

Chocolate ©
Jerome W. Berryman
July 29, 2021

In our village everyone loved chocolate. We ate it for prizes, surprises, and for no reason at all! We even made change with it. If something cost \$1.98 and you put down \$2.00, you got back two little round pieces of chocolate.

One day a stranger came to town. He was green. In our village there were people of every color in the rainbow but not green. This made people uneasy. It also made people uneasy that he had a wagon full of kelp and kale to sell. These things were also green, but the stranger did wear a red, velvet vest with a gold pocket watch and chain. His grin was wide but toothless. He sort of hopped when he walked. People slowly got used to him but not to the kelp and kale.

It was good we got used to the green person, because others in our village began to look like him. Some said it was the power of green. Others were more curious and kept asking, "Why." Finally, the people, who worked at the House of Science, noticed that when the green people sneezed tiny, transparent tadpoles flew through the air. If you breathed them in, you too turned green and walked with a hop. That might have been okay, but after a time the green people went POP and disappeared! All that was left were little, crumpled piles of red vests and gold watches all over the village. Where did the green ones go? No one knew, but they were gone, gone, *gone*.

People didn't want to be gone so they crowded into our hospital when they began turning green. The only thing that could stop this was chocolate. Dr. Pepper at the House of Science discovered that if you ate chocolate at 10:00, 2:00, and 4:00

you would not go POP and slowly turn back into your original color. You also stopped hopping when you walked and wore regular clothes.

The Lord Mayor took this bit of news seriously and mandated that everyone in the village had to eat chocolate at 10:00, 2:00, and 4:00. About half the people thought this was good. They already liked chocolate and it was free. They also didn't want to go POP. The other half refused. They only wanted to do what they wanted to do.

The anti-chocolate people continued turning green and going POP until they were all gone. Life in our village went on. Soon the mandate was no longer needed, so people ate chocolate whenever they felt like it.