

Holly
Topia

A Series about faith & Religion

Robin
Vialon



Foreword

This series, albeit fictional, is heavily inspired by existing religions. through the story in this book I criticise while sharing my opinions about them.

While my opinions about religion are strong, I do not see religion as inherently bad. Everyone is allowed to believe and put their faith in what they see as right. My problem with religion lies only with the people that believe that they can harm or force others with the premise of their religion being the only “correct” one.

Religion is very personal and should not be politicized and used as a tool for ones greed.



“The magical garden”

In the heart of the countryside, where rolling hills meet the sky and where the air is sweet with the scent of wildflowers, there lays a hidden garden. This is no ordinary garden; This is a magical garden, where seeds bloom into flowers in a matter of seconds and where the berries are always plump and ripe to eat. The garden is always full of different species of flowers. making the garden look like a gleaming rainbow from afar.



In the middle of the garden is an overgrown wooden cross. One made out of two wooden logs, some torn rope that holds both together and some wheat that serves as decoration.

The cross seems old, hinted by the moss growing on its bark. But even though the cross looks old, it seems well taken care off, as the cross has a polished shine.

On most days the garden is empty. With only the butterflies and the sun to keep it company. While the garden always looks beautiful in the beginning of the week, after each day the garden starts to change. Flowers start to wither, the berries taste changes from sweet to sour, and the garden slowly loses its vibrant colours. And that continues, until Sunday.

On Sunday, there is a lot of people in the garden.
The people in the garden are always different.
Sometimes there is a Fox
Other times a rabbit
And the last time there was a stork.



But one person is always there.

A Bird

A colourful bird.

A kind, colourful Bird.

That always speaks to the other people attending.
The Bird always stands in front of the wooden cross.
And starts speaking about different kinds of topics.

“Unity”

“Love”

And “Worship”

Sounds lovely doesn't it?









At the end of the day the people leave.
And after they left, the garden regained it's vitality.
Magical.

The people that leave always look happy.
Especially the Kind, colourful Bird.
But there is always one person who doesn't look
happy.

Once it was a fox,
Another time it was a rabbit,
And the last time it was a stork.
I am not sure why they don't look happy, like the
others, but my guess is, is because they had to leave
one person behind.

That happens every time in the garden.
Sometimes it's a Grandma,
Other times it's a Dad,
And the last time it was a Child, like me.

The kind, colourful Bird says that it is normal,
and that we give them back to our garden when
someone lost theirs.
Although I don't fully understand what the Bird
means, everyone else seems to agree.



My big inspiration for this project was Religion. I strode for a Fairytale/ Children's book type aesthetic because I feel like that it was religion should be like. It is what helps us cope with our world and gives us a drive to stay here. Its gives a purpose for the people who need it and inspires others to be kind and helpful to others.

But nowadays that is overshadowed by greed, sexism, homophobia and pretty much used as an excuse to be hateful towards others who think and act differently.

In this photoshoot I wanted to show that behind this "happy life" front, that many religions nowadays have, lies a bunch of toxic and controlling people. Who use their faith to do malice and trick other people into joining their so called religion, with the promise of fulfilment, but end up only hurting themselves and other people without even being aware of it.

The amount of damage these kind of religions do have been well documented through the history of humankind and especially in our so called " sophisticated" modern society ends up doing more harm than good. While the younger generations have more freedom when it comes to choosing their own believes, a big majority still ends up being shunned or excluded by their own family members for having a different view. This disguised hatred or so called "religious nationalism", gets passed down by older family members, who themselves where victims of said nationalism by their own family members, and don't realise what kind of harm they are doing to other people, or one could even say: "they are so heavily brainwashed that they think that whatever harm they are doing to others is justified by their own god and that those people deserved it for not following their believes.

In this story I created, I talk about a Stork. An only mother. Who desperately wants to fit in.

The stork, having moved away with her precious child for a new start, is trying to make new connections in a small but lovely town. Determined to make new friends for her and her child's sake, she starts going to this magical garden that she got to know of through a recommendation from her neighbours. Everyone there is really kind and accommodating and she ends up finally making some "friends". They show her how they work with the garden and tell her that if she wants to do so as well, she needs to follow some specific life rules. Thinking that the rules are pretty harmless, she agrees and officially joins the garden. She becomes better friends with everyone working there and has finally found her tiny paradise on earth. On her first time going to the garden on Sunday, she learns about how the garden stays "magical" and while confused at first, peer pressure makes

her accept their doings and starts to believe that this way is indeed the correct one. Then, something unexpected happened. Her child, now old enough to form her own opinions, decided to follow her own magical garden. A garden with a very different set of life rules that makes it difficult for the mother to come to terms with.

The mother ends up convening with her "friends" at the garden about it, and they tell her that there is only one solution: the child must return to the correct garden through the Sunday ceremony. The child, wanting to please her mother, accepts to go to the mother's garden on Sunday, not knowing its hidden meaning.

At the ceremonies end, everyone leaves pleased, as they did their garden proud. But one person is not. Weeping in the back of the crowd is the stork, filled with uncertainty and questions of regret, unconsciously following the magical garden's members, since as of now, she has no one else..



