

# Butterfly in a Glass Bottle



Thomas H. Green

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By

Thomas H Green



Eloquent Books  
New York, New York

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Eloquent Books  
An imprint of AEG Publishing Group  
845 Third Avenue, 6th Floor - 6016  
New York, NY 10022  
[www.eloquentbooks.com](http://www.eloquentbooks.com)

ISBN: 978-1-61897-500-3

Printed in the United States of America

Book Design: Roger Hayes

## **Dedication**

To my very beautiful soul mate and wife, Christine, for her endless love, support and encouragement. Without it, this book would never have seen the light of day.



## **Acknowledgements**

To Alison McGarrigle, who has inspired this book with her thirst for life and living it on the edge.



# 1

## **Don't Wake Me Unless You Can Find Me**

Like the Mad Hatter in Alice in Wonderland she was trapped in a spiral drawing her deeper and deeper, faster and faster into a reoccurring nightmare. Despite its frequency this was the one nightmare that had haunted her for as long as she could remember. Unlike the children's fairytale this was real, for she could sense the growing terror, feel the ice-cold chill wash over her body as the nightmare sent her on a journey she feared almost worse than death itself. All that went through her mind over and over again was 'why is this happening to me? What have I done to warrant this torment?' But like always, there was never an obvious answer.

While she was on this journey she found she was not a participant in its "happenings". It was like being in a theatre, watching a play from the wings, so close to the actors you could almost see them perspiring under their make-up. But unlike the play, which is shown in real time, this was always in three-quarter time. It was as if the creator of the happenings was deliberately slowing the unfolding events down so she had time to pick up on all the details. Hoping she would not miss even the tiniest of clues which would lead her to the key, the key that would finally reveal the message the creator wanted to give her and in doing so free her. The spiral was slowing down.

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The black and white shades, the “vehicle” for the happenings, made way for the rich colours like night does for the day. It was a bright summer morning; there was a breeze gently blowing. She could see a large building in the distance, very similar to an old English manor house of the aristocratic and very wealthy.

The happenings then recommenced like an actor returning to the stage for the next scene in a new costume, but the happenings would be played out in a surreal manner. The symbolic nature of it was lost on her; it was like she was trying to complete a cryptic crossword puzzle trying to find a literal meaning in its clues.

She saw a very tall and fat woman, larger than the building, standing at the top of its battlements waving her fists at a tiny multi-coloured balloon drifting away from her. In the basket below the balloon were three people, a father, mother and a little child who was dressed in pale blue and wearing a small golden pendent around the neck with an owl and cat motif on each side.

The fat woman called to the Sun to help her bring back the balloon. It shone and shone, increasingly projecting its heat around the balloon but only causing the rivers below it to dry up, leaving the fishes to do the “dance of death” quickly drying out to a crisp. Without water to nourish them, the leaves on the many trees left the branch, much as a lover would leave home when there was no love left.

The balloon continued to go further away from the fat woman. She called the Sun back and told it she was very unhappy and mad at it for not doing her bidding in bringing the balloon back. She reached down to the socket where the Sun received all its energy and pulled out its plug despite the pleading from the Sun that its light was vital to make the world go round. Within seconds it was dark.

The headlines in the morning newspaper read, “The Sun has been murdered.” But no one ever read it, for without the light of the Sun it was so, so very dark.

The fat woman then called on the Rain to help her bring

back the balloon. When the Rain got to her it apologised for being late – it had gotten lost trying to find its way to her in the dark. It told the fat woman it would be unable to help her in her quest to have the balloon returned, because it couldn't see too well in the dark and wouldn't be able to locate it. She reached down to the tap where the Rain got its water from and slowly turned it off. The Rain pleaded with her like the Sun had earlier but to no avail. The Rain was now unable to cry – and what good is a dry rain cloud? So it caught the nearest breeze and was taken away, never to be seen again.

The fat woman looked about her, something was not right. Finally it came to her that the stars were not shining. She called out in her booming voice and demanded they come out. They had seen what had happened to both the Sun and Rain and had all been trembling in fear and were hiding behind the dark side of Venus. Mars had wanted nothing to do with them: being a male he didn't possess any sensitivity and therefore didn't understand their plight. Venus asked them to go out and see what the fat woman wanted and if they were not happy with her demands they could all come back and Venus, the female planet, would take care of them.

After taking their positions in the sky, the stars were about to turn on when the vibrations from the fat woman's high-pitched voice shattered them into many tiny pieces. There was now total darkness.

On seeing the death of her beloved stars and blaming herself for their demise Venus stopped spinning, causing herself to fall; she fell a long way right into the mouth of a hungry, deep Black Hole, who burped after the meal and started to look for his next.

