

## Librarians In Fiction

An Annotated Bibliography  
in celebration of Library Lovers Month  
General Collections Department  
Central Library  
February 21, 2007

Novels and stories in the Central Library fiction collection, having librarians as main, featured or supporting characters. Selection

and annotations based on *Librarians in Fiction: a Critical Bibliography*, by Grant Burns (McFarland, c1998).

Astley, Thea. *Reaching Tin River*. Belle slides from her jazz-playing mother to an autocratic, reactionary librarian boss, to her cold, self-absorbed librarian husband. The bright point in her life is the 19<sup>th</sup>-century farmer whose life she researches. Australian setting. New York: Putnam, 1990.

Betts, Doris. *Heading West*. Librarian Nancy finds being kidnapped by a psychopathic bank robber more stimulating than the routine at her branch library. New York: Knopf, 1981.

Bosse, Malcolm J. *The Man Who Loved Zoos*. San Francisco librarian and astrology fan Victoria Welch tries to clear her Vietnam veteran son's name after his bizarre death. New York: Putnam, 1974.

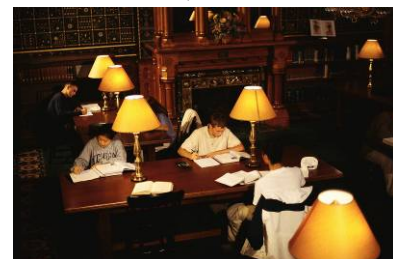
Brookner, Anita. *Lewis Percy*. Literary scholar Percy takes a vaguely described job in a British public library. New York: Pantheon Books, 1989.

Chesterton, G. K. *The Return of Don Quixote*. Michael Herne, emerging from the solitude of his abbey library to play a medieval king in amateur theater, attempts to lead a return to chivalric times in England. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company. 1927.

DeWeese, Gene. *The Doll with Opal Eyes*. Roslyn Stratton, returning to the town of her birth to take a job in the public library, unravels a shocking case of confused identity. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1976.

DeWeese, Gene. *Hour of the Cat*. Valerie Hamilton deals with book reviews, censors at library board meetings, and threats on her life after a false newspaper story about her nonexistent engagement. Garden City, New York: Garden City, New York, 1980.

Dickens, Charles. *The Life and Adventure of Martin Chuzzlewit*. Sacked from his job on a pretense, good-hearted Tom Pinch gets another: organizing and cataloging a copious jumble of books. Another plot



thread concerns naive young Englishmen among predators in the American South. New York: Putnam, 1985.

Dolson, Hildegard. *Please Omit Funeral*. An activist borrows and destroys “offensive” books from Marcy Covington’s high school library. The local author of one of the censored books intervenes, then suddenly dies. Is there a connection? Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1975.

Fontaine, Don. *Sugar on the Slate*. Mrs. Beasley would like to arrange the books in her junior-high library by color instead of Dewey number. New York: Farrar, 1951.

Fox, Paul Harvey. *Four Men*. Surviving submarine duty in WWI, Will Giles becomes a physician. His first patient is branch librarian Emma Bass. They become romantically involved, despite the author’s negative portrayal of poor Emma. New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1946.

France, Anatole. *The Revolt of the Angels*. Julien Sarricte, in charge of a fabulous private library, is driven quite mad by continuing anarchic treatment of his priceless collection in this satiric fantasy. New York: Limited Editions Club, 1953.

Frank, Pat. *Alas Babylon*. After nuclear war in Florida, Alice Cooksey reasserts the importance of her town’s library to the survivors. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1959; later reprints.

Garrett, George P. *The King of Babylon Shall Not Come Against You*. Researching violent events in Paradise Springs, Florida related to Dr. King’s assassination, reporter Bill Tone meets librarian Eleanor Lealand and falls more-or-less in love with her. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co. 1996.



Goodrum, Charles A. *The Best Cellar*. What happened to several thousand books from the Library of Congress when the British sacked Washington in 1812? Librarian-sleuth Edward George and Betty Crighton Jones of the Werner-Bok Library may find out. New York: St. Martin’s Press. 1987.

Goodrum, Charles A. *Carnage of the Realm*. Retired Yale librarian Edward George is on the track of rare coins, rare books and all-too-common computer crashes. New York: Crown Publishers. 1979.

Goodrum, Charles A. *Dewey Decimated*. More rare books and a murderer sniffed out by the charming Dr. George. New York: Crown Publishers. 1977.

Gosling, Paula. *Hoodwink*. Molly Pemberton, librarian and policeman’s widow, aids her husband’s old colleagues, discussing murder cases with her cat. New York: Doubleday, 1988.

