



## Sword in the Stacks

*Jen Swann Downey*

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### **Sword in the Stacks** Jen Swann Downey

Now official apprentices of the Lybrariad, Dorris and Marcus have joined Ebba in the immense time-folding labyrinth known as Petrarch's Library for the Summer Quarter.

Dorrie is eager to do well at her practicums, and prove her worth as an apprentice, but before she can choose between "Spears, Axes, and Cats: Throwing Objects with Precision and Flair" and "First and Last Aid: When No One Else Is Coming", mistakes made by Dorrie in the past cause trouble for the lybrarians.

The Foundation, once nearly destroyed by the Lybrariad, now has the means to rise from its ashes, and disappear reading and writing from the world. To make sure it succeeds, the Foundation sets in motion a dark plan to increase the power of a cruel figure from the fifteenth century.

To stop the Foundation, Dorrie, Marcus and Ebba will have to burglarize Aristotle, gather information among the suffragists and anti-suffragists of 1912 London, and risk their lives to wrest a powerful weapon out of the Foundation's hands - all while upholding the Lybrariad's first principle of protecting all writing, appreciated or despised. If they fail, reading and writing will only be the first things to disappear.

### **Sword in the Stacks Details**

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Author : Jen Swann Downey

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## From Reader Review Sword in the Stacks for online ebook

### Suzanne says

Those who have visited my library know that I am a fan of this series, I even have the "Is Your Librarian a Secret Ninja?" poster on display in the fiction section. For those who haven't encountered this series before, let's just point out that the title says it all. Ninja. Librarians.

This time around, Dorrie and Marcus return to Petrarch's Library to continue their training as apprentice Lybrarians. There is a little difficulty actually reaching the portal (something about being banned from their hometown library, breaking in, getting caught in the act...). Once they arrive, they are able to turn in their requests for mentors and practicum courses. Besides the hostility from Millie and her friend Izel that Dorrie has come to expect, there is also disagreement between the senior Lybrarians about the best course to take. Some want more missions sent out to find the Foundation's stronghold and prevent them from tampering with history. Others insist that the ends justify the means and that physical coercion should be used on the prisoner, Mr. Biggs, and force him to give them information on the Foundation.

Between planning with Ebba for their Principles of Lybrarianship training mission, doing the assigned readings, taking a field trip to Tyre in 327 BCE, practicing her sword work with Savi, and assisting the Archivist in organizing mission reports, Dorrie stays very busy. But that doesn't stop her from worrying about the page from the *History of Histories* that the Foundation has acquired, or their plans to disrupt key missions, or the rumor that one particular disruption would mean the death of someone in Petrarch's Library. Marcus has his own worries. His crush, Egeria, has a boyfriend that Marcus didn't know about. A drummer he met while he and Dorrie were in Athens is being charged with serious crimes and Marcus wants to save him. Even Ebba is distracted with an upcoming trip she and her Lybrarian parents are planning. Can a few apprentices with plenty on their plates actually solve the problems that their teachers can't? You'll have to read to find out.

Besides the mystery and adventure of the story, I also enjoy the humor. Some of my favorite moments from this book are times that Marcus quotes from "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory." As he, Dorrie, and Ebba are traveling through a dark cave, he sings, "There's no earthly way of knowing, which direction we are going." When they hear the ceiling above them cracking, he quips, "The suspense is terrible. I hope it lasts." And when someone asks why anyone would ever help the Foundation, he suggests they are doing it for "a lifetime supply of chocolate?" When he's not riffing on Roald Dahl, he is also very amusing when he tries to drown his heartache in large amounts of baklava.

There are also serious themes worked into the book. The girls learn about how important it is to let both sides of a cause have their say, even when you disagree with what is being said. (That part actually reminded me of the scene in "The American President" when Michael Douglas addresses the media and talks about the Constitution and Bill of Rights giving everyone the right to freedom of speech.) There is also the debate on whether the ends justify the means. If you do bad things for a good cause, can your cause remain good? And Dorrie learns a very good lesson about facing fear and not letting it take over.

Altogether a wonderful second adventure for the characters. Each of them learn and grow, even the adults. And there are still plenty of opportunities for future missions as their training and the series continue.

I read an e-book provided by the publisher through NetGalley.

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## **Marlana says**

The Ninja Librarians are back! (Or Librarians with a y if you prefer)

I still both like and dislike Dorrie. She's impulsive and at times, selfish, but to me, that lends authenticity to her age in the books. Marcus is just as charming as ever and as ridiculous. Ebba, Millie, and the whole gang are back as well and it's delightful to see them all.