Mars was in love with Venus and had been since the start of time but he hadn't told her. Seeing her eaten alive by the Black Hole he was beside himself. Who was going to do all the things she had done for him? He got mad and madder and flew off in a rage leaving the Universe and entering another, where he was consoled by a female planet.

From her pink apron with lace trim, the fat woman took

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out a vacuum cleaner head and pointed it in the direction that she had last seen the balloon. Within seconds, the balloon was caught in the suction of the vacuum and was dragged back to the fat woman.

The man in the balloon was shouting, “No, Mother dear, you must stop doing these things.” His wife inside the basket was dangling her little baby over the side saying, “I will, I will, I will let go if you don’t let us go.” There, sitting on top of the balloon, was a black bird bigger than the tall and fat woman wearing a miner’s hat with a light on. It saw the tip of the balloon and wanted to take it home to its nest. Within seconds the bird’s beak had pierced the skin of the balloon sending it flying off into the distance at the true speed of a “million miles an hour”. All that was left was the once tall and fat lady, who was now so small she couldn’t be seen, but her tears ran down the side of the building creating a huge watery moat around it, isolating her now from the rest of the World.

The balloon went on and on into the horizon and then far beyond it. It finally landed on a crocodile’s head, which at the time had been sunning itself on the riverbank after eating a very, very large black bird. It was so upset by this occurrence that it went back into the river in a huff as no one or thing had ever treated it in this disrespectful manner before.

Not long after a kangaroo came to the water’s edge to take a drink. It had been hopping about for a long time waiting for the crocodile to go back into the water. It saw the father and mother of this little human, dead, their blood now colouring the water, which the kangaroo thought would bring that pesky crocodile back. The kangaroo grabbed the little human who had been holding on to its dad, crying, placed it in her pouch alongside her joey and hopped off.

The crocodile surfaced and being the greedy creature it was came back onto the bank determined to see where all this blood was coming from. It saw two humans lying motionless; the blood was coming from them. It had never taken human flesh before and wondered what it would taste like. Moving with the speed of a bullet it was now alongside both bodies. It

took a giant bite out of each; still undecided as to which tasted the better he kept on taking larger mouthfuls out of both.

While it was her nightmare she was not in control, she could not close her eyes. As the crocodile tore into the flesh of the two humans she could see the wounds it left and hear the bones being crushed.

The crocodile deciding it liked the taste of both humans took the remains of their bodies one at a time down to his larder under the water, and for seconds it came back and took the balloon and basket remains away leaving no trace for anyone to ever find.

She woke up with a scream. The blankets from her bed were on the floor and her body was covered only by a cold sweat as she lay on a damp, pale blue satin sheet. Getting up quickly, she ran to the window and opened the curtains just enough to peak out, as if she was looking to see if the creator of her nightmare was still within sight so that she could call him or her back to please explain.

Her name was Ila Jabiru. She was twenty-eight years old, around five feet ten inches tall and very slim. A natural blonde, her present hair colour was a strawberry blonde with darker highlights through it. Her eyes were sharp and cold like frozen pale green ice, but could melt very quickly, for she had a very unstable and fiery temperament but deep down she had a kind heart, despite the cards life had dealt out to her to date.

She lived in a small one-bedroom apartment above a fashion shop called “Moonlight Lady” in the market area of Fremantle, just south of Perth in Western Australia. Despite her very, very modest income her apartment was tastefully appointed. The Arabian-style décor with white walls and ceilings allowed the rich colours to flow through in her use of fabrics. There were lots of big cushions scattered around the floor. The walls were currently devoid of her own paintings, for Ila was strapped of ready money and had sold them a few days ago in the markets to some Japanese tourists.

Her bedroom was her favourite room. It had a large bed with a firm but well-worn mattress with netting that she would

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unfold when she was safe within its confines. She had used her bed as her vehicle to escape the events of her world, until this one nightmare had arrived on the scene. Her painting utensils were in the opposite corner of the room placed on a large, old wooden chest where she kept her belongings, which didn't amount to much.

Her bathroom was a compact space off to the right of her bedroom, down a small passageway that led back into a combined lounge, dining and kitchen area.

Ila lived by her wits, which saw her on a razor's edge for survival most of the time. She had a very strong artistic bent which saw her make a living through selling her abstract watercolour paintings which were always in demand at the markets. She was also the owner and instructor of a small yet thriving dance studio called "Exotic Dance". The studio, which she rented, was part of the complex below her apartment. She taught the age-old art of belly dancing, mainly to bored housewives trying to put some spice back into their flagging relationships.

