**B2U3 Text A with Translation**

# Text A

**Growing Up in the Library**

*Learning and relearning what it means to have a book on borrowed time.*

*Susan Orlean*

1 I grew up in libraries, or at least it feels that way. My family lived in the suburbs of Cleveland, about a mile from the brick-faced Bertram Woods branch of the Shaker Heights Public Library system. Throughout my childhood, starting when I was very young, my mother drove me there a couple of times a week. We walked in together, but, as soon as we passed through the door, we split up, each heading to our favorite section. The library might have been the first place I was ever given independence. Even when I was maybe four or five years old, I was allowed to go off on my own. Then, after a while, my mother and I reunited at the checkout counter with our finds. Together, we waited as the librarian pulled out each date card and, with a loud *chunk-chunk*, stamped a crooked due date on it, below a score of previous crooked due dates that belonged to other people, other times.

2 Our visits were never long enough for me — the library was so bountiful. I loved wandering around the shelves, scanning the spines of the books until something happened to catch my eye. Those trips were dreamy, frictionless times that promised I would leave richer than I arrived. It wasn’t like going to a store with my mom, which guaranteed a tug-of-war between what I desired and what she was willing to buy me; in the library, I could have anything I wanted. On the way home, I loved having the books stacked on my lap, pressing me under their solid, warm weight, their Mylar covers sticking to my thighs. It was such a thrill leaving a place with things you hadn’t paid for; such a thrill anticipating the new books we would read. We talked about the order in which we were going to read them, a solemn conversation in which we planned how we would pace ourselves through this charmed, brief period of grace until the books were due. We both thought that all the librarians at the Bertram Woods branch were beautiful. For a few minutes, we discussed their beauty. My mother then always mentioned that, if she could have chosen any profession, she would have chosen to be a librarian, and the car would grow silent for a moment as we both considered what an amazing thing that would have been.

3 When I was older, I usually walked to the library by myself, lugging as many books as I could carry. Occasionally, I did go with my mother, and the trip remained as magical as it had been when I was small. Even when I was in my last year of high school and could drive to the library, my mother and I still went together now and then, and the trip unfolded exactly as it used to, with all the same beats and pauses and comments and daydreams, the same rhythms of thought. My mother died two years ago, and since then, when I miss her, I like to picture us in the car together, going for one more magnificent trip to Bertram Woods.

4 My family was big on the library. We were very much a reading family, but we were more a borrow-a-book-from-the-library family than a bookshelves-full-of-books family. My parents valued books, but they had grown up in the Depression, aware of the uncertain nature of money, and they had learned the hard way that you shouldn’t buy what you could borrow. Because of that frugality, or perhaps despite it, they also believed that you should read a book for the experience of reading it. You shouldn’t read it in order to have an object that had to be housed and looked after forever, a memento of the purpose for which it was obtained. The reading of the book was a journey. There was no need for souvenirs.

5 It might have remained that way, and I might have spent the rest of my life thinking about libraries only wistfully, the way I thought about, say, the amusement park I went to as a kid. But then libraries came back into my life unexpectedly. In 2011, my husband accepted a job in Los Angeles, so we left New York and went west. I didn’t know the city well, but I’d spent time there over the years, visiting cousins. When I became a writer, I went to Los Angeles often to work on magazine pieces and books. On those trips, I had been to and from the beach, and up and down the canyons, and in and out of the Valley, and back and forth to the mountains, but I never gave downtown a second thought, assuming that it was just a glassy landscape of office buildings which hollowed out by five o’clock every evening. I never went to the public library, never thought about it, although I’m sure I assumed there was one, and probably a main branch, probably downtown.

6 My son was in first grade when we moved. One of his first school assignments was to interview someone who worked for the city. I suggested talking to a garbage collector or a police officer, but he said that he wanted to interview a librarian. We were so new to the city that we had to look up the address of the closest library, which turned out to be the Studio City branch. It was about a mile away from our house, the same distance that the Bertram Woods branch was from my childhood home.

7 As we drove over to meet the librarian, I felt a gut-level recollection of this journey, of parent and child on their way to the library. But now it was turned on its head, and I was the parent bringing my child on that special trip. We parked, and walked toward the library, taking it in for the first time. The building was white and modern-looking, with a mint-green mushroom cap of a roof. It didn’t look anything like the stout brick Bertram Woods branch, but when we stepped inside the thunderbolt of recognition struck me so hard that it made me gasp. Decades had passed, and I was two thousand miles away, but I felt as if I had been whisked back to that precise time and place, walking into the library with my mother. Nothing had changed — there was the same soft *tsk-tsk-tsk* of pencil on paper, and the muffled murmuring from patrons at the tables in the center of the room, and the creak and groan of book carts. The scarred wooden checkout counters, and the librarians’ desks, as big as boats, and the bulletin board were all the same. The sense of gentle, steady busyness, like a pot of water on the simmer, was just the same. The books on the shelves, with some subtractions and additions, were certainly the same.

8 It wasn’t that time stopped in the library. It was as if it were captured here, collected here, and in all libraries — and not only my time, my life, but all human time as well. In the library, time is dammed up — not just stopped but saved. The library is a gathering pool of narratives and of the people who come to find them. It is where we can glimpse immortality; in the library, we can live forever.

