

The disappearing librarian

It was a large library, large enough that, in its admirable purpose of encouraging young people to read, it was able to devote an entire room to “The Children’s Library”, well-stocked with easy to read literature of all types and decorated to stimulate the young thirst for fantasy and imagination.

Aradia Green, by no means a child, and certainly not a mother, on a whim wandered in. Her eye was captured immediately by the woman sitting at the antique wooden desk in the center of the room. The children’s librarian wore a long, flowing red velvet gown, rather low-cut in the front, a shimmering black cape, and a black conical hat with wisps of white silk emerging from the tip. Around her neck hung a large golden pentagram on a chain. The woman had shoulder-length light blonde hair, and though she was about 40, her face was pretty and soft, and she had a friendly, radiant smile.

“How nice,” thought Aradia, “that the librarian should come in costume to delight the children.” Indeed, it did seem to have a good effect, for the room was filled with elementary-aged little people, and they did not hesitate to come and talk to the pretty witch at the desk.

Aradia walked around the room looking at the photographs and paintings on the walls, depicting adventure and mystery themes, fantasy and science fiction, and children playing games. One of the pictures caught her eye-- it was a photograph, such as might be found in a magazine, but nicely framed, of the children’s librarian herself, clad just as she was in the library. Aradia concluded that some magazine must have done a feature article on this exceptional librarian. Aradia was pleased to see that she had gotten recognition for her work. As Aradia left the children’s room, she smiled at the woman at the desk, who smiled back and winked.

It took Aradia half an hour to find the book she sought in the main library: Witches by Erica Jong. But before leaving, she looked back into the children’s room, thinking of talking with the costumed librarian, but the woman was nowhere to be seen. As she looked about the room, she noticed a thin black child staring at a blank space on the wall. Walking nearer, she noticed his face loomed about to cry. “What’s wrong,” she asked. “My favorite picture is gone,” the boy replied. “It’s a magic picture, and it’s gone.”

Aradia remembered what picture had been there-- the photograph of the children’s librarian.

--inspired by Gypsy Jill’s dream January 4, 1982