

The church was abandoned decades ago. My mother went to the last service held in there. Only ten people showed up, she liked to tell, including the minister. He probably was one of those fire and brimstone kinds of ministers. Mother loved those until the end of her life. That is why I stopped joining her to those services as soon as I could.

So I knew quite sure it was abandoned decades ago, even before I was born. There was nothing special about the building either. It was the typical brick and mortar building that dominated the building plots in the seventies. It had not even been used for long before it was abandoned. It was kind of square and boarded up.

Last year I could rent a room near that church. It was not much, but all I could afford on my small wages. The first Sunday, when I sat there at my writing desk facing the window, I saw her. She entered the church, and seemed not to be afraid of anything falling on her head. I would be, the way the building looked with its broken windows. I briefly wondered what she would want in there, but soon it slipped my mind again. There were more pressing matters at hand, like writing the paper due that Monday before I had to go to work. I never saw her leave. I did not look out of the window often. Why would I? It was not like I had a great view.

A couple of weeks later I happened to see the old lady again. It was a Sunday morning, a little before ten, just like last time. My curiosity was piqued this time. Why would an old lady keep going there? Could it be that there still were services? I would not even be that surprised. The surroundings fitted the type of service I knew my mother had liked. I started paying more attention to the building, but all I ever saw happening there was the old lady entering it, and leaving after about an hour. If there were services again, it certainly was not a kind of revival. She was the only attendant I could see.

I started watching the old church. Even the old lady only came there on Sunday mornings. No one else ever entered it from my point of view. I wanted to know what she was doing there, so one morning I went there too. How she would even get in there was something I did not think about before. When I stood at the entrance however, I noticed that it was tightly locked. Off course it was, whoever was in charge of the building would not want squatters in there. The old lady would have a key. I waited, and indeed saw her unlock the door.

The inside was as derelict as I imagined it to be. When I entered I remembered my first thought when I saw the old lady enter. I had not thought about anything falling on my head again until now. The lady sat down and began to sing. Her voice was feeble, and it sounded eerie in the empty space. I could not make out what she sang. When she finished the song, she turned to me. 'Oh, you are nice and young', she cooed, 'How wonderful to have such a replacement'.

By now I know exactly what she sang that morning. I sing it every Sunday morning, in the same old abandoned church. I am bound to somehow, out of curiosity. I do not know how it is done. All I know is that it killed my freedom in the end, the minister's last curse over the building. It could not be demolished as long as someone was still there on Sunday mornings. That someone is me now. I can only hope that I can do this until I die, and that no one will be as curious as I was.