Another occasional source of revenue for her was the local talent night at the "Beach Front Tavern". Ila would always win – she loved singing Kate Bush's songs. But it had now reached the point where no one would enter the competitions if she did.

Ila was now in deep trouble. At the moment she was facing a court hearing that could lead her straight to jail if found guilty. The police had charged her with fraudulent behaviour of a scam they said she was running. It involved her using terminally ill patients in the cancer ward at Lakeview Hospital in Joondalup, just north of Perth, to carry messages once they had died to the loved ones of paying customers who were also on the "other side".

Ila arranged for the patient and client to meet so the client could pass on their message firsthand. There was normally only one more visit by the client to the patient; this was to show the client that the patient had memorised their message and to take the final payment.

Ila found her clients by advertising her services in the local

newspaper, which is how the police eventually found her. There had been no complaints from the public. Her clients were mainly female and over sixty years of age, looking to pass on a message to their beloved husband, child or parent. Some of her patients were pleased to receive the \$1000, half the total payment made by the client, for promising to deliver the message. It would help their bereaving loved ones cope with the expenses of the funeral arrangements. Other patients would take no monies for they saw it as a mission on their part to help a fellow traveller through life. In those cases Ila kept the total amount.

On numerous occasions in the last week Ila had been taken down to the local police station, for further interviews by the reporting officer, who was old enough to be her father. She just knew that he fancied her in the way that he undressed her each time he leered at her. She knew he thought she would be an easy target.

Once when he came to interview her at her apartment he had come alone. His fellow officer had gone supposedly to buy a drink. He dropped his pants and pulled out his swollen cock from his underpants and told her to give him a blow job. When she told him she would report him, he said someone with her record of ripping off the aged and dying wouldn't be believed, and he had his partner to back him up.

This running back and forth to the police station had eaten into her available working hours. She also had to pay upfront for a lawyer well past his use-by date, taken on because of his cheap fees, which were still too much for her to afford. His name was Archibald Trump, a decrepit, aged fossil, falling apart at the seams.

Ila was good at reading eyes, for some reason it just came naturally to her. She could see in his that he had just about given up on life. In his perception he had been dealt far too many bad hands by life. He just wanted an easy ride to the end of his journey, one that had a few memories to savour in the afterlife.

He had even told Ila he would waive some of his fees if

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she were “nice” to him. In a non-delicate manner she told him to keep using his hand. Ila was sure that if he had not been in a desperate way financially he would have delighted in throwing her out of his shabby rented office.

Using her rent money to make a down payment on the lawyer’s fees left her short again for her rent on both the apartment and studio. She was now three months behind. Her landlady, Lillian Frank, had demanded at least a substantial part payment by tomorrow or she would have to throw Ila out. Lillian had been more than fair to her over the time she had been renting. Where would she go? She had no close friends or even family to mooch off.

Breaking her train of thought was a light rap at the door. It didn’t sound like someone was knocking. Ila was dreading the thought that maybe Lillian had changed her mind and wanted the money she was owed now. Heading across to her window she peered out, noticing a parcel van just moving off. It was not unusual for her to get mail items left at the top of the stairs. She was expecting a package of music DVDs.

She made her way to the door, realising she was naked but safe in the knowledge that she had an enclosed balcony around the top of the stairs and anyone on it was not visible to the gaze of people below. She opened the door bending down to pick up the object that was supposed to be there, only to find two very large black shoes looking a little worse for wear and in need of a polish. Her eyes moved on from the shoes to a pair of black pants that led her gaze all the way up to the face of a very young and confused priest.

When she stood up she was almost looking down on him, from the step up outside into her room; his eyes seemed transfixed on her well-rounded ample breasts, unable to move despite the embarrassment on his face. He looked like the proverbial “stunned mullet”. She quickly turned and made a dash back through the lounge down the passageway into her bedroom, retrieving her pale blue dressing gown that matched her bed linen. The only thought going through her mind was that he had such large feet for his height.

“Please come in father,” came the resilient and calm voice from the lounge room. There was a long pause before the young priest responded.

“I think I am better ... I mean safer ... I ... what I am trying to say is I am enjoying the morning sun, why don't you come and join me ... out here?” He was almost pleading with her.

“Father, I do apologise for my state of undress a few moments ago, but I am now covered up. I don't usually go to the door naked, but I didn't think anyone was there. I thought the mailman had left me a parcel, I saw his van leaving moments before opening the door to you. You must have seen him on the way up here.”

Another long pause, the priest was still outside.

“No,” he stammered. “I mean, I could have seen him if I was looking for him, but I wasn't so I don't think I saw him. That's not to say he wasn't there.”

Ila made her way to the door where a very nervous young man was still transfixed to the spot. Looking at him she could just imagine his fear. He had probably been taken straight out of school and spent the last four or five years of his life in a seminary. Unless he had sisters he may not have seen a naked woman in the flesh before.

Taking his hand she said, “Please father, come in, you will start tongues wagging if you remain out there, not to mention the possible sunburn you may get that could lead to cancer in later life.” Her hand felt warm and soft, and he followed her into the apartment. He had only seen naked women in magazines smuggled into the dormitories at the seminary.

He was quite surprised at how small the area was inside. He was accustomed to large, open spaces.

“Take a seat father and I will get you a tea or coffee.” She waited for his reply.

“Yes, that would be nice.”

“Yes father, tea or coffee?”

“Both would be fine.” She was sure he meant that either would be fine. She loved freshly made coffee and had just

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enough for both so it would be coffee all around. She looked in the cupboards but there were no biscuits to accompany the drink; still, that wouldn't cause the end of the world.

“Would you like a screw?” Those words were very faint but were now reverberating in his head and he didn't know what to do with them. His pulse was racing and his hands sweating. He thought he must have heard her incorrectly, when he heard the voice again.

“I would like a screw, how about you?” Again the voice was very faint. He was sure he had heard it correctly this time. He was in a panic. The lessons in the seminary had not covered how to handle a woman who had a strong, dare he say the word, sexual desire. His immediate reaction was to get up and run but something deep within him was telling him to sit tight. Bartholomew had been told by his teachers that this internal feeling was the voice of the Devil and he must not listen to it or he too would end up in Hell.

Just as he was about to get up and head for the door she came back into the room carrying a tray with their drinks. Bartholomew now realised he had made a big, almost huge mistake by sitting on the two-seater lounge. For she had placed the drinks on the glass coffee table just in front of it and was making her way to sit next to him. He would have been much safer on one of the two single chairs.

Taking her place next to him she said, “I have not milked or sugared our drinks as anyone who is passionate about their coffee knows you never do that, and I can see you are a very passionate man.” The reason the drinks were black and sugarless was because she had neither milk nor sugar.

He sensed she was moving closer to him, and what did she mean by saying he was a passionate man? Had she seen something deep within him, could she read his most private thoughts? What was he to do? He had to do something, she was moving closer to him. He decided to pick up his cup of coffee. He soon realised this was a big mistake. His hand was shaking so much that when it picked up the cup he spilled the hot liquid all over his crotch. He just sat there absorbing the intense pain.

His teachers had told him that he would have to endure a life of great suffering and this was obviously the beginning of it.

She had got up and rushed off back into the kitchen. It was then he heard the faint voice. "Show me what you got." He had hardly any time to digest this next piece of sexual incitement before she was back in the room with a large tea towel and heading for his wet patch. He couldn't let her touch him there, it was, well, it was – his teachers would say that they were having foreplay and that was not allowed. Why had the Devil picked this time to appear in his thoughts?

This was his first mission since becoming the priest of this parish and it was not going well. Just as she was about to dab his wet patch he quickly put his hand across the spot and took the towel from her, dabbing it himself. It was then he again heard the voice, this time saying, "Let's have a lick." He looked up at her, her lips were not moving but that voice was still speaking.

"I want it, I want it." He was so relieved the voice was not hers. It had sounded so much like a woman's voice.

"It was coming from the far corner of the room just as you went through into the kitchen," he explained.

Seeing the reaction on the priest's face to the voice Ila went over and removed the blanket covering the parrot's cage. While going over to the cage she wondered what would have caused the sheer relief that she had seen on his face. Then as if her mind was playing a tennis match with her it sent back the thought, 'He took the remarks to be coming from you and not the bird.' She broke out in laughter and he looked puzzled by her outburst.

"No father, I was not laughing at you, but the thought that you may have assumed the remarks from the bird were mine. The bird's voice does sound like a woman's."

"Yes, no, I mean no, definitely no, not at any stage did I assume you would be responsible for such sexual, sorry, what I meant to say was 'colourful' vocabulary."

Making her way back to the lounge he thrust the damp tea towel into her hands, she placed it on the glass coffee table and

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took her seat next to him. She continued.

“Its name is Rupert, it was part of a pair, but the female bird died about ten months ago. The reason it speaks in a female voice is that its owner, who is currently in hospital after experiencing a heart attack, had been a speech therapist until she retired. She became very lonely, no family to fuss over, so she bought the birds and they became her family. She was devastated when Mortisha, the female bird, died. She got that name from her favourite TV show, *The Addams Family*. We had a little burial out the back and your predecessor took the service. She was a big donator to the church, in fact very big.

