

# It's In The Book

(by Robert Bee)

The fact that the voice making that simple statement came from the fuchsia pot plant on my back pergola should have been a major cause of consternation. Shock. Even surprise. But its impact was blunted by being the latest and least in a string of unusual events that morning. Did I say unusual? Strike that. Let's say unworldly. No. Otherworldly.

I'd never seen a green sunrise before. But then, I'd never seen a green Sun. I assume it's still our Sun, old Sol, since I hadn't overnight traveled by a faster-than-light space ship to another solar system. At least, I don't think so. No. It must be our Sun, but why it rose in the west this morning is still a puzzle to me, even more of a puzzle than why it's a brilliant choko green.

I can say choko green with great confidence, as it's exactly the same colour as the beautifully ripe chokos growing over the trellis around my out-house. I had picked one – a risky move as I had to fight my way through the noisily feuding emus feeding on them - and held it at arms length towards the Sun and they were identical in colour. It made my bowels loosen a bit, that strange recognition of the Sun's transformation into a choko-coloured star but I didn't use the out-house to relieve it. I dare not. I didn't have an out-house when I'd gone to bed the night before.

Judith won't like the out-house, choko vine, emus or not. She has a thing about spider webs across doorways, waiting in the dark to fill your unsuspecting face with its eight legged resident while you have your mouth open. She may like the green Sun, though. After all, green is, or was, her favourite colour. I can't ask her as she's slightly indisposed at the moment. In bed, in her nightie, but still indisposed. Very still. I suppose it has something to do with the green Sun, but it may not. The fact that the sand she is currently sculptured from has a distinct green hue may be just coincidence.

I've seen plenty of sand models, but Judith is good. Perfect in every detail, even down to the cute little mole on her left... well, very good. I'd love to pick her up and bring her out to see the sunrise and emus, but you know what sand castles are like.

After seeing Judith I checked in the bathroom mirror... we still have one, a bathroom that is... to be sure I hadn't turned into something weird, like sand, or jelly. But I hadn't. I was still the same. Skin, nose, mouth, eyes, horn, ears... Horn? Oh, that's cute, right in my forehead, like a unicorn.

It was at this moment that I began to suspect that something strange was going on. It can't have been the prawns we had for dinner last night, as we'd had frozen lasagna. And I knew I wasn't dreaming. The pain I felt when I pinched my arm was indescribable. The pincers on my right hand left a cut that has only just stopped bleeding.

No, this is all real. Green Sun, out-house... well, it was an out-house, now it's a Jamie Drury water feature with a musical fountain feeding a pretty little stream... sand wife, unicorn's horn and crab claws. All real.

And now I have some strange voice whispering from the fuchsia about something being in the book.

"What is?" I snapped, waving my claws threateningly over the pot plant.

"The magical cure to your ills. It's all there, enough for your whole world," the voice said.

"You mean, it will change the Sun back, un-sand Judith, give me back my fingers..."

"Yes, yes, all that, just hurry before the..."

It was all too much. This little voice was trying to tell me how to put things right, and that stupid fountain was drowning it out with its splashing and Handel's wet water music. "Just a moment," I said as I dashed across the lawn, stepping over the stream and threw the switch to the water feature. Mercifully, the music stopped and the fountain collapsed to a puddle which was quickly soaked up by the ground and the Sun's rays. Peace again. I walked back to the pergola, slumped into my chair and turned to the friendly fuchsia.

"So, tell me, where do I find this book you mentioned?"

“No, not book,” it said, much clearer now without the pesky noise. “I said, it’s all in the brook” and a small spindly hand emerged from the fuchsia leaves and pointed with an even spindlier finger.

“What brook?” I followed the direction of the pointing finger across the back yard, to where the once bubbling little stream had soaked into the now quite dry buffalo lawn. I noticed the out-house had returned with an outrageous display of green hibiscus.

“Damn,” came the reply, then silence, broken only by the hissing sound of slipping sand from within the house.