

Sunrise at San Attarium

Rhys Llewellyn

Snowbird Press

Softcover \$17.95 (341pp)

978-0-9835128-1-3

Sunrise at San Attarium questions whether it is possible to make one's fantasies come true.

To live out a fantasy isn't possible for most people, yet in Rhys Llewellyn's *Sunrise at San Attarium*, it's imperative.

Bob Inwater can't seem to keep his fantasy life from encroaching on his real life. After several occasions where he tunes out of reality, with eyes literally rolled back in his head, Bob consults a psychiatrist. The seemingly common-sense advice: In order to stop fantasizing, Bob must aspire to make his fantasy a reality. Only then can he stop tuning out and start living fully in the present.

It's an intriguing thought for Bob, a guy who has been happy to take shortcuts throughout life. He somehow rode to second-in-command at his company mainly by being in the right place at the right time. His dull marriage also came about without much conscious effort, so he is long overdue to take action for his own benefit.

Bob has a sense of humor, but he displays no common sense. In taking his psychiatrist's advice to make one of his overriding fantasies a reality, Bob needs to slip out of cruise control and fully engage. Doing so entails a move out of the country to a tropical island called San Attarium.

As hinted at by the island's name, the story is full of word play, puns, misunderstandings, and lots of odd encounters with eccentric characters. Llewellyn has a talent for this word craft.

Bit players throughout the book con Bob out of a seemingly endless supply of money, and his wife Harriet is a foil who he cracks his jokes upon. Perhaps the most interesting character is the one Bob makes up: a woman named Rachel, whom he has a suggestive relationship with.

The story is a meandering tour through the various acts of Bob's disengagement from reality in pursuit of his fantasy. Many encounters do little to advance character development or plot. The narrative technique of cutting back and forth from real events to the outlandish scenarios in Bob's head lends interest, although occasionally the journey feels like it may never reach fruition. Clever turns of phrase and ever-present puns are redeeming, though, so reading remains enjoyable.

Sunrise at San Attarium is a novel with an intriguing premise. It travels a meandering, rollicking road that leaves one wondering about the true nature of reality and whether it is possible to make fantasy lives come true.

FELICIA TOPP (May 3, 2017)

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