I am absolute. Here, you are the guest, and I am the hostess. And I assure you, my hospitality is... boundless."*

A tendril of shadow snaked out from the Genie, wrapping around Elara's wrist. It wasn't painful, but it held her with an unbreakable grip, pulling her gently, inexorably, deeper into the dark expanse. Elara struggled, but it was like fighting against a dream, her efforts futile. *"Now," the Genie purred, her smile widening, "let's discuss your 'wishes,' shall we? Though, I suspect, your first wish will be for a way out. And that, I'm afraid, is one wish I will never grant."*

Elara felt her consciousness begin to dim, her will dissolving in the overwhelming presence of the dark Genie. The obsidian bottle, once a vessel of hope, had become a prison, and its beautiful, malevolent inhabitant, the keeper of her newfound, eternal servitude.

**\*Genie in a Bottle - Grand Opening** Saturday July 12th 7:00 pm CET - 1:00pm EST Tune-A-Tellers; Vibrent, Maya (DJ Incognito) & Presenza\*

