

# **THE NOUN TOWN MYSTERY**

## **OF THE LIBRARY LOOTER**



Created by  
The Word Nerd

# THE NOUN TOWN MYSTERY OF THE LIBRARY LOOTER



## HELLO TEACHER FRIEND!

*I'm thrilled that you've decided to download this product! Not only is it a great way to help your students practice identifying collective nouns, but it's a fun story as well!*

### ***In this product you'll find...***

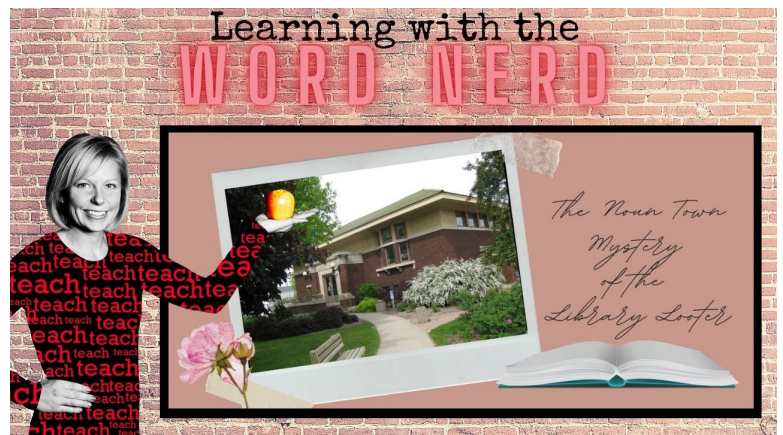
- *A short story/mystery text (with 15 collective nouns embedded in each of the 10 chapters) in a printable form with answer recording space.*
- *An answer key*
- *A writing extension activity with planning page and printable writing sheets*
- *A writing rubric for the writing extension activity*

*One way to enhance this product is to use it in conjunction with the audio recording of the story. This way students whose comprehension is improved when listening to text read aloud can have a little assistance, whether they are in your classroom or at home! You can find the video [here](https://youtu.be/fzNtUp8cL1E).*

*I hope you and your students enjoy the story and figuring out WHO DUNNIT, as well as practicing with collective nouns.*

*Happy teaching!*

*Amanda Zieba  
(AKA: The Word Nerd)*



<https://youtu.be/fzNtUp8cL1E>



# The Noun Town Mystery of the Library Looter



## Chapter 1

An eerily silent crowd stood staring at the crime scene. The police department jostled them as they strung up the yellow caution tape and yelled a mess of orders for them to stand back. It was odd. Nothing like this had ever happened in their little town before. The citizens would not have believed it had they not been seeing it with their own pair of eyes. Above them a parliament of owls stared down at the forest of legs standing in the library lawn, adding to the peculiar atmosphere.

"Where is she now?" a man in a heavy coat asked.

"The librarian? Chief said it drove her absolutely mad.

She's at the hospital now," another responded.

"I heard it took the entire ambulance crew to remove her from the building," commented a bystander.

As the adults looked on and speculated, a gang of school children burst onto the scene. Having been released from school moments earlier, their pent up energy seemed to overwhelm the scene. They tromped straight past the yellow tape and descended onto the mass of books that littered the library lawn.

Currently the library staff was being marched out of the building and past the bomb squad as they began their search of the building. It was highly unlikely that anything besides the books were amiss, but the team of officers on duty would rather be safe than sorry.

A small section of reporters from the local syndicate stood on the edge of the scene, snapping a roll of film that would document the event for any who might not be present for this bizarre moment.

## Collective Nouns

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# The Noun Town Mystery of the Library Looter



## Chapter 2

The flock of onlookers finally broke up near dusk, heading home to the calling of dinners unprepared and homework un-started. An ensemble of voices and shuffling feet could be heard all along Main Street. Among the homeward bound was the mayor, feverishly wondering which member of his constituency could have possibly pulled this prank. Who would remove every book from the library only to leave them mere paces from the front door? What would such a demonstration prove? Was there anyone who wished to harm the health of the Madame librarian? Because surely this would do the trick.

He waved absentmindedly to the police patrol stationed across the street ushering a pack of children through the crosswalk and decided to focus more closely on his drive home instead of attempting to solve the mystery.

Also heading home was a teacher, just emerging from school. She had been grading a mountain of tests and watching a naughty duo of trouble makers in detention and therefore missed the event. She attempted to catch up on the town gossip as she

walked the three short blocks home. She noticed a convoy of vehicles dispersing from the library and hastened to catch up with a student from her class.

"Why the gathering of the public? What's with the swarm of children and parents?" she asked.

"A bunch of the library books were moved to the front lawn," her student explained.

"Why?" she asked.

"No one in the group seemed to know," the student continued. "The police force has no leads."

"Very peculiar," the teacher commented.

"I need to catch up with my family," the student called over their shoulder as he began to run ahead. "Good night!"

"Good night."

## Collective Nouns

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# The Noun Town Mystery of the Library Looter



## Chapter 3

The next day, a Saturday, an audience formed to watch a crew of enthusiasm lacking volunteers carry the bundles of books back into the library. In couples and clusters and yokes and masses, the books were brought back inside. From the sidelines, the crowd could hear a majority of the faculty volunteers grumbling a cloud of complaints.

“What did they hope to accomplish by putting this heap of books out here?” a volunteer griped.

“Whoever writes books with an abundance of pages should be fined! My arms are killing me!” a junior staffer whined.

“Is the librarian coming at all today?” another asked.

“Nah, she doesn’t check out of the hospital until tomorrow.”

