

Message in a Bottle

(The Police)

[Verse 1]

Just a castaway
An island lost at sea
Another lonely day
With no one here but me
More loneliness
Than any man could bear
Rescue me before I fall into despair

[Chorus]

I'll send an SOS to the world
I'll send an SOS to the world
I hope that someone gets my
I hope that someone gets my
I hope that someone gets my
Message in a bottle
Message in a bottle

[Verse 2]

A year has passed since I wrote my note
But I should have known this right from the start
Only hope can keep me together
Love can mend your life
But love can break your heart

[Chorus]

I'll send an SOS to the world

I'll send an SOS to the world
I hope that someone gets my
I hope that someone gets my
I hope that someone gets my
Message in a bottle
Message in a bottle

[Verse 3]

Walked out this morning
Don't believe what I saw
A hundred billion bottles
Washed up on the shore
Seems I'm not alone at being alone
A hundred billion castaways
Looking for a home

[Chorus]

I'll send an SOS to the world
I'll send an SOS to the world
I hope that someone gets my
I hope that someone gets my
I hope that someone gets my
Message in a bottle
Message in a bottle

[Outro]

Sending out an SOS...

"Message in a Bottle" is a song by English rock band The Police. It was released as the lead single from their second studio album, *Reggatta de Blanc* (1979). Written by the band's lead singer and bassist Sting, the song is ostensibly about a story of a castaway on an island, who sends out a message in a bottle to seek love. A year later, he has not received any sort of response, and despairs, thinking he is destined to be alone. The next day, he sees "a hundred billion bottles" on the shore, finding out that there are more people like him out there.

The song was the first of their five UK number one singles. *Rolling Stone* ranked it number 65 on its list of the "100 Greatest Guitar Songs of All Time".

According to the band's guitarist, Andy Summers, the guitar riff that "Message in a Bottle" is centered around was originally used for a different song. During the band's first American tour, however, he reworked the song and slightly altered the riff, becoming the final version of the song. In addition to the core riff, Summers came up with, as Sting described, "lovely arpeggiated shiver" during the break prior to the third verse. Sting praised this addition saying, "He'd do that – the song would be quite raw and he'd just add these lovely colours." The song was recorded at Surrey Sound Studios as part of the sessions for the *Reggatta de Blanc* album. Stewart Copeland's drumming, praised as his "finest drum track" by Summers, was "overdubbed [from] about six different parts."

The Police debuted the song on live television on the BBC's *Rock Goes to College*, filmed at Hatfield Polytechnic College in Hertfordshire, England. The Police donated all money earned from the show to the college.

The song was released as the first single from *Reggatta de Blanc* in September 1979. The song was a massive success in Britain, becoming The Police's first number one hit in the UK Singles Chart. The song also topped the charts in Ireland and reached number 5 in Australia. Despite its popularity in the UK, the single only reached number 74 in the United States. An alternative "classic rock" mix is available on *Every Breath You Take: The Classics*.

The song's B-side, "Landlord", was written by Sting (lyrics) and Copeland (music). Sting said of its inspiration, "I wrote that after Frances and I were thrown out of the house we were renting in London. I hated the idea of somebody fucking my life up like that. Stewart Copeland wrote the music." The song originally featured lyrics by Copeland, but they were replaced by Sting's.

'Message in a Bottle' is a good song. That can move me. I like the idea that while it's about loneliness and alienation it's also about finding solace and other people going through the same thing. The guy's on a desert island and throws a bottle out to sea saying he's alone and all these millions of bottles come back saying, So what So am I! I like the fact that the whole deal is clinched by the third verse. It makes a journey. — Sting, Q, November 1993

The Police performed at Live Earth, a 2007 charity concert to raise awareness of global warming and other environmental hazards, and performed "Message in a Bottle" as the US finale, with John Mayer playing guitar with Andy Summers and Kanye West performing a rap verse over the chorus of the song.