

***The Library Book* by Susan Orlean**
 2018: NY Simon & Shuster; 309 pages
Character Descriptions by Barbara Keating, 2021

Characters +	Notes
Susan Orlean, Author	Author, journalist; Books include: <i>Saturday Night</i> (1990), <i>The Orchid Thief</i> (2000; <i>Adaptation</i> film); <i>The Skinny: What Every Skinny Woman Knows about Dieting (And won't tell you)</i> written as Susan Sistrun (1999); <i>Rin Tin Tin</i> (2011); <i>The Ghost Story</i> (2016); <i>The Library Book</i> (2018). Collections of her magazine articles include: <i>The Bullfighter checks Her Makeup: My Encounters with Extraordinary People</i> ; and <i>My Kind of Place: Travel Stories from a Woman Who's Been Everywhere</i>
Los Angeles Central Public Library	Opened in 1873 with \$5 annual membership. Page 124: “five dollars represented several days’ pay for an average worker so only affluent people were able to join.” Current building opened in 1926. Pages 182-3: “ windows ... streamlined into stacks of rectangular panes. ... blocky base ... ascending terraces, ... The top ... an enormous but somehow delicate pyramid tower ... covered in thousands of brilliantly colored tiles and crowned with a finial of a human hand holding an open flame rising from a golden torch. The façade of buff-colored stucco was embellished with Lee Lawrie’s architectural sculptures of thinkers, god, heroes, and writers.
Library of Alexandria, Egypt	Page 96: “The most celebrated lost library of the ancient world ... no record (of) ... exact location.... a half million documents and manuscripts ... staff of one hundred resident librarians. ... burned several times ... Caesar (48 B.C.E.) hadn’t targeted the library but the fire he started in the port spread and ... engulfed it. ... ¶ The last and final burning, which erased it from history forever, occurred in AD 640.”
Harry Omer Peak (1959-1993)	Underemployed actor; suspected of setting the 1987 fire; told some he had done so but with multiple stories and alibies. Arrested but not charged. Died 1993 of HIV/AIDS complications.
Bertram Goodhue (1869-1924)	The architect who designed the Los Angeles Central Library; as well as the 1915 San Diego’s Panama-California Exposition and Nebraska State Capitol Building.
Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919)	Pages 130-2: Scottish businessman; started library-building project in 1890. “He offered large grants to build libraries in communities that would commit to supporting them with tax revenues. ... ended up building nearly 1,700 libraries in 1,400 communities. He funded six small libraries in Los Angeles, which were added to the main system as branches.”
Bill and Melinda Gates	Started helping libraries in 1997 to get all American libraries connected to the internet. The Global Libraries Initiative founded in 2004 to make world’s libraries the “default location for free public internet.” (Page 297-8)

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John Littefield	First city librarian, 1873-79. Pages 125-6: “dour asthmatic...burdened, regretful”
Patrick Connolly	City librarian for one year, 1879-1880; alcoholic painter.
Mary Foy (1862-1962)	Only 18 when appointed city librarian, 1880-1884. Pages 125-6: “Women were not yet allowed to have their own library cards and were permitted only in the Ladies Room. No library in the country had a female head librarian and only a quarter of all American library employees were women. ... stern and efficient.” Became teacher and suffragette.
Tessa Kelso (1863-1933)	Newspaper reporter from Ohio; head librarian 1889-1895. Pages 126-7: “thought the library was stodgy and needed to modernize. She abolished the membership fee. In no time, the number of cardholders rose from a little more than one hundred people to twenty thousand. She moved most of the books onto open shelves ... set up “delivery stations,” an early version of branch libraries.
Mary Letitia Jones	City librarian, 1900-1905. Page 130: “... the first city librarian to have graduated from a library school (New York State Library School, 1892). ... serious, efficient, and innovative ... dropping the age limit for children ... allowing ten-year-olds.... She recruited African American librarians for branches in neighborhood with large black populations and encouraged them to build a collection of books about ‘the Negro experience.’” Firing in 1905 was controversial; became head of Bryn Mawr library.
Charles Lummis (1859-1928)	Head librarian 1905-1910. Walked 3,507 miles from Cincinnati to LA, taking 143 days and sending weekly dispatches to newspapers. Page 145: “felt personally responsible for the intellectual health of the library’s patrons.” Pages 150-1 “smart about many things. He had a knack for getting attention and a genius for getting things done.... brave ... enterprising. He drew people to him with the sheer force of his own convictions; he was magnetic. He thrived on drama and challenge and a certain amount of chaos.... his personal life was in turmoil, and the scene at El Alisal (home) was a circus. ... lived on bullheadedness, self-involvement, and a daredevil’s willful obliviousness.” Pages 152-3: “ Lummis changed the Los Angeles Public Library forever. He made it more democratic and yet more sophisticated; more substantial, more accessible, more celebrated. At the same time, he offended people and spent too much money and became much too famous for his personal travails. ... at the end of 1910, he was pressured to leave.”
Dr. C.J.K. Jones	Hired by Charles Lummis with the title, “ the Human Encyclopedia ” to a “walking information desk” to provide answers; former Unitarian minister. Page 148-9: “the library staff hated him. ... sometimes found lemons and hammers on his desk, which he interpreted as an insult. ... (LA Times speculated) that the highly paid Dr. Jones spent most of his time in the library’s roof garden, watering the geraniums.”
Purd Wright	Head librarian 1910-1911; Pages 173-4: “ who tidied up the wreckage left in Lummis’s wake and then resigned after just eight months.”

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Everett Robbins Perry	City Librarian, 1911-1933 Replaced Purd Wright and stayed over twenty years. Pages 173-4: “A small man with ... a penetrating gaze whose idea of leisure wear was a three-button suit and a four-in-hand tie. He was an imperturbable as Lummis had been tempestuous. ‘all business ... Listens well; doesn’t talk much.’ ... his passion was exclusively for libraries , and he judged people by whether or not they shared his passion. The staff of the Los Angeles library adored him. They called him Father Perry.”
Althea Warren	Head librarian, 1933-1947. Pages 198-9: “probably the most avid reader who ever ran the library. ... a reading evangelizer. She constantly looked for new ways to get books into the hands of the public...”
John Szabo	City Librarian, 2012 to present; Page 236: “...had worked every position in the library. ‘He is a <i>real</i> library person.’”
Glen Creason	History Department Senior librarian; Page 159: “whose tenure spanned the fire; the AIDS crisis, which killed eleven librarians; the reopening of the building; the library’s adjustment to omnipresent Internet;”
McDonnell Douglas	Aerospace manufacturer dried the first batch of frozen twenty thousand books in a space simulation chamber using intense vacuum pressure to remove water.
Document Reprocessors	Book drying contract; used vacuum chambers similar to McDonnell Douglas.
Airdex	Book drying contract; collaborating with NASA on the project; chambers purged of internal, water vapor, atmosphere every twenty-five seconds.
Overdrive	The largest digital content catalog for libraries and schools in the world. Has thirty-seven thousand member libraries. Loaned a million books within three years. By 2017 it had loaned one billion books.
ALA	American Librarian Association
IMDB	World’s largest online database for movies and television