As dusk fell, the final book was re-shelved and the pair of oak doors were locked, the books safely behind them. The clique of coworkers trailed out of the parking lot. The events of the past two days behind them and a weekend ahead and waiting. Their talk turned from work to a multitude of other mundane topics.

## Collective Nouns

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# The Noun Town Mystery of the Library Looter



## Chapter 4

Curiosity was fueled by a letter that appeared in the newspaper the following day.

To the entire population of Noun Town,

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly apologize for my library spectacle. I am truly sorry for the thicket of trouble it may have caused. I am also writing to ask for some help. While removing the books, I stopped on the moonlit lawn to gaze at the galaxy and constellations in the heavens and read a most fascinating tale. I was quite busy and could not finish it, so I marked my page with a special note. You know how the librarian hates when we lie them face down, damaging their spine in the process. Seeing as I was already going to drive her crazy with my plague of shenanigans, I didn't want to further upset her. When I returned home, yes, I too am a member of this fair city, I realized I left a large bank of wealth tucked inside the pages of the book. Do you think you could help me find it?

Please do this discretely, I don't want to create a rush of pandemonium. Simply go to the library and begin checking out a bushel of books. Don't let me catch you returning the bulk of books without reading them... I'd hate to have to turn your house inside out! If you find the currency I spoke of earlier, contact the newspaper and they will place an announcement in a random section alerting me that it has been located. If you should see this notice, feel free to discontinue your search.

Thank you for your host of help and again I apologize for the expanse of trouble I have caused.

Sincerely,  
The Library Looter

## Collective Nouns

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# The Noun Town Mystery of the Library Looter



## Chapter 5

In every office, on every bus and in every classroom, a harvest of information was gathered. Throughout the town a network of gossip was instated. A piece of green paper sticking out of the top of graphic novels. The assistant librarian's boyfriend had acquired a packet containing a list of every book the library owned. A dozen bouquets had been sent to the librarian and she had a bevy of visitors. Each visiting party attempted to gain some small factoid about what she may have seen upon her unfortunate discovery on the library lawn. Every piece of information was passed along the gossip chain including the knowledge that the librarian was said to be on indefinite leave of absence starting now.

An anthology of questions were asked. "How will the looter know if I actually read the book?" "Do you really want to test the theory and end up with your laundry scattered in your yard?" "Can I really find this nest of money buried in a load of dusty books?"

An extensive list of plans were made. A Girl Scout troop strategized to work together and split any money they found. Their meetings were already held in the basement of the library and the frequency of their meetings was increased to three times a week. Teachers extended free reading time during class so that they themselves could page zealously through their library books. Whole families instated reading time each night before bed and could be seen religiously reading through their lit windows.

Each night they fell asleep mentally spending their reward and wondering who would be the lucky one to find the hidden coven of treasure.

## Collective Nouns

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# The Noun Town Mystery of the Library Looter



## Chapter 6

If the looter was distressed at the continued displacement of his or her money, they made no comment. Weeks went by, and the town continued to read, and read, and read. The children read a feast of picture books. The teens had set up shop in the young adult section. They refused to allow anyone in but their own age-group while they read a horde of paranormal romances. Mothers checked out batches of cookbooks and after they had run out of those they went through a regiment of historical romances. After a wad of sport and construction magazines the fathers began reading a body of books on architecture. Old men read a platoon of war memoirs while their old biddy wives read a host of religious biographies on saints. It seemed everyone had their section in the library staked out and everyone was reading. And it wasn't just the books.

Keeping in mind that an announcement would be made in the newspaper once the money had been found, the citizens combed the newspaper from front page to last looking for word that the search had ended. Even those who didn't purchase the newspaper, soon became daily subscribers.

The faculty at the library was working harder than they ever had before. Reshelving a battery of books left them feeling delightfully exhausted. If only the mentally vacationing librarian could see this, surely her soul would be healed! But she remained away.

## Collective Nouns

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# The Noun Town Mystery of the Library Looter



## Chapter 7

The assistant librarian used to sit bored at the front desk praying for a friend to stop by, a child to check out a book, or an email from her boyfriend. Now as a line of regulars stretched across the room, she wondered if those days were an illusion. A crop of book lovers seemed to have grown over night. The span of hours she spent at the library seemed to fly by in a blur.

Each day a slew of books exited and reentered the library, carried by a mass of men, women and children. Each time she checked out a book, her heart raced at the thought of discovering the looter's left behind treasure. How much had they really left trapped between chapters? Which of the books in the body of the library had been chosen? How and why? A clutter of questions she asked herself daily. The urge to constantly check her email left her, as her boyfriend now chose to visit her at the end of each work day. Together they assessed the dwindling list of books the library owned that had yet to be checked out since the fateful day.

They promised each other they wouldn't use the list to find THE BOOK themselves. They just enjoyed the process of the treasure hunt the city was determined to complete. As a new reporter among a mob of stiff competition, the boyfriend was excited about his inside angle on this compelling story. The assistant librarian carefully locked the door behind a caravan of Girl Scouts leaving with an array of reading selections tucked under their arms before rushing back to the front desk, her boyfriend and the list.

### Collective Nouns

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# The Noun Town Mystery of the Library Looter



## Chapter 8

"It has been too long since I was last here," the mayor thought as he veered away from a knot of people gathered around the library shelves. He'd decided to stop and pick up some evening reading material since his wife was on vacation visiting her sister on the West Coast. It was getting a little lonely at his house and he thought it might be fun to fill his mind with a cast of characters. He was happy to leave behind thoughts of the city planning committee, the finance board meeting, a looming election, a council position that needed to be filled and the lack of appetizing dinner options awaiting him at home. He instead turned his attention to an anthology of books on the US Presidents.

Once seated comