

Along the Twitten and Through the Shaw

By Amanda Kerr

The ridiculously glamorous weather girl had posed in bright sunshine and predicted light showers. I had considered this very unlikely as the sky was a clear, velvety blue as far as I could see. I had set off in an optimistic mood but this had rapidly deserted me as the sky took on a rather threatening grey tone. The first of the promised light showers soon decided to prove itself to be a little more than that. I raised my face to the gloomy clouds as they cried their chilly tears and I understood just how they felt. Why had I ignored the advice of the well respected forecaster? What made me think I knew better and why did things always go wrong for me?

"Hello Universe" I silently communicated to somewhere beyond the clouds "apparently you have a plan for me. May I just ask if you could, perhaps, plan something nice?"

As I trudged along the high street towards the newsagent's shop I contemplated my latest bit of bad luck. A car had sped through a puddle just as I happened to be walking past it. My pale grey, linen trousers, so perfectly pressed, now looked like a damp, crumpled rag and flapped in a most attention seeking way round my legs. I raised my head again, hoping for a reply from the universe, and noticed a glimmer of sunshine smiling through a crack in the clouds. My first thought was that even the universe was laughing at me but then I decided to, literally, look on the bright side. Maybe the golden grin was a sign of brighter things to come. Holding on to that thought as I entered the warm, bright shop I decided to buy myself a scratch card as well as my usual newspaper.



"Good luck with that" said the cheerful lady, tapping a polished nail on the card as she handed over my purchases.

"She probably thinks I look as though I need it." I thought glumly. Thinking I might need some consolation later, I decided to give in to the temptation of the large bar of chocolate that lay on the counter. I handed over another £1 and headed out of the shop.

As I stepped back onto the high street I was greeted by the full embrace of the sun. I watched tendrils of steam rising from the road and felt ridiculously triumphant in the knowledge that the offending puddle would soon be nothing but a bad memory. "Definitely a sign." I thought to myself.

Feeling suddenly a lot more hopeful and in order to hang on to the chance of being a big winner a bit longer, I decided to pop the card into my pocket and save it until I got home. Once indoors I would make myself a delicious coffee and either celebrate or console myself with the chocolate.



With a new spring in my step I decided to take the longer route home. I headed for my favourite twitten and enjoyed the damp smell that came from the walls as the sun began to warm them. I placed a hand on the rough stone work and wondered what interesting happenings this little pathway had witnessed in the many years it had been here. It was used by us locals as a lovely, quiet route away from the bustle of the busy street. It was a little muddy underfoot but that didn't matter, I would soon be able to buy as many pairs of shoes as I wanted. I stopped in my tracks as I noticed a tiny blue flower clinging to the stone wall. A butterfly settled on it and began warming its wings in the growing heat. I noticed that my trousers were also drying out and although still a little crumpled, they didn't look so bad. As I came to the end of the narrow twitten I decided that my shoes couldn't get any muddier and I might as well continue on through the shaw. It was surprisingly dry under the dappled shade of the trees. The breeze that shook the dampness from the leaves felt fresh and warm. Even the cloud of small insects that brushed my face felt good and their busy, purposeful flight gave me hope. I thought again about the scratch card and put my hand into my pocket to check it was still there. As I did so I was delighted to notice a family of foxes hiding in the undergrowth just ahead of me. The dog fox raised his head and tried to look fiercely at me but all I saw was his beautiful red coat and shining eyes. I gave the family a wide berth but managed a glimpse of three little cubs tussling with each other under the protection of their attentive parents. That's what life is about I reflected as I proudly thought about my own three children. All now grown and launched into the world. What a lot I have to be thankful for.

As I came out of the other side of the shaw and began the climb up the bank to my house. I stopped again to take in the beauty of my little garden as it welcomed me home. My husband stood at the door enjoying the sun on his face and I could hear the gentle hiss of the kettle and smell the freshly baked bread. As I contemplated all the good things in my life I noticed the young mother next door just about to leave with her brood of three curly headed children. They were all clean and smart ready for their day at school but my neighbour looked tired and rather sad. Her husband had died after a long illness and the family dog had recently passed on too. I realised how silly I had been to get so upset about an unexpected shower and a soaking from an inconsiderate motorist. I gently placed the scratch card and the bar of chocolate on a large stone at the top of the bank. I was certain one of the children would see it and the thought of their excitement as they skipped through the shaw on the way to school made me feel very happy indeed. Even if they didn't win I know they would enjoy the possibility. And life really is full of possibilities.

