



And they did. I asked for a good, strong-bound book, fit to be on library shelves. And that's what they made. And they made it beautiful.

And now, you.

Hello you.

and the future, the stars in the sky, giant squids and cruel puritans: They were all mine, all given to me by an anonymous librarian.

I was thus initiated into the economy of knowledge where libraries are the beautiful savings and loan and books are good currency. It's a gift economy that creates a nation where a child has full rights of citizenship as soon some wobbly, letter-like marks can pass for a written name on a card. It's a gift economy where a person learns to respect the rights of others and take good care of common resources.

Every time a reader chooses a book, an independent vote is cast. Ideas open up.

Knowledge happens. The reader is transformed. Of course, none of that can happen unless there are books on the shelves.

There is a whole culture devoted to putting books on shelves. Book builders are a part of it. I have the pleasure of being part of the great book-building conspiracy. As it turned out, I was more suited to reading than repairing the Hubble telescope or arguing with cows. So I write indexes. It's a tiny role in service of books and readers, and it doesn't require a speck of bravery. But I know courage when I see it. I see it before me.

Librarians are on the front lines.

When you provide access to a book, you are defending the right to think. It runs much deeper than the right to speak: the right to think. It is the right to imagine and understand, to have thoughts. Shit happens in your brain when you read.

When you put a book on the shelves, the consequences are profound.

Loa Lindgren had a craptastic life. She also had access to libraries, to books, to knowledge. Nothing magic happened. No one waved a wand and rescued her and