



GIFT FROM THE SEA

I remember once walking by two little boys on the beach collecting shells in late November. As I passed, they looked up at me and asked if I was finding any shells. I said I was just out walking toward the sunset. One of the boys held out a shell. “That’s a moon shell,” I told him. He showed me another one. I told him it’s a channeled whelk. The next one, an oyster shell.

The oldest child said, “You sure do know a lot about shells.”

I mentioned a book I love, *Gift from the Sea*. “It’s all in there,” I added.

“Oh, yeah. Our mom brings it to the beach every year but she never reads it.”

During my stroll the next evening, I felt a presence behind me. I turned to a woman who somewhat sarcastically said, “Thanks a lot.” I realized it was the boys’ mother.

I asked her if she brought the book with her this year. She nodded.

“Well, on this dark and gloomy day, why don’t you begin it this evening?” I offered. She smiled and shrugged and went inside.

She found me during my walk the next evening and thanked me again, but this time I could tell she meant it. She spoke softly: “I wish I had read it a few years ago instead of reading all those novels. It might have helped me save my marriage. But it might not be too late to save myself.”

“What’s wrong with novels?”

“They are too much like my real life,” she sighed.

We hugged. I continued my walk; she returned to her condo.

Each morning for the next week, I saw her walking the beach and carrying *Gift from the Sea*. I prayed that it was not too late to save herself.