Our heroes face some large tests in this volume, but they rise to the challenge even if at first they don't succeed.

I look forward to more books in the series.

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## **Karen says**

I loved the premise of this book, but I just couldn't connect with it. Maybe it was the writing I didn't especially like.

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## **Wayne McCoy says**

'Sword in the Stacks' is the second book in the Ninja Librarians series by Jen Swann Downey. It's a series about kids on adventures in a series of libraries that can take people into the past.

Dorrie and Marcus are home safe from their last adventure when they get some strange visitors and an interesting invitation. They are invited to go to Petrarch's Library for the Summer Quarter. Their parents seem a bit oblivious to any danger that the library might hold or even leaving their kids in the hands of these strangers, so they agree.

The story mainly follows Dorrie as she makes friends, takes classes and discovers the mysteries surrounding what the bad guys, known as The Foundation, are up to.

I didn't read the first book, but I felt like I was given enough information to follow along just fine, but I'm still not really sure why the series is called The Ninja Librarians since they are not ninjas and the title they use is lybrarian. As far as young reader adventures go, its ok. Nothing spectacular, but nothing too terrible either.

I received a review copy of this ebook from Sourcebooks Jabberwocky and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you for allowing me to review this ebook.

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## **MaykenAlanna says**

In SWORD IN THE STACKS, Dorrie and Marcus are back at Petrarch's Library , this time as official apprentices with mom and dad's approval. And between choosing among all those interesting courses and old mistakes catching up with them, excitement isn't in short supply. On top of that, Dorrie and her best

friend Ebba are sent on their first mission to protect free speech - only it's not the mission they expected.

This is the sequel to THE ACCIDENTAL KEYHAND.

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### **Teresa Bateman says**

In this, the second in "The Ninja Librarians" series, 12-year-old Dorrie and her brother are now apprentice librarians. These are not your book-shelfing type of librarians, however. they travel through time, through library portals, to protect freedom of speech. Classes can be interesting, and assignments challenging, especially when you have to protect speech you disagree with. Dorrie, however, has bigger fish to fry. Due to a mistake she made the past may be changed and someone at Petrarch's library may die. Can she put things right? Only by risking everything. This is a fun, engaging, adventure series that you don't have to be a librarian to enjoy.

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### **Jennifer Monsen says**

A delightful series, with time travel, sword fights, and lots of books.

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### **Andretta Schellinger says**

This is a super interesting look at librarians and the underworld of super heroes. Well if you think that librarians can be super heroes, which I personally do. It is intended for I would say middle school age kids, but I still enjoyed it. There is some information in it that wouldn't be relatable for middle schoolers but for adults it would make more sense.

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### **Ron says**

What not to like? Adventure, time travel, librarians with swords fighting off nasty Foundation baddies. Unfortunately, I started this and then it ended up being buried in my reading pile. I am very glad that I excavated this from the pile and finished this fast moving adventure that flashes from New Jersey to Petrarch's library to Victorian England and spends time in early Athens and Timbuktu. Dorrie and Marcus along with other apprentice Lybrarians in frustrating Mr. Biggs by discovering what Winn's Gift actually is and keeping history in line. Now, I just need to read the 1st volume and see if more tales have been printed.

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### **Sam says**

This book was given to me in exchange for an honest review and that has not altered my opinion in anyway.

I am surprised to say that this book was excellent as far as sequels go. I'm not usually one for sequels, usually I don't go for them much at all, but this one was so well done and a quick read...once I had sit down time. This book starts off not long after the last one ended. This time it starts with the Lybrarians visiting

Dorrie and Marcus at their house to inform them that they in fact will be coming back as apprentices this year after nearly destroying everything before when they accidentally ended up in the Lybrary. While the two are excited to come back for their apprenticeships there's still a lot that they have to make up for and with the Foundation becoming an even bigger threat, Dorrie, Marcus, and their friends must work together to figure out what they are planning while still attending classes and practicums and going on small missions of their own.

Basically this book took me back to being a twelve year old, engrossed in an adventure complete with sword fighting, potions, magical creatures (creatures made of magic like stuff?), and time travel. Seriously, this series has my attention and I am loving it so much. There is extreme character development in mostly Dorrie and, surprisingly, Millie. Dorrie is feeling the pressure of her mistake from her and Marcus' first visit to the Lybrary, and when she ends up apprenticed with the last person she would expect, the bond she ends up forming with them is quite adorable and awesome! Millie turns into a person I had not expected (leaving it there to avoid spoilers). But I did feel as though Marcus got forgotten in this book a little, just as though he would appear every so often and Ebba almost took his place as Dorrie's partner in crime.