Guilloux, Louis. *Bitter Victory*. (French title: *Le Sang noir*) Louis Babinot, small-town schoolteacher and librarian in World War I France, is a blustering xenophobe and patriot, redeemed only by the doom in his heart anticipating his son's death in battle. New York: R. M. McBride, 1936.

Harris, Charlene. *Real Murders*. Aurora Teagarden, after her job at the library, attends a club that studies the details of historical murders. A member of the club is savagely murdered; the details parallel the crime that is the subject of Aurora's upcoming presentation. New York: Walker, 1990.

Harriss, Will. *The Bay Psalm Book Murder*. Distinguished, crotchety Link Schofield is found murdered, \$14 missing from his pocket, his library's rare and valuable copy of the famous *Bay Psalm Book* clutched in his hand. New York: Walker, 1983.

Horner, Joyce. *Greyhound in the Leash*. Evalina Grant lives several different lives with as many different men. In one life, she is a librarian. Garden City, NY: Doubleday. 1949.

Larkin, Philip. *A Girl in Winter*. In England during World War II, Katherine Lind must deal with petty, condescending Mr. Anstey, her boss at the library where she works. Chance discovery of a letter from him shows her his humanity. The Overlook Press. 1976.

Le Guin, Ursula K. *Always Coming Home*. In future, tribally organized California, libraries are important repositories of each tribe's experience and knowledge. Donating one's documents to a library is a sacred rite. New York: Harper & Row. 1985.

Lewis, Roy Harley. *The Manuscript Murders*. Tom Duncan, boxer turned university librarian, goes all out to obtain a Shakespeare-related 16<sup>th</sup> century manuscript. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1982.

Lewis, Roy Harley. *Where Agents Fear to Tread*. An English county librarian and expert on Arabic manuscripts is caught up in James Bond-like adventures in Pakistan. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1984.

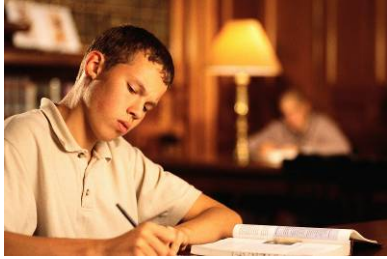
Lewis, Sinclair. *Main Street*. Carol Kennicott, prepared by a Chicago library school to bring the light of culture to Gopher Prairie, Minn., instead is suffocated by the town's relentless provincialism. Cutchogue, N.Y.: Buccaneer. 1976.

Lincoln, Joseph Crosby. *Ownley Inn*. Dr. Samuel Payson, curator of a Connecticut archive, turns detective after theft of a rare primer. New York: Coward. 1939.



Lively, Penelope. *Passing On*. Middle-aged Helen, still dominated by her late mother, escapes her blah private life by brisk efficiency in the library. Her younger brother's life crisis gives her an opportunity to show strength. New York: Grove Weidenfeld. 1989.

Lockridge, Richard. *Distant Clue*. Loudon Wingate, retired professor and town librarian, is found dead with a lawyer, both shot. Did they kill each other, as it appears? Lippincott. 1963.



McCracken, Elizabeth. *The Giant's House: a Romance*. Adept, aloof reference librarian Peggy Cort meets young James, intellectually curious and sociable, whose gigantism dooms him to a short life. Her wish to help him turns to a transforming love. New York: Dial Press, 1996.

McCullough, Colleen. *The Ladies of Missaloughi*. Pretty, divorced Una runs the library in an Australian frontier town. She befriends young Missy and helps her on her way to marriage. New York: Harper & Row, 1987.

McLavery, Michael. *Three Brothers*. Dutiful and capable, Brendan is loyal to his father who urged him into library work, his uncle who steals library books to pay gambling debts, and his brother who is faking his way through medical school. Macmillan, 1948.

MacLeod, Charlotte. *Rest You Merry*. Professor Shandy finds librarian Jemima Ames dead. She apparently bashed her own head in a fall, though several people would gladly have done it for her. The quick-witted Helen Marsh steps into Ames's job and is Shandy's love interest. Garden City, NJ: Crime Club/Doubleday, 1978.

McShane, Mark. *Séance for Two*. Suburban librarian William Wilson befriends spiritualist Myra Savage, involved in a child kidnap-murder, who draws him into a bizarre series of crimes. Garden City, NJ: Crime Club/Doubleday, 1972.

Mojtabai, A. G. *Mundome*. Cataloger Richard Henken labors heroically to help his schizophrenic sister reengage with the world. A painful, haunting novel showing strongly drawn characters trapped in an impossible situation. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974.