# Text A Translation

**在图书馆里成长**

一遍又一遍地学习如何争分夺秒地读书。

苏珊·奥尔琳

1 我是在图书馆里长大的，至少我有这种感觉。我家住在克利夫兰郊区，离隶属于沙克尔高地公共图书馆、有着砖墙外立面的伯特伦森林分馆大约一英里。在我整个童年时期，从我很小的时候起，妈妈每周都会开车带我去那里几次。我们一起往馆里走，但一进门，我们就分开了，各自去自己最喜欢的区域。图书馆可能是我被给予独立地位的第一个地方。即便在我只有四五岁的时候，我就获准独自行动。然后，过一会儿，我和妈妈在借书柜台前汇合，各自带着自己发现的图书。我们一起等着图书管理员抽出每本书的日期卡，然后，啪嗒一声，在卡上敲上一个歪歪斜斜的到期日。在我们的到期日前面，已经有二十来个歪歪斜斜的到期日，那都是别人的，以前敲上的。

2 对我来说，我们在馆里逗留的时间从来都不够长——图书馆的藏书实在太丰富了。我喜欢在书架周围走来走去，浏览书脊，直到有什么东西吸引了我的眼球。去图书馆借书如同梦幻之旅，顺顺当当，我回来时必定比去时更富有。这不像和我妈妈一起去商店，在我想要的东西和她愿意给我买的东西之间，我们肯定会有一场拉锯战；在图书馆里，我可以得到我想要的任何东西。在回家的路上，我喜欢把书叠放在大腿上，书沉甸甸地压在我身上，封皮薄膜粘在大腿上，有一种既结实又温暖的感觉。不付钱就带着东西离开一个地方，实在太刺激了；翘首期盼翻阅新得的书，太令人激动了。我们讨论将按什么顺序阅读。这是一场严肃的谈话，我们计划着在图书到期之前用怎样的阅读节奏度过这段迷人的、短暂的恩惠时段。我们俩都认为伯特伦森林分馆的所有图书管理员都很漂亮。我们常常花几分钟的时间讨论她们的美丽。然后我妈妈总是说，如果她可以选择职业，她会选择成为一名图书管理员。接下来车里就会陷入沉寂，我们俩都在想当图书管理员是一件多么美妙的事情。

3 当我长大一点后，我通常一个人自己走着去图书馆，尽可能多地背些书回来。偶尔，我也和母亲同行，而这种出行仍然像我小时候那样神奇迷人。即使在我上高中的最后一年，可以自己开车去图书馆的时候，我和妈妈仍然时不时地一起去图书馆，而这种出行也像过去一样展开，有着相同的节拍、停顿、评论和畅想，有着同样的思考节奏。我母亲两年前去世了。从那时以后，每当我想念她时，我喜欢想像我们一起坐在车里，再来一遍去伯特伦森林分馆的华丽出游。

4 我们家人特喜欢图书馆。我们是一个热衷读书的家庭，但我们更是一个从图书馆借书读的家庭，而不是一个书架放满书的家庭。我的父母很珍视书，但他们在大萧条中长大，知道钱的反复无常，他们吃过苦头，懂得凡是可以借到的东西就不该买。因为节俭，或者尽管节俭，他们认为人应该为了读书的体验而读书。读书的目的不是为了拥有一个必须永久保存和照看的物品，不需要一个用来提醒你获得该书目的的纪念品。读书是一次旅行。读书不需要纪念品。

5 事情本来可能就一直那样。此后的一生里，我可能会怅然地缅怀图书馆，就像我缅怀小时候去过的游乐园那样。但后来图书馆出人意料地回到了我的生活中。2011年，我丈夫接受了一份在洛杉矶的工作，所以我们离开了纽约，去了西部。我对这座城市不太了解，但这些年来，我在那里呆过一些时间，拜访过一些表亲。当上作家后，我经常去洛杉矶为杂志撰稿和写书。在那些旅行中，我曾往返海滩，上下峡谷，进出洛杉矶山谷，来往山里，但我从来没有对市中心多想过，认为那里就是一群玻璃幕墙办公楼，每天傍晚五点钟人去楼空。我从来没有去过公共图书馆，想都没想过，尽管我认为应该有一个，而且很可能是一个主要分馆，可能就在市中心。

6 我们搬家时我儿子上一年级。转学初期有份学校作业，要求他采访一位为这个城市工作的人。我建议他找一位垃圾清运工或者警察谈谈，但他说他想采访一个图书管理员。我们对这座城市太陌生了，所以我们不得不查找最近的图书馆的地址，结果发现是影城分馆。它离我们家大约一英里，与伯特伦森林分馆离我童年的家一样近。

7 当我们开车去见图书管理员时，我想起了记忆深处的图书馆之旅，想起母亲怎么带我去图书馆。不过现在角色颠倒了，我成了母亲，带着自己的孩子去作这特殊的旅行。我们停好车，朝图书馆走去，第一次仔仔细细地打量它。这座建筑是白色的，看起来有现代感，屋顶是薄荷绿色的蘑菇顶。它看起来同结实的砖砌伯特伦森林分馆一点也不像，但是我们一踏进图书馆，那种熟悉的感觉就如同雷电般击中了我，令我倒抽了一口气。几十年过去了，我在两千英里之外，但我感觉自己好像被带回到了彼时彼地，和妈妈一起走进图书馆。一切都没有改变——铅笔在纸上写字的嚓嚓声，房间中央桌旁的读者轻声低语，运书的手推车吱吱嘎嘎的声音，都和以前一模一样。斑痕累累的木制借书柜台，像船一样大的图书管理员办公桌，还有那布告栏，都和过去完全一样。那种缓缓的永不停歇的感觉，就像煮在炉子上的一锅水，也跟过去完全一样。书架上的书，肯定也和过去一样，有点增减而已。

8 在图书馆里，时间不是停止了，而好像是被捕获、被收集了起来，这在所有的图书馆里都一样，不仅我的时间、我的生命是这样，所有人的时间都这样。在图书馆里，时间被拦截围堵住，不仅停止了，而且被蓄存起来。图书馆是一个收集故事的池子，也是来寻找故事的人的集合地。在这里我们可以窥见不朽；在这里我们可以永生不死。