We traveled to more worlds and met new Lybrarians and the connections to all the different aspects of each detail was amazing! Down to my favorite part of this book: the Scooby Doo library!! It's two of my favorite things combined! From this mischievous mini library to pulling camels out of books and riding them across a desert, this book has the adventure you would want in any middle grade ninja librarian book!

I really can't wait to see where Jen Swann Downey takes the next book (there will be another right??) and where our apprentices end up next quarter. Four point five beans out of five from me!

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### **Heidi says**

Dorrie and Marcus are delighted to be back in Petrarch's Library, as welcome apprentices this time. But things aren't going as well for the Lyrariad as they would have hoped, and Dorrie feels partially responsible, since she and Marcus lost the page from the History of Histories that may lead the Foundation to change the past in seriously dangerous ways. But in-between worrying about the Foundation's activities, Dorrie and her friends focus on learning from their classes. Dorrie and her friends also discover a new ghost library where they work on helping Marcus and Dorrie fix past mistakes and make plans for stopping the Foundation's latest plot. The thing that I like about this series is the way that historical characters and events are blended into the story. For example, for one class, Dorrie and Ebba are assigned to help protect the efforts of an anti-suffrage group who they heartily disagree with when they would much rather help the suffragist they befriend along the way. Can they find a way to do both? I also love the idea of Lyrarians out in the world protecting free speech/intellectual freedom. This is a fun series for children who love unusual libraries. This is along the same lines as *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library*, except with more serious themes and sword play.

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### **Pam says**

Slow starting but draws you in the the Lybrarians world again. The author resolves some of the issues from the first book and provides more character development. Looking forward to the next book.

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## **Amanda Thompson says**

*Thanks, NetGalley! They provided me with an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review. Check out the original review on blog.*

I'm very happy to say I was NOT disappointed in this sequel.

Let me explain. I've been obsessing over the first book in this series for almost two years, and when a reader obsesses like that -thinking back on all the great moments, good story, and fun characters- that same reader might possibly unintentionally set that book on a pedestal that the sequel just can't compete with.

With that first book on a pedestal or not, *Sword in the Stacks* was magnificent.

Picking up pretty much where we left off, Dorrie and Marcus must convince their parents to allow them to apprentice with the time-hopping, evil-fighting, censorship-opposing Lybrarians out to save the world -one piece of writing at a time.

Not only is this sequel magnificent, I might actually like it better than the original. Aside from the great story it tells -the daring adventures! the madcap run-ins with famous historical figures! the inevitable breaking of rules and general child-hero mayhem!- it really delves into a side of Librarianship that's important to understand: A complete lack of censorship.

Ever since discovering the series, I wondered how Downey was going to handle this specific aspect of her concept. The idea of the world-saving Lybrariad is that these heroic Lybrarians travel through time trying to save endangered writings and/or authors, whether from destruction, censorship, or death. This is fantastic when a Lybrarian saves an essay on human kindness or a book on anti-slavery, but what about works that hold disagreeable or downright horrible ideas? Downey jumped right in to address the Lybrariad's stance and I feel much more comfortable in this world now, knowing that there isn't any agenda-pushing going on here; instead, the Lybrarians of Petrach's Library -while themselves cannot be unbiased- strive to protect all writings despite their bias. This is, understandably, a tricky concept to portray, especially in middle grade, but Downey handled it with considerable tact and grace -plus she twisted it into another of her lovable madcap adventures!

(I keep using the word 'madcap', I know. Pretty sure that's an effect of the secret room that Dorrie, Ebba, and Marcus find, and the fact that they dub it the 'Scooby-Doo library'.)

There was one other thing I longed to see in this book and my wish was granted.

We get to learn a little more about Millie. In the first book, she was the snotty brat who gave Dorrie such a hard time on her last visit to the Lybrariad, also implying that Dorrie wasn't good enough to qualify as an apprentice on her own merit. Once we found out she was the daughter of the Lybrariad's head of security, I've been dying to know more about her! There's the obvious 'mean girl' conflict here, but what I found most intriguing about it is Dorrie's stubborn desire to win Millie over. Instead of letting Millie bait her into fighting, or giving her the cold-shoulder in turn, Dorrie is determined to make friends with Millie, whether Millie likes it or not. Even in the first book, I found this adorable and refreshing, and I liked seeing more of this genuine kindness in Dorrie's character. I look forward to seeing where Downey will take these characters next.

Speaking of characters, I must admit my disappointment at Marcus. As fun as he remains in the sequel, and still as true to character, not a single Star Wars quote passed his lips. Not. A. Single. One. He's the same Marcus we know and love, up to his old shenanigans, he's just got some different obsessions now. Teenagers, right?

