



The Ninja Librarians I By Jen Swann Downey

Master Phillipus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim's Guide to **Petrarch's Library**

People

Aspasia: Friend to Socrates and partner to Pericles (an Athenian statesman), Aspasia enjoys all the intellectual freedom she wants within Petrarch's Library of course, but she's also found a way to enjoy it out in Ancient Athens. This is no small achievement. In fourth-century BCE Athens, women are not generally educated or given an opportunity to discuss art, theater, writings, or political ideas. Only a class of women known as the "hetairai" are invited to develop their intellectual powers, and then only to better entertain the men who hire them for stimulating companionship.

Basho: A revered Japanese poet who's living out in the seventeenth century. He hates cities and writes a lot of haiku, a kind of poem that can only ever have three lines. The first must have five syllables, the second seven, and the third, five. Here's one about breaking wind by one Barry Beans from out in your time:

*"When underwater
It is difficult to hide
Bubbling evidence"*

Try writing one yourself!

Callamachus: When not running Petrarch Library's Reference Services, Callamachus writes rather ground-breaking poetry and brings order to the Alexandria Library's chaos out in the third century BCE. He's very devoted to his pet project: Cataloging the entire contents of the Alexandria Library. Though he's already filled 112 scrolls, the job is nothing compared to what Callamachus has had to catalog in Petrarch's Library!

Casmir Liszinski: A Polish nobleman, currently on the Lybrariad's Mission List. He studied philosophy with the Jesuits, a religious order of the Catholic Church, for eight years and it got him thinking. Out in 1687, he's working on a treatise (a paper that goes into mind-boggling amounts of systematic detail on a subject) titled "The Non-Existence of God." The Catholic Church is powerful in that wheren. History books in later wherens say that a man who owed money to Mr. Liszinski stole the treatise and showed it to Church leaders, who then accused, tried, and executed Mr. Liszinski for not believing in God. Let's hope the Lybrarians can get to him before that happens!

Catherine the Great, Empress and Autocrat of All the Russias: A champion of free expression? Maybe. We'll see. She's out in the Russian Empire in the late 1700s, ruling away. Alexander Radischev, one of her subjects, just wrote a book called *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*, which is quite critical of Russia's rulers. It's going to irritate her and test the strength of her free expression principles. For certain? She has great taste in hats.

Cornelius Loos: As you know, Cornelius Loos, a Catholic priest, spoke and wrote against the witch trials he witnessed out in 1580s Trier. Out in the 1590s in Brussels, Church officials forced him to publicly recant his “errors.” On his knees. One official, Martin Del Rios, kept close watch on him after this, having Loos imprisoned several times for “lapsing” into the “wrong” kind of thinking. When Loos died of the plague, Mr. Del Rios apparently felt cheated of the chance to execute him.

Cyrano de Bergerac: I'm positive that Savi would be highly relieved that you now know he is a real person and not just a figment of Mr. Rostand's dramatic imagination. If you want to read more about him, look up a biography by a woman living out in your time named Ishbel Addyman. (No relation to Barry Beans.) She did the best she could (quite well!) making sense out of his life, but since she doesn't know Cyrano serves as a keyhand of the Lybrariad, do take her conclusions with a pinch or two of salt.

Egeria: Besides conducting her work as a Lybrarian, it appears from current history books that Egeria will find it necessary to do quite a bit of traveling out in the fourth century, mostly in the Middle East. She'll visit Mount Sinai, Mesopotamia, Jericho, Jerusalem, and other places. Apparently someone finds some of her field notes in the late 1800s, takes them to be an interesting extended sort of postcard to her sisters and publishes them. They've been read in all kinds of wherens under the title *Itinerarium Egeriae*, or the Travels of Egeria.

Gabriel Naude: Monsieur Naude works, of course, as a keyhand in seventeenth-century Paris but he also works as a librarian for Cardinal Mazarin, who is unaware of Monsieur Naude's other job.

Giacomo Casanova: When not teaching his Stealth and Deception Practicum or torturing the world with his dramatic creations, Casanova is employed by Count Joseph Karl von Waldstein in the Castle of Dux in Bohemia out in the late 1700s. After a lifetime of extreme gambling, business, and romantic exploits across Europe he has his friends and enemies convinced that, flat broke, he has reluctantly settled down to write an autobiography. He describes it to anyone who asks as “the only remedy to keep from going mad or dying of grief.” A convincing cover story, don't you agree?

