

Books About Libraries

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Librarians love to read about libraries and librarians and we love to encourage others to read about them, too. Libraries are a great setting for mysteries, romances, adventures, and more, plus give the author a chance to introduce lots of interesting characters. Here are a few books about libraries that are worth checking out!

“Mr. Penumbra’s 24-Hour Book Store” by Robin Sloan is a unique and intelligent story. Clay Jannon just took a job in the titular book store, which often functions more like a library, where the few customers don’t ever seem to buy a book. Instead they “check out” dusty, old texts. Curious about their behavior, Clay informs his boss, who begins to reveal the secrets of his book store/library. This book was fascinating and left me a devoted Robin Sloan fan!

On April 29, 1986, a devastating fire at the Los Angeles Public Library destroyed over 400,000 books and damaged over 700,000 more. More than thirty years later the question remains: was the fire arson, and if so, why would someone set the public library on fire? In “The Library Book,” Susan Orlean weaves the story of the Los Angeles Public Library fire into a larger narrative about the history of libraries and their current role in our communities.

Erika Swyler’s “The Book of Speculation” introduces Simon, a lonely research librarian who comes into possession of 1700s traveling circus carnival log, which reports magical yet strange things, including an account of a mermaid who drowned on July 24. Simon is shocked; generations of women in his family have drowned on July 24, which is soon approaching. Simon is concerned that the curse will take his sister and sets out to break it before he loses her.

Genevieve Cogman’s “Invisible Library” series tells the tale of professional spy, Irene. Irene works for a mysterious “Library” organization, which sends her to different realities to collect fictional works. One of her missions sends her to an alternate London to collect a dangerous book. Upon her arrival, Irene finds that the book has already been stolen and that the nature of reality itself may be at stake due to the chaos of this magical alternate London. This is a great fantasy and adventure series, with a lot of library lore thrown in for good measure!

Phaedra Patrick’s new novel, “The Library of Lost and Found,” is about librarian Martha Storm. One day Martha finds a fairy tale book on the front steps of the library that is dedicated to her from her deceased grandmother, Zelda, who recently died under mysterious circumstances. A clue in the book gives Martha hope that Zelda may still be alive and trying to reveal a long-held family secret. This one is on my to-be-read list; I have enjoyed Phaedra Patrick’s other novels. She creates great characters and heartwarming stories that are perfect for fans of cozy whodunnits who want to find that same vibe in general fiction.

There are many, many more books about libraries and librarians; these are just a few to get you started. If you stop by the library we'd be happy to recommend more!