


International Bestselling Author of *Red Sister* and  
*The Book That Wouldn't Burn*

MARK  
LAWRENCE

"An excellent writer."  
—GEORGE R. R.  
MARTIN



THE  
BOOK  
THAT  
BROKE  
THE  
WORLD

BOOKS BY MARK LAWRENCE

THE BROKEN EMPIRE

*Prince of Thorns*

*King of Thorns*

*Emperor of Thorns*

SHORT STORIES

*Road Brothers*

THE RED QUEEN'S WAR

*Prince of Fools*

*The Liar's Key*

*The Wheel of Osheim*

THE BOOK OF THE ANCESTOR

*Red Sister*

*Grey Sister*

*Holy Sister*

IMPOSSIBLE TIMES

*One Word Kill*

*Limited Wish*

*Dispel Illusion*

THE BOOK OF THE ICE  
*The Girl and the Stars*  
*The Girl and the Mountain*  
*The Girl and the Moon*

THE LIBRARY TRILOGY  
*The Book That Wouldn't Burn*  
*The Book That Broke the World*

THE  
BOOK THAT  
BROKE THE WORLD

---

THE LIBRARY TRILOGY:  
BOOK TWO



MARK LAWRENCE

ACE  
New York

ACE  
Published by Berkley  
An imprint of Penguin Random House LLC  
[penguinrandomhouse.com](http://penguinrandomhouse.com)



Copyright © 2024 by Bobalinga Ltd.  
Penguin Random House supports copyright. Copyright fuels creativity, encourages diverse voices, promotes free speech, and creates a vibrant culture. Thank you for buying an authorized edition of this book and for complying with copyright laws by not reproducing, scanning, or distributing any part of it in any form without permission. You are supporting writers and allowing Penguin Random House to continue to publish books for every reader.

ACE is a registered trademark and the A colophon is a trademark of Penguin Random House LLC.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Lawrence, Mark, 1966– author.  
Title: The book that broke the world / Mark Lawrence.  
Description: New York: Ace, 2024. | Series: The Library trilogy; book 2  
Identifiers: LCCN 2023031469 (print) | LCCN 2023031470 (ebook) | ISBN 9780593437940 (hardcover) | ISBN 9780593437964 (ebook)  
Subjects: LCSH: Libraries—Fiction. | LCGFT: Fantasy fiction. | Dystopian fiction. | Novels.  
Classification: LCC PS3612.A9484 B64 2024 (print) | LCC PS3612.A9484 (ebook) | DDC 813/.6—dc23/eng/20230714  
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023031469>  
LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023031470>

Cover design © HarperCollinsPublishers Ltd 2024  
Cover illustration © Tom Roberts  
Interior design adapted for ebook by Kelly Brennan

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

pid\_prh\_6.3\_146688424\_c0\_r0

# CONTENTS

[Cover](#)

[Books by Mark Lawrence](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Dedication](#)

[The Story So Far](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Chapter 18](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

[Chapter 20](#)

[Chapter 21](#)

[Chapter 22](#)

[Chapter 23](#)

[Chapter 24](#)

[Chapter 25](#)

[Chapter 26](#)

[Chapter 27](#)

[Chapter 28](#)

[Chapter 29](#)

[Chapter 30](#)

[Chapter 31](#)

[Chapter 32](#)

[Chapter 33](#)

[Chapter 34](#)

[Chapter 35](#)

[Chapter 36](#)

[Chapter 37](#)

[Chapter 38](#)

[Chapter 39](#)

[Chapter 40](#)

[Chapter 41](#)

[Chapter 42](#)

[Chapter 43](#)

[Chapter 44](#)

[Chapter 45](#)

[Chapter 46](#)

[\*Acknowledgements\*](#)

[\*About the Author\*](#)



To my friend Sherrina, who didn't get to finish this story

## THE STORY SO FAR

**F**or those of you who have had to wait awhile for this book I provide brief catch-up notes to Book Two, so your memories may be refreshed, and I can avoid the awkwardness of having to have characters tell each other things they already know for your benefit.

Here I carry forward only what is of importance to the tale that follows.

- The library is effectively eternal and infinite. It reaches into many worlds and contains a truly vast collection of books (or the equivalent) from a great many species, spanning all periods of history. It comprises square chambers two miles on each side and is staffed by gleaming white assistants that stock and restock the books. The door from one chamber to the next opens for every member of some species and not for those of others. The further you travel from an entrance keyed to one particular species the rarer doors they can open become.
- The Exchange is an in-between kind of place whose appearance is partly shaped by the expectations of those visiting it. The Exchange can change the appearance of others to suit visitors' expectations and it makes the speech of everyone in it understandable to everyone else.
- The Exchange contains many doors. Those doors lead to the past, present, and future, and to different worlds. The furthest forward time a person visits becomes their present. If a person leaves the Exchange by a door that leads to their past then they

appear there as a ghost, invisible to the people of that time and unable to touch anything or communicate with anyone. They will regain their normal form in the Exchange and in any place in their present or future. Left to its own devices the Exchange brings things together and creates coincidences.