“Father, was this just a social call to introduce yourself to your flock? I must admit straight away that I have been too indisposed to attend lately but I have seen the error of my ways and I will leave no stone unturned in my quest for salvation. In fact, father, I am in need of some now.” She picked up his left hand and held it between her hands. She was now gazing into his eyes. The young man’s heart started to race again.

“Yes ... no ... I mean no, it was, I mean it is a non-social call as such, but in fact all calls are in a way social. But I am digressing from the point of the visit.”

Ila was enjoying the state the priest was getting himself into. She squeezed his hand and said, “You have such a way with words father, the tone of your voice, it makes me feel all soft and warm inside. I look forward very much to your first sermon.” There was a long pause, as he tried unsuccessfully to retrieve his hand.

“That’s very kind of you to say those things about my voice. I am not sure that is the type of reaction I should be getting from my, as you put it, flock. We must not digress again. I mean, I must not digress again. I have ... I mean, you must have more important things to do than just sit here holding my, what I meant to say was ... listening to me.” Again she stirred him a little more as though he were an olive in a dry martini.

“I could just sit here forever, just holding your hand and looking into your warm, sensuous eyes. They...” His heartbeat

was increasing with every second she looked into his eyes. He was powerless to move, he knew he would have to go to confession this week and divulge his sinful ways. Rushing out his words he said, “The Cardinal has arranged for his most eminent lawyer, Father Ant ... No it’s not ... what I meant to say was Antonio, I mean Father Antonio. You must never say I said ‘Ant’, that was a name he was ... Now I digress again. What I am trying to tell you is that his most holiness the Cardinal has arranged for you to meet Father Antonio later today at my church. I didn’t mean mine, for it belongs to the church and not me, what I meant to say was at the church I am the priest at.”

There was a long pause as the priest got his breath back and Ila was trying to work out why the church’s lawyer would want to see her. Surely the church couldn’t take her to court over non-attendance or non-payment of monies that she had promised to give. These were the thoughts going through her mind.

“You look a little confused Ms, err...” He was struggling to remember her name. He had always been told by his teachers that he had a bad memory, so before he left the church this morning he had written her name down on his person so if he forgot it he could look at it, but he had forgotten where he had written it down. He hurriedly continued.

“On the off-chance that I have not explained myself too clearly and I have been told more than once, in fact one could say many times, that...” He paused, finding her name on his right cuff.

“Jibiru.”

“Father, I think it is my fault but I am a little bit confused at where this conversation is heading. Can you please tell me why Father Ant...” She could see the priest was about to interrupt and correct her over the use of the nickname for the father and not wanting to spend the next five minutes debating it she contined: “Sorry, I mean Father Antonio, why does he want to see me?”

“He wants to take over the case against you by the State.”

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There was a long pause. She was wondering if this was a way for the church to raise money.

“I have a lawyer, and it’s costing me an arm and a leg. I couldn’t afford another.”

“I don’t think you have grasped what I have just articulated, I mean said. The church will take over your case and there will be no charge.”

There was another long pause. Ila thought if this offer was correct she would be able to get her down payment back from her lawyer and pay the rent with it. But wait, another thought came stampeding into her mind, were there any strings attached to the offer?

“How good is Father what’s-his-name?” she asked.

“He has never lost a case yet.”

“How many has he had?” She wanted to know.

“Twenty-three ... No, I am incorrect, it’s twenty-four, he is currently on one now, it will conclude, I mean finish, this morning.”

She reached out and grabbed the startled priest hugging him and kissing his cheek. She was so excited she thought he deserved a little treat so she ran her right hand lightly across his wet patch just stopping ever so briefly to give his genitals a little squeeze but knowing she would have to give him a way out of this predicament she had put him in.

“You are almost dry, it helps being so hot down there. I couldn’t let you go in a wet state, what would the neighbours think?” She got up and opened the door. It took him a while to regain his composure; when he did he rushed to the door and headed off down the stairs without saying a word. It wasn’t until she was about to close the door when she heard the voice of the priest echoing around her balcony.

“It’s at 2.30 this afternoon, that’s P.M.”

She rushed over to the phone to find it had been disconnected. She made her way into the bedroom and found her purse on the wooden chest, under last night’s underwear. Her mobile phone was inside the purse along with the business card of her lawyer. She dialled his number. The call didn’t last

too long: he was happy not to represent her in court but he wouldn't return the down payment. He advised her to get a lawyer and sue him and hung up.

The wind had been taken out of her sails by his refusal to give her the money back. She still needed to find a way to pay her rent and time was fast running out.

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