Hypatia: Taught philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy for many years out in ancient Alexandria before deciding to move into Petrarch's Library full-time and take on her current position of Director. I hesitate to say more, or Mr. Martine will surely accuse me, and rightly so, of a lack of polite circumspection.

Katherine Henot: At the moment (spring of 1625), she works as the first Postmaster in Germany, running the post office in the town of Cologne. Count Leonhard II von Taxis is part of the Imperial Court, and he wants a centralized Post Office. Katherine thinks that's a bad idea and has said so. Believe me, there's a very good reason she's on the Lybrariad's Mission List.

N'Sync: According to Marcus, N'Sync qualifies as a “boy band” of the “unlistenable” variety common out in your era. If you simply must have more information about them, he advises something called a “Google search.”

Petrarch: Francesco Petrarco to his fellow Italians. Out in his fourteenth century, he was known for his poetry, his discovery of lost manuscripts by ancient writers, his love of travel, and the letters he wrote to centuries-dead “imaginary” friends like the Roman statesman Cicero. (Only, as you've probably guessed, Cicero and Petrarch did speak on more than one occasion at the Library.) Historians out in the later wherens consider Petrarch the father of “Humanism”—a system of values and beliefs that people are basically good and that problems can be solved using reason instead of religion. If they only knew the half of it.

Phillippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim: Also known as Paracelsus. When I'm not doing my small part for Petrarch's Library or snacking, I do spend some time out in the first half of the sixteenth century making discoveries in medicine, toxicology, and chemistry; also lots of friends, and perhaps an enemy or two.

Sima Quin: Out in second century BCE China, Sima Quin has finished a monumental history of his country, called Record of the Grand Historian. He was born into a family of astrologers, and will eventually hold the title of Court Astrologer. But perhaps he didn't read the stars correctly. As of now the history books say he pays dearly for speaking well of someone that Emperor Wu had blamed for a military defeat. I'm sure the Lybrariad will put him on the Mission List soon.

Simon Morin: Currently on the Lybrariad's Mission List. In his wheren of Paris 1663, poor Mr. Morin suffers from a delusion that he is 1: a good cook and 2: Jesus Christ. This should hardly be a problem for anyone but himself, except that he has a frenemy who just talked a high-ranking priest into taking Mr. Morin prisoner for his "crime."

Strabo: Out in the first century BCE Strabo (philosopher, historian, and geographer) has been exploring Egypt, Ethiopia, Tuscany, and Corinth. Eventually, if history holds, he'll settle in Rome. Sadly, one of his major works (forty-seven volumes!) has gone entirely missing. Out in your time, only a tiny piece of "Historical Sketches," written on a scrap of papyrus can be found. You'd have to go to the University of Milan (Italy) to see it. Marcus advises asking your parents if they have any frequent flyer miles you could use.

Su Shi: I'm glad to report that this late-eleventh-century Chinese poet, painter, and statesman is no longer on the Lybrariad's Mission List. If you look him up, you'll see that his current fate—banishment—while still not just, is far less horrible than his old fate (trust me!). And many of his writings have survived!

Timotheus of Miletus: History books in later wherens don't have anything to say about the musician named Timotheus who Marcus met while visiting Athens 399 BCE, but curiously they do mention a musician named Timotheus of Miletus who lives a couple of generations later. Actually, they mention him in connection with the development of a "new music" based on unusual rhythms, ones that especially irritated the philosopher Aristotle. You don't suppose the latter-day Timotheus could have had a grandfather who met Marcus, do you?

Vitruvius: Another Roman. Loves designing buildings and has definite ideas about how to best do it. Out in the first century BCE, he's busy writing (in Latin and Greek, naturally) "The Ten Books on Architecture." It will soon say that buildings must be solid (*firmitas*), useful (*utilitas*), and beautiful (*venustas*). Oh, and you know that image that Leonardo da Vinci likes to draw out in the fifteenth century—the man standing with his legs and arms outstretched within a circle and a square? It's famous in all the later wherens. Da Vinci called the figure his Vitruvian man because Vitruvius believed that beauty lay in natural proportion, and that the human body, inscribable in both a circle and a square, showed how perfectly elegant its proportions. All that said, I'm afraid I have it on very good authority that Vitruvius didn't have much of a sense of humor and made a dull dining companion.

