

Somerset author, Emily Scialom is top of the book charts

Lawrence John @CGazetteLJ
Entertainment reporter

GROWING up in Glastonbury must have been part of the magical ingredient which has seen one writer create a 'George Bailey for the 21st century'.

The writer in question is Emily Scialom whose novel called *The Religion of Self Enlightenment* (first published in 2016) has sold out on Amazon, as well as in Waterstones, Heffers and in Oxfam.

The story tells of Carrick Ares, who has a near-death experience in a car accident. He becomes a changed man and proceeds to write a new religion about love and happiness.

For those who do not know, George Bailey is the main character in the film *It's a Wonderful Life*.

George is unhappy, wants to die and jumps off a bridge into a river. He is saved by his guardian angel, Clarence.

He is given a chance to see what his world and his life in Bedford Falls would have been like if he was never born.

He sees the difference he made and he indeed had 'a wonderful life' and gets a chance to live again.

The character in Emily's book, Carrick Ares, gets a similar sort of chance as he finds out the answers to the questions:

- Have you learnt to love?
- Have you made the world a better place?

The idea for the character of Carrick came about while Emily was living in Cambridge, she moved there when she was 12-years-old after living her formative years in Glastonbury.

Explaining how it all came about Emily said: "I went a guy when working in a pub in Cambridge and he seemed very boring. He seemed dull. He said he used to listen to Pink Floyd music and take drugs.

"Then he said he had had a near death experience and in his eyes he seemed to come alive.

"It was as if there was something in him, he was like one of those Russian dolls (Babushka), the person he had been was trapped inside the person he had become."

Not content with her first book (now in paperback) she has written a second which she hopes will be out in December.