- The Mechanism is a small building into which a single person can take a single book. It will then allow them to experience and interrogate the book as if they were walking through the world in which it's set or talk to the author with the advantage of all manner of solid illusions to illustrate the text.
- Escapes appear to be spirits of some kind that can take physical form. They escape from the Mechanism and seem to be the result of damage to it. They tend to attack whatever's in front of them. It seems that Mayland can direct their appearance in the Exchange and has done so in the past when people started to look for him.
- There are many mythologies concerning the library's creation. All of them are true. The one that is used by Livira, Evar, and the others in order to make sense of the situation concerns two brothers: Irad, who created the library, and Jaspeth, who wants to destroy it. The current library is an imperfect compromise resulting from a fragile peace between the two brothers. A low-level war between the brothers' proxies has been flaring back and forth across history. It appears to be coming to a head again in the here and now. In the library's war Yute is championing the current compromise. Mayland appears to have sided with Jaspeth and wants to destroy the library.

The main characters we have already met in this story are:

**Livira:** a human from a settlement on the Dust, now a librarian aged around twenty. She spent about two hundred years trapped inside an assistant (known as the Assistant) that raised five canith children trapped in a library chamber. Currently she is a ghost

after her assistant body was destroyed by large insectoids known as skeer.

**Malar:** a human former soldier in his late forties, a very skilled warrior who cares about Livira. He spent around two hundred years trapped inside an assistant (known as the Soldier) and raised the canith children with the Assistant. Currently a ghost after his assistant body was destroyed by skeer.

**Evar:** a canith in his early twenties who spent a decade in the Mechanism with Livira's book. Last seen failing to save the assistant in which Livira was trapped from being destroyed by skeer. Thinks Livira is dead.

**Clovis:** raised as Evar's sister. Dedicated to the arts of war. Hates humans for slaughtering all her people in the library chamber when she was a child. Clovis escaped into the Mechanism.

**Starval:** raised as Evar's brother. Dedicated to the arts of stealth and assassination.

**Kerrol:** raised as Evar's brother. Specialises in understanding and manipulating others.

**Mayland:** raised as Evar's brother. Thought to be dead but turned out to have escaped the chamber a year before Evar did. Specialises in history.

**Arpix:** male librarian, early twenties, companion to Livira, studious and serious.

**Meelan:** male library trainee, early twenties, companion to Livira, rich, intense, loyal. Brother to Leetar, who joined the diplomatic corps under Lord Algar.

**Jella:** female bookbinder, early twenties, companion to Livira, timid, kindly.

**Carlote:** female house-reader, early twenties, companion to Livira, vivacious, adventurous.

**Yute:** deputy head librarian, former assistant, married to now-deceased head librarian Yamala (who was killed by Mayland). Has been in semi-human form for around a thousand years. Had a

ten-year-old daughter who went missing in the library about a decade ago.

**Lord Algar:** one-eyed nobleman who has tried to put an end to Livira's career at every stage. Has in the past employed assassins to kill her.

**King Oanold:** ruler of the now-destroyed Crath City. Stirred up hatred against the peoples who live on the Dust (including Livira) for political ends.

**Salamonda:** Yute's housekeeper and cook. A woman in her late fifties.

**Wentworth:** Yute's cat. The size of a largish dog.



BOOK ONE ENDED with Evar understanding that Livira was the love of his life and had been trapped in the Assistant for the whole of it. He runs to save her but is too late, discovering the Assistant and the Soldier destroyed by skeer.

The door to the chamber is open for the first time in two hundred years. Evar lets his sister Clovis and brother Kerrol lead him through.

Livira and Malar survive the destruction of their assistant prisons but are now in ghost form following Evar, unable to interact with him.

Mayland and Starval were last seen in the Exchange as Escapes drove everyone from it.

Yute was last seen directing the exodus from the Exchange of around two hundred soldiers and a few dozen civilians who had survived the destruction of Crath City by the canith, then escaped the fire in the library that started during fighting between the canith and the soldiers. The civilians included several of Livira's childhood friends, Neera and Katrin among them; also Leetar (Meelan's sister) and Lord Algar.

Arpix, Meelan, Jella, and Salamonda escaped the library fire through a portal Livira hurriedly made for them. They were accompanied by half a dozen bookbinders and Jost, a senior librarian.

Carlotte escaped the library fire through the pool in Evar's chamber just after Livira (in assistant form) first created it.

*The greater tragedy of our world is not the victims of cruelty, but that so many of those victims would, given the opportunity, stand in the shoes of their oppressors and wield the same whip with equal enthusiasm.*

Excavating Crath, by Anthony Robinson

---