

Enna Rose

Conversation

By Dagny McKinley

Please do not attempt to recreate the events of Enna Rose's life. They will result in internal/external death or at the very least a yeast infection.

Most of Enna Rose's religious experiences had taken place at Sunpie's Bistro. Here she had seen apparitions, had revelations and met prophets. Tonight was no different. Amber ale coated her throat while she awaited epiphanies, looked for new writing on the walls and sacrificed herself to the energy swirling around. As she twirled around, she bumped into a woman with a quiet presence, copper hair and a purple scarf twisted around her neck.

"You're Enna Rose, aren't you?" the woman asked. Enna nodded. "You're the one who wrote the new Ten Commandments last year. Those were really brilliant," she continued.

"Thank you," said Enna as she curtsied for the woman. She felt a revelation coming on. There was a different stir to the air, something shifting in the seasons, in the heat of almost-summer air stolen back by snow. Something was about to be unleashed so Enna put down her ale, threw a glass of cold water in her own face and waited.

"I have to admit, I was kind of disappointed," said the woman as she took a sip of Diet Coke. "After your first sermon, your church faded so the words you preached felt false. I was ready to listen, ready to follow and then the words faded with the weeks and now here we are, a year later and no church."

Disappointment always sobered Enna. "Let's go outside," she suggested. At that moment the wind swung open the door and a rugby player who had not been seen in a long time came in with his unmistakable laugh. He seemed to move through the women but held a beer in his hand so they moved on. They found a rock near the river and let the flakes of snow gather on them.

"I haven't told anyone else this," said Enna, "but after I started the church, I felt myself having an aversion to the word church and some of the practices it represents for me. Most religions have waged wars and I want peace. Some religions feel outdated to me, maybe a guiding principle at most, but sometimes instead of breaking down walls they build up walls around women, around gay people, around 'different,' so I let it fade." "I guess you haven't listened to Alain de Botton have you?"

"Who?"

"He gave a talk called Atheism 2.0 and maybe his interpretation of religion might change the way you feel about church, about religion. You see, he thinks we should take the best parts of religion and appreciate what they offer, how they teach and use that to understand all of this," she gestured to the world around her.

"Are you an angel?" asked Enna.

"My name is Sloan, I just thought, well... I think you have a lot to say. I've spent some time in churches..."

"I like how peaceful they are when no one is in them, how elaborate and ornate and impervious to weather..."

"There is a feeling of reverence when you walk in. Most people feel the need to whisper. They created a space that sets a mood," said Sloan.

"So I should build a place that speaks to what I believe in?"

"I think that place has already been built. But maybe you need to find your way inside the world you love?"

The snow was piling up flake upon flake on their hair, yet still melting against their skin, on their faces and on their hands, rivulets trickled down.

"Maybe a cave?" suggested Sloan.

"Or against the shelter of a rock."

"There's a whole world to choose from, but think about cathedrals of trees, or alters of stone, think about the world you want to convey."

Enna climbed down a few rocks and submerged her bare feet in the icy waters of the Yampa. They tingled and went numb and she thought about rocks and ancient tribes of people and what was important to them. They had Gods to worship, but oftentimes those gods were the natural elements around them and they inspired a certain awe that caused people to record, in images, their beliefs.

"We need art," said Enna.

"More than art," said Sloan. She was perched on one of the rocks that drew a line between land and water. "Alain talks about the need of having art explain itself. Churches do this very well. They illustrate what love looks like, or compassion, or struggle. You can understand art in a church, but museums, have you seen modern art? I never know what I'm supposed to think or feel, sometimes it looks like nonsense until I read about the artist and what they were trying to do."

"Yes, yes! We need art that shows love, generosity,

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