

THE ATLAS (SHORT VS.)

PREMIÈRE SÉRIE // PT1. AR // BY NICOLE BONOMI

I

Hello.

SHE

You want henna?

I

No thank you, I came for mint - for nausea.
And also saffron - Mohammed said you have the best.

SHE

You like saffron?

I

I love saffron.
My father's favourite dish from North Italy is made with saffron.

SHE

Your Father eats gold then.
Did you know this?

I

That makes sense - he is gold.

SHE

Your mother cooks it?

I

Yes.

SHE

She loves him.

I

Very much.

SHE

Cook always with love.
It costs more to cook with resentment than to buy saffron.
Did you know that?

I

Makes sense too.
I pray over soup when I cook it.

SHE

This is wise.

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I
I think you are wise.
What else do you know?

SHE
You want the henna?

I
And a good business woman (laughing).

We smiled at each other.

I
Ok let's do the henna.

She inspected my hands, back and front.

SHE
Healing.

I
Yes, you know reiki?

SHE
No. But you love cinnamon and honey too.

I
Yes! I do! I love, LOVE cinnamon and honey.

SHE
I sell this.

I laughed.

SHE
And your eyes -

*I looked in her eyes - slightly trepidatiously. It was like pupil to pineal.
Pineal to root. Root back out through pupil - in a blink.*

SHE
You are an ancient power - The Berber People know you.

I
I don't know about that.

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SHE

Yes. Mohammed will put a mark on your middle eye.
You need protection before you learn your own power.
Light attracts the moth.

The winding of the Atlas does not sicken you. You are not nauseous for the journey to Sahara but the company you keep. Ill company is a winding road with no promise of Sahara. The worst company is friends with the best seamstress.

Often the closest to us rob the canteen before our naked eye and we do not blink. The giver is unbothered by sharing so they do not recognise the taker. A taker is not a receiver. Do not confuse the two - a good-receiver is as good as a good-giver.

A man's horse may be revered, and the power that carries him forward - coveted - and so his water may be poisoned. But those who wage war, who come after love, who sabotage true nobles, poison only themselves.

If you hunger for true love, be willing to die from starvation. But best you do not hunger at all - find joy in fasting. Ask after true love but have the wisdom to dismiss what is not. See with your middle eye. Have the courage to be alone, and be confident in your travels - alone. Alone you may die of thirst, but a death by the conditions of the desert is a noble courageous death. Better this, than to die the fool, poisoned by a false witness, or worse, to live half-alive, which is half-dead, with a "lover" who is not love at all.

People's hearts do not break, they bend by who is not love, they bend into shape for who is, but some never recover from the agony of change. Take time for recovery. Celebrate change. Beware the false messiah - like only the *flavour* of honey and cinnamon - but it is not from the bees or the bark. After equinox, open your heart slowly. Smile back at the crescent moon. And remember true love was always the patient and *kind* master. When you meet the sands of Sahara, you'll remember. You will leave your fossil, as it did on you a time before.

Finally, remember 1 and 7. One of 7. One. And 5, 5 essential dignities. And 7.

You like the henna?

I

Yes.

Nicole Bonomi

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