Monahan, Brent. *The Book of Common Dread: a novel of the Infernal*. Princeton archivist Simon and reference librarian Frederika have a scarily entertaining run-in with Vincent DeVilbiss, whose name gives away his nature. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

Monfredo, Miriam Grace. *North Star Conspiracy*. In 1854, Seneca Falls librarian and feminist Glynis Tryon solves a murder and also helps the cause of her friends Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

Monfredo, Miriam Grace. *Seneca Falls Inheritance*. The first Glynis Tryon mystery, set around the 1848 Women's Rights Convention. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.

Pearson, Edmund Lester. *The Secret Book*. A loosely connected set of stories about the Hell-Fire Club, whose members gather to tell each other stories about books and libraries, the ubiquitous author Ibid, and the Cit brothers, Op and Loc. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1972; reprint of the 1914 ed.

Pearson, Peter. *Postscript for Malpas*. On holiday on the Scottish coast, technical librarian Alexander Cotton discovers (thanks to his nuclear expertise) an intrigue that threatens to destroy the United Kingdom in a radioactive holocaust. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1976.

Pym, Barbara. *An Unsuitable Attachment*. Ianthe Broome is not amused when young assistant librarian John Cantrell finds her attractive. Well-imagined characters, effective dialogue, and frequent flashes of humor make this a very suitable day's reading. New York: Dutton, 1982.

Salamanca, J. R. *A Sea Change*. Michael Pritchard loves his wife, Margaret, to the point of obsession. He also loves his job at the Library of Congress, which provides him solace after Margaret leaves him. Overly long, but often engrossing. New York: Knopf, 1969.

Sallenave, Danièle. *Phantom Life*. tr. from the French by Lidia Davis. A quiet yet gripping examination of an affair between librarian Laure and married Pierre. New York: Pantheon Books, 1989.



Smiley, Jane. *Duplicate Keys*. Alice Ellis, a cataloger with The New York Public Library, finds two friends murdered in a third friend's apartment. This fine and literate mystery focuses as much on the human relations of its characters as on the working out of the mystery. New York: Knopf, 1984.

Stevenson, D. E. *The Young Clementina*. Charlotte Dean is a reader's advisor in a London geographical library. She loses her childhood sweetheart, eventually regaining him. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970.

Swaim, Don. *The H. L. Mencken Murder Case: a literary thriller*. Ann Elkin has attempted careers as a coal miner, firefighter, policewoman and longshoreman. Now she works in a public library and is writing an historical romance. Her book-dealer lover, Howard, gets into trouble with the aging Mencken and an 18<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988.

Van Vechten, Carl. *Nigger Heaven*. Mary Love is a black librarian in Harlem, the district referred to by the title. The novel is an early attempt, by a white writer on African-American subjects, to depict black urban life in a sympathetic and realistic way. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000 (originally published by Knopf, 1926)

- Wallis, Ruth Sawtell. *Too Many Bones*. Alice Barton, librarian at the Proutman Museum, instructs budding anthropologist Kay Ellis about the museum, which has a large collection of human bones, and its unpleasant patron, Zaydee Proutman. Ms. Proutman disappears, but her bones turn up in the museum's collection. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1943.
- Wharton, Edith. *Summer*. Charity Royall, rescued from the poor part of town and appointed to run the town library, feels inadequate to the job, her life desolate. Her fortunes turn when Lucius Harney, a young architectural expert, comes to town. New York: Scribner, 1964 (originally published in 1917)
- White, Patrick. *The Solid Mandala*. Waldo Brown has labored for over a decade in the Sydney Municipal Library, under the subtly vicious Mr. Crankshaw. New York: Viking Press, 1966.
- Wiesel, Elie. *The Fifth Son*. tr. from the French by Marion Wiesel. Reuven Tamiroff, tormented Holocaust survivor, finds in library work the solitude and silence he craves. Narrated by one of Tamiroff's sons, the novel contains impassioned letters written to another son who is dead. A powerful, memorable story of love, history, and the search for self. New York: Summit Books, 1985.
- Wodehouse, P. G. *Leave It to Psmith*. Miss Eve Halliday, hired as "cataloguist" for the "amiable and boneheaded" Earl of Emsworth's large private library, attracts the attention of Psmith, protagonist of several Wodehouse novels. Psmith masquerades as Miss Halliday's best friend's husband to worm into her good graces. Ridiculous situations, preposterous characters, an airy delight. New York: Vintage Books, 2005, ©1924.
- Yates, Elizabeth. *Nearby*. Mary Rowan, a conscientious, liberal young teacher, finds an ally in Miss Patch, town librarian. Convinced of the library's duty to provide the "best" literature and protect the public's morals, Miss Patch finds Mary's attitudes challenge her own. New York: Coward-McCann, 1974.



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