Places

Library of Celsus: If your name is Gaius Julius Aquila, and your father is named Tiberius Julius Celsus Polemaeanus, then you just have to build a library in your dad's honor. Or at least organize other people to build it. I don't think Gaius dragged much stone around himself. The library was finished in 135 CE, and filled with 12,000 scrolls. Tiberius loved to read. He was buried (once suitably dead) in a sarcophagus below the library's floor. Unfortunately, out in the third century, most of the Library of Celsus fell down in an earthquake, but out in the twentieth century, its facade has been rebuilt! They put a few bits in the wrong places but on the whole did a pretty good job.

Passaic Public Library: Out in the twenty-first century, the Passaic Public Library stands on Gregory Avenue in Passaic, New Jersey.

Porte de Nesle: Out in Cyrano's wheren, the Porte de Nesle is a passage through the thick stone wall built to surround Paris during the middle ages. It stands beside the Tour de Nesle on the left bank of the river Seine.

The Serapeum: A library built in Alexandria out in the third century BCE. This very grand temple was dedicated to Serapis, a sort-of patchwork god invented to help Greeks and Egyptians get along when the Greeks took up residence in Egypt. In later times, it houses a library, and then I'm afraid it does eventually come to Petrarch's Library as a ghost library.

Villa de Papyri: Pool, bronze sculptures spitting water, terraces, gardens! The views from this residence built on the side of a volcanic mountain called Vesuvius were *spectacular!* Until the day the lava decided to get out and see a bit of first-century Herculaneum. The mountain is still smoking out in that wheren and the residence has more or less disappeared. However, out in the eighteenth century, one Karl Weber has tunneled into the cooled lava and found the house's library with its 1,785 charred papyrus scrolls. Out in your time, because of the invention of multispectral imaging, people are reading the scrolls! I'd explain the technique to you, because I completely thoroughly perfectly understand it, but I must get on with this list.

BOOKS, SONGS, LONG RAMBLING SPEECHES, AND ASSORTED OTHER EXPRESSIVE WORKS

"Declaration of the Rights of Women and the Female Citizen": Document. You know that French Revolution that happened out in the late 1700s, not long after the American Revolution? When the crowd in charge published their "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" they weren't kidding. Women were not granted equal rights. Playwright and activist Olympe de Gouges tried to point this out in her own Declaration.

A Vindication of the Rights of Women: Book. Meanwhile out in England, Mary Wollstonecraft, hearing about events in France, is writing A Vindication, laying out the reasons she feels women should have access to education, among other things.

"Areopagitica; A speech of Mr. John Milton for the Liberty of Unlicenc'd Printing, to the Parliament of England": Document. Mr. Milton has yet to give this as a speech, though as you might have figured out, he does love to talk. He just published it out in the wheren of England 1644, after Parliament passed a law requiring writers to have their books and pamphlets approved by the government before they can be published. Did I mention that a civil religious war is raging out there? So far, no one in Milton's wheren seems to be listening to him, but out in other wherens, his arguments are influencing John Stuart Mill, John Locke, and the framers of the United States Constitution.

Cyrano de Bergerac: Dramatic Play. Not Savi's favorite, but the crowds went *wild* for this play when it premiered in France out in 1897. Edmond Rostand wrote the entire play in rhyming couplets. Here's an English translation of one of the fictional Cyrano's lines: "My nose is Gargantuan! You little Pig-snout, you tiny Monkey-Nostrils, you virtually invisible Pekinese-Puss, don't you realize that a nose like mine is both scepter and orb, a monument to my superiority?" A valiant group of actors is probably performing the play right now somewhere out in your time.

Kidnapped: Book. Stolen inheritances! Kidnappings! Desert Islands! Robert Louis Stevenson wrote this adventure tale out in the 1880s, but based it on real events like the "Appin Murder" and the political upheavals going on in Scotland in the mid-1700s. I do love those kinds of books...

Socrates and Athenian Society in His Day: Book. A. D. Godley wrote it and got it published in London out in 1896. But most people out in your time (and by most I mean hardly any) know A. D. Godley for his funny poems. (My favorite is “Megalopsychiad.”)

Martine's Handbook of Etiquette and Guide to True Politeness: Book. It seems bad manners drive Mr. Arthur Martine up the proverbial wall and halfway across the ceiling. Out in 1866, he just published this handbook. It's packed with helpful if rather stern commands such as: “You will sip your soup as quietly as possible from the side of the spoon, and you, of course, will not commit the vulgarity of blowing on it, or trying to cool it, after it is in your mouth, by drawing in an unusual quantity of air, for by so doing you would be sure to annoy, if you did not turn the stomach of the lady or gentleman next to you.”

