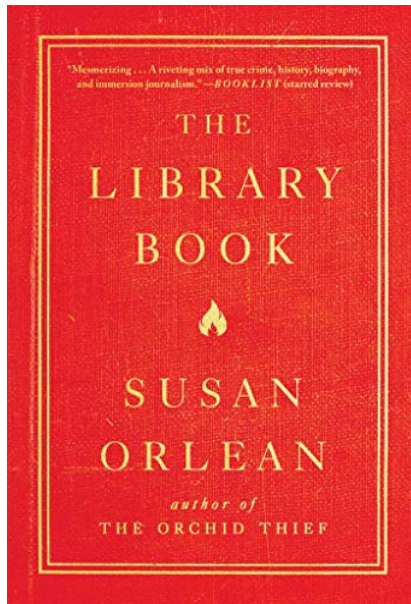


NplVH [Download] The Library Book



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Susan Orlean, hailed as a "national treasure" by The Washington Post and the acclaimed bestselling author of *Rin Tin Tin* and *The Orchid Thief*, reopens the unsolved mystery of the most catastrophic library fire in American history, and delivers a dazzling love letter to a beloved institution--our libraries. On the morning of April 29, 1986, a fire alarm sounded in the Los Angeles Public Library. As the moments passed, the patrons and staff who had been cleared out of the building realized this was not the usual false alarm. As one fireman recounted later, "Once that first stack got going, it was Goodbye, Charlie." The fire was disastrous: It reached 2,000 degrees and burned for more than seven hours. By the time it was extinguished, it had consumed 400,000 books and damaged 700,000 more. Investigators descended on the scene, but over thirty years later, the mystery remains: Did someone purposefully set fire to the library--and if so, who? Weaving her life-long love of books and reading with the fascinating history of libraries and the sometimes-eccentric characters who run them, award-winning journalist and New York Times bestselling author Susan Orlean presents a mesmerizing and uniquely compelling story as only she can. With her signature wit, insight, compassion, and talent for deep research, she investigates the legendary Los Angeles Public Library fire to showcase the larger, crucial role that libraries play in our lives. To truly understand what happens behind the stacks, Orlean visits the different departments of the

LAPL, encountering an engaging cast of employees and patrons and experiencing alongside them the victories and struggles they face in today's climate. She also delves into the evolution of libraries across the country and around the world, from a metropolitan charitable initiative to a cornerstone of national identity. She reflects on her childhood experiences in libraries; studies arson and the long history of library fires; attempts to burn a copy of a book herself; and she re-examines the case of Harry Peak, the blond-haired actor long suspected of setting fire to the library over thirty years ago. Along the way, she reveals how these buildings provide much more than just books--and that they are needed now more than ever. Filled with heart, passion, and unforgettable characters, *The Library Book* is classic Susan Orlean, and an homage to a beloved institution that remains a vital part of the heart, mind, and soul of our country and culture.

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