

# The further adventures of Libraria, info-warrior



Lloyd E Davis was so inspired by the poster of the info-warrior astride her mutant kangaroo that he offers *inCite* readers this short story:

Libraria scanned the wasteland. It had been a long sojourn and she had endured summer's heat and winter's cold on her quest. Many nights she had slept rough in her bedroll, with just her Thunderoo and her Tome for company. She was tired. Not the tiredness of lack of sleep but a bone-weary travel tiredness which would only diminish after some weeks back with her Tribe. The sun had reached its meridian and Libraria was thankful for her powasol giving her some shade. Her cool sunnies ameliorated the reflected glare of the blasted landscape sufficiently that she could scan the pages of her Tome. Libraria held it reverentially and as she did, felt the heavy binding and reassuring solidity increasing her inner strength and reducing some of her fatigue. She recalled the secret women's ceremony where her mother and grandmother had passed it on to her — an adolescent's dream; her very own Tome! Of course, the Megeeks had invented so-called 'better' methods and equipment such as comsat uplinks with digipods to enable access to the Cendat and naturally, as a Class 3 Warrior Lady, Libraria had equipped her Thunderoo with these. Nonetheless, the rarity of Tomes, especially after the Fall, made them a desirable addition to any wasteland warrior's tool kit. And there was still so much informada to recover and distribute to the Tribe.

The Thunderoo shifted uneasily. Its huge head rose and fell repeatedly in its usual warning action. Libraria's Zen training made her at one with her mount. Her instincts, honed by years of Warrior training, engaged without conscious effort. She whipped around in time to see a Sandweller leap from the rock ledge above her. In a flash, she sheathed her Tome in her father's leather saddlebag, drew her flint spear from her bedroll, set the butt on the ground and impaled the attacker neatly, allowing the weight of the Sandweller's lifeless body to push its way down the shaft.

'No problem there,' she thought, her training and experience confirming that Sandwellers were lone scavengers, 'no chance of one of his mates having a second try.'

Libraria jumped deftly onto the Thunderoo's head and she commanded it to lift her up to the rock ledge from whence the attack was launched. She rifled through the tattered cloth bag left there by the Sandweller for safekeeping before the attack. All Sandwellers carried these bags and Libraria knew that some had useful booty, if one could manage to separate the owner from the bag.

'Shoooo' she exhaled quietly through pursed

lips. Her hands quivered slightly as she withdrew three Tomes of varying sizes from the bag. She caressed the covers and it took all of her Warrior training in self-discipline to stop her fingers trembling as she opened the first Tome. There, on the yellowing pages flapping slightly in the hot plains breeze were the ancient symbols embodying the teachings of The First Ones! Her long, seemingly endless, lessons in the arcane language and symbols of The First Ones came flooding back and she read the ancient knowledge. And read, and read. Tears of joy and gratitude that fate had chosen her to recover such a treasure welled up and she wiped them away, careful that they did not fall on the precious pages. Time ceased. Again and again, Libraria read the symbols and began to understand the meaning of the Tomes she had acquired.

It was chilly. The sun was dipping toward its nadir and Libraria stood up, her lithe 2.5-metre frame casting a lengthening shadow over the Wasteland plains. She composed herself and placed the newly discovered Tomes in the tattered cloth bag. Calling to her mount, she hopped, cat-like, onto its head. Resuming her saddle and tapping on the digipod with her nimble fingers, she activated the comsat uplink to send her co-ordinates and a brief message to her Tribe, describing her find. Libraria then sent a slightly longer message to the sponsor of her mission, The Keeper of the Tomes. The woman known only as The Keeper of the Tomes was so old that all who knew her name, save for herself, were dead. It was hard to imagine, looking at the care-worn face and gracefully aged body of The Keeper of the Tomes, that she was once was once a Class 5 Warrior Lady. However, Libraria knew from the way The Keeper of the Tomes walked that, despite her age, her bearing still showed the rigorous discipline of Warrior training. The Keeper of the Tomes would look auspiciously on this new acquisition and Libraria knew that an upgrade to Class 4 Warrior Lady would be favourably received at the next Tribe Council, especially with The Keeper of the Tomes speaking for her. But there was one thought that warmed her against the increasingly brisk winds from the cooling plains below: it was the anticipation of her next session with The Keeper of the Tomes as they sat together, just the two of them, cross-legged, on the floor of the Great Library, illuminated by candles, with Tomes strewn around them and the further arcana they would glean from the writings of The First Ones.

Libraria drew gently on the reins and turned her beast's head toward home. ■

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