“Plaisir d'Amour” or “The Song Sung Terribly in Chapter Four”: Please don't tell the Archivist I referred to it in that way. Written out in 1784 France by Jean-Paul-Egide Martini, the song takes as its subject the pleasure and stabbing pains of love. Though Martini wrote the music for the song, the words came from a poem written by another French guy named Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian. Chew up a cracker and then try to pronounce that. I dare you.

The Princess Bride: S. Morgenstern's Classic Tale of True Love and High Adventure: Book. Abridged by William Goldman into the “good parts version.” Dorrie pressed the tale into my hands, saying “it's the best book ever.” I suspect hyperbole, but it's now on my nightstand.

Sears and Roebuck & Company catalog: Sent out in mass mailings in 1895 United States, these catalogs are big—532 pages big! People living far away from stores can flip through its pages and order wood-burning stoves, coffee grinders, and teapots. A family eking out a living on an Appalachian mountain probably doesn't have much cash available to place an order, but when hung on a nail in the outhouse, the catalog makes a terrific toilet-paper supply.

Star Wars: A motion picture. I understand that in your when you can “download” them to a device that you can fit in your pocket.

The Three Musketeers: Book. By Alexandre Dumas. “All for one, and one for all.” Dumas lives out in nineteenth-century France. He based his novel on a memoir (a fancy name for an autobiography or biography) that he took out of the Marseille public library and apparently never returned. He spends a lot of his free time fencing for the fun of it.

“True and False Magic”: Document. Out in your time, history books say that the manuscript of Cornelius Loos' “True and False Magic” disappeared in 1593 and wasn't seen again for three hundred years until discovered out in 1886 by one George Lincoln Burr in the Jesuit Library of Trier. This is troubling to the Lybrariad. After all, Udo succeeded in getting the manuscript to Savi, didn't he?

EXPLETIVES, INVENTIONS, AND OTHER UNCATEGORIZED MARVELS

Gayetty's Medicated Papers: Just recently put on the market in the U.S. in 1857 by one Joseph C. "enough with the corncobs" Gayetty, these flat aloe-saturated squares make wiping a revolutionary breeze for Americans. Toilet paper. It's what the Chinese Emperors have been using since the 1300s (only available to them in two-by-three-foot rectangles).

"God's Dentures": Well, this is a real swear phrase for Mr. Kornberger. In his own special way, he is trying to swear like a person living out in sixteenth-century England with Queen Elizabeth and Shakespeare. But out there you'd be more likely to hear a woman yell "God's Teeth!" after doing something like accidentally slamming her hand in a door.

Method Acting: Out in the 1930, in NYC, actors working with the Group Theatre are exploring the ideas of Constantin Stanislavsky, who himself is out in 1910 Russia pursuing the holy grail of "theatrical truth." Soon actors and teachers will start developing the "Method" techniques for delivering realistic performances on stage and in films. Some Method actors try to think and feel and dress and talk like their characters even when not performing. Out in your time, *Cracked* magazine has called method acting: "The art of torturing yourself to prove you're an artist."

Mongolian Gerbils: Animals. Recently, Ebba informed me that out in 1954 Mongolia, Dr. Victor Schwentker is busy capturing forty-four pairs of the creatures. Apparently, in another fifteen years, great hordes of American children are going to be begging for them as pets, and building tubal paradises for them to dwell within out of a newly invented material called "plastic." Too fetchingly cute for even me to eat.

Punch and Judy: Particularly disturbing puppet characters. Versions of them haunt many wherens.

Ragtime: Ragtime is the name of a style of music being played out in the late 1800s and early 1900s, especially in the U.S. The "ragged time" of the music makes it very bouncy and dance-able. It may surprise you to know that Mistress Lovelace is a serious fan. It is rumored she has a photograph of Scott Joplin, a huge writer and performer of ragtime music, hung on her bedchamber wall.

Roller skates with five-inch-high bicycle-style wheels: Out in early 1900s England, businessmen like to skate between their homes and offices on them. They have no braking mechanism. There have been accidents.

Spotted Deadnettle: As Egeria would be the first to emphasize, this plant, unlike many other nettle family plants, does not sting. The plant is hardy and edible, and rampant in many wherens. No wonder Egeria spends so much time on it in her Foraging class.

Water Clocks: At least as old as writing itself, water clocks are used out in many of the early centuries connected to Petrarch's Library. People in China, India, Babylon, Egypt, Greece, southern Europe, Byzantium, and Syria are all making use of various types of water clocks. No electricity or complicated gearworks needed!