

THE LIBRARY

a queer, erotic tale of librarians

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Here creates a notable ledge where bodies may fall into chasms, may bounce from rock to rock as though packed with sand. Limbs will be bent unnaturally in this way, folding over against the joint and staying. What is left of who enters is bodies quite unaccustomed to walking with inverted knees, but they will learn slowly and gracelessly and eventually forget the way their knees bent before.

The librarians are not opposed to cutting the tension, being free-willed whatever the means. The books are there to remind them that whatever can be said need not be said, that all the sentences exist. They retreat to, or are relieved by something more physical, an expression that could but need not be formulated in analysis, in confession, in guilty admittance, or justified by words saying *love*, or *the best one can do*, or *just this once*, or *I'm not usually like this*, or *this is the last time and I mean it*. The books—corporeal as much as they are discarnate, existing here as both yet unrelated—fall off the shelf and are bent, folded, water damaged, but exist regardless of their containers' movement and destruction.

And the librarians, aware of this, taxed with this, are nonetheless inspired by it, feel themselves permitted to allow their own bodies to act without the weight of what's inside them, without the burden of forming sentences to explain. The sentences already surround them.

The librarians lay words onto each others' bodies as decoration. Or as stimulation, a note to get the song started, a suggestion for procession. *Formidable. Smoke. Stronghold. Ardent. Imprint. Tallow. Curtail. Incline. Fold.* They let these figures lay across their skin, they peel them slowly off. Taste them, if words can be sensed. Make tools of them, if they can be handled. Place them, if words can set inside.

Glasses placed on the desk to avoid breakage, bodies placed gingerly to avoid clatter—they are respectful of their patrons' pursuits, of the need for quiet time. They try.

There is the need for this, such great need. This is public space, a resource for all. The librarians do not take their position lightly, but they are passion-filled, struck in such ways that the binding of their skin cannot contain. And so. Silence as it is can be demanded though rarely performed in libraries, beds. Where still the hum of breathing, moving bodies, grinding teeth, and vocal chords cannot help but assert. The song first emerges in the night to lull a beloved

into dreamland, or to lull her out of it, to inspire some desire as a song is apt to do of a vision in the mind of youth and flexibility, properly functioning joints and organs, a full set of teeth, and hair (some carnal urge). But then, the song successful to degree, will prove difficult to withhold on other occasions, even if the occasion calls for inhibition, silent reading, clean hands.

There's not a reason not to, not to fuck each other, not to cross walls, not to combine all this individual space. *I have too much room inside me, one says, please come in. Help me fill it.* This is all they're doing, helping each other to sufficiently inhabit what they have been

given, or burdened. Here, all around them, is the evidence of pulling back, of containing the impulse, of preserving it. The impulses line the shelves, are held under arms, or placed into bags, are taken home for short visits, or sometimes long visits if the draw is too great, if the impulse escapes its bound boundaries. The librarians are surrounded by this, it is insulating them, padding them, explaining them, permitting, begging them to reach. So they do.

They thus face each other, drag fingernails across each other's arms. They reach towards each other and grab onto the lip of a belt, or the hook of a shoulder blade. They undress slowly, press

fingers into the coils of permanents. They dig their hands beneath all there is to dig through—considerable amounts of stuff sometimes—they dig through it, their hands find each other finally. Their faces cannot remain apart, their bodies roll into the stacks. Startling always to find themselves there, they have to pause, they have to feel this moment.

The books are not surprised by this, the books have been prepared for more. The books have seen, they own in fact, all that can happen, all that is impulsively released or appropriately held back, and all that is let loose from the body in every dripping way, every deep and relieving thing, every act that could find its way into words.

The books know all of this already. So why be quiet for them?

The librarians are connected by fingers and teeth and legs, and tongues, and arms, and breasts, and woven torsos, and when they pause this way to think about what this place has brought them, what they've brought to it, it is hard for them to consider much outside of the ache of their bodies' positions, and the anticipation of what comes next. It hurts, this movement, that's what can't be read, how tired the muscles get under another's weight, how mouths are too vigorous at times, how a hand overstays its welcome, but is called again, is invited farther, and so opens, stays. *Grain. Holding. Stilt. Still. Rake.*

The librarians take these words from the walls and empty them into each other. This is one way to protect what's been said already, not by saying it again, but by using it on a body. They alternate positions justly, they scream and quake, their heads throw back, they stare into the florescent lights, then look back to each other and find faces distorted in a black hole of florescence, now anonymous, stripped. They pull into each other to regain their bearings, identify themselves by what they reach. The books are walls around them now, and the librarians expand, swell, expel rather than quell, attempt to fill the space, the library.

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