Last, but not least, concerning our favorite Lybrarian: Much as I love Hercule-Savinien de Cyran de Bergerac -with his expert swordsmanship, magnificent schnoz, fantastically ridiculous name, and swoon-worthy vocabulary- I enjoyed seeing Dorrie cope through most of the adventure without him. With the Lybrariad working double-time to solve the mysteries of the Foundation's return, most of their Lybrarians are hunting down clues, including her beloved Savi. And who does Dorrie wind up working with? Well, I won't spoil that. But this unexpected change in mentors forces Dorrie to face her disappointment, some of her self-doubt, and preconceived notions. Again, I adore Savi, not only because he's awesome, but because he's also a wise and patient mentor to Dorrie, but I liked that Dorrie has a chance to work with others, to maybe realize that she doesn't have to rely on just one mentor. I also think it taught her to rely a little more on herself.

To sum up? Another fantastic, hilarious adventure, with plenty of drama and intrigue -high stakes! high seas!- and good lessons learned all around.

The Ninja Librarians is a glorious mix of time travel, historical fiction, and the "Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?" game I loved as a child -this series knows no bounds!

I see kids all the time at my library devouring Mary Pope Osborne's Magic Treehouse books and I can't wait until their old enough I can switch them over to these.

[Dorrie's father] "Where did you meet these people?"

"In a dark alley," said Marcus. "They leaned out of a van and offered us a candy."

"He's kidding, he's kidding!" cried Dorrie.

Seriously, I adore Marcus!

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## **Bibliofiendlm says**

Full review here: <http://tinyurl.com/h7a9qqq>

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Overall, this is a cute book for middle grade readers (grades 5 thru 8). There is a great sense of adventure and mystery plus a good deal of humor which will appeal to many young readers. Any history buff or library lover will get a kick out of the premise.

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## **Allison Campbell says**

<https://noranydroptoread.com/2016/06/...>

Lilah (age 9) and I read this sequel to THE ACCIDENTAL KEYHAND out loud. For me, it took a while to get moving, but it held Lilah's interest from the start. Here's what happens when you buck middle-grade fantasy tradition, which prefers dead, absent, or oblivious parents: the observant and involved parents have to be convinced to allow the heroes to pursue their fantastical adventures. This takes the first two chapters, which dragged a bit for me but sums up the backstory and first book well. Then the third chapter is getting through the public library, and then we're finally back in Petrarch's Library. From this point, we were constantly disappointed when it was time to put the book away for the night, and we stayed up too late more than once.

Dorrie is poring over the available practicums, including "Swords, Daggers, and Coffee Can Tops: A

General Survey of Sharp Edges and Their Uses,” “Codes, Invisible Inks, and Smoke Signals: Keeping Communication Maddeningly Secret,” and “Damp Dungeons, Desolate Moors, and Dreary Parties: How To Survive Inimical Environments With Style,” when she learns she won’t be apprenticed to Savi, her beloved sword fighting tutor. Instead, she’ll spend the term assisting the Archivist, a crazy old man who reads excessive quantities of oranges out of books. But she, Marcus, and Ebba are too busy for Dorrie to dwell too much on this: they have an Athenian musician whose fate they are sort of responsible for, a secret or two hidden away in a new library, and an anti-suffragette newspaper to save. Meanwhile, the Foundation is gaining power it plans to use to take control of the written word in all wherens (time-places).

The sibling relationship between Marcus and Dorrie is believable and often funny. Marcus’s crush on Egeria adds plenty of comic relief in the midst of serious adventures. There is a really interesting discussion of means and ends—in the context of whether to torture a prisoner to save other lives—that was quite well done and sophisticated for a middle-grade fiction book. There is also a discussion of the importance of defending all writing, even abhorrent writing, that runs through one of the main plotlines. And another theme involves the true meaning of courage in the face of fear, so the comic relief is very welcome.

Downey balances the lighter “magical boarding school” elements nicely with the “fighting evil” plot. Dorrie, Marcus, and Ebba get away with really impressive amounts of rule breaking with few consequences, and I occasionally found myself thinking the library needed a McGonnagal or a Snape patrolling the corridors, but this is a minor quibble. We couldn’t wait to read the end, and then we were sad it was over. One last plot twist at the very end should wind up being very important in the third book, and Lilah and I actually gasped at the revelation and then sighed over having to wait another year or so for the third book.

Highly recommended, but it’ll be more fun if you read *THE ACCIDENTAL KEYHAND* first.

Source disclosure: I received an e-galley of this title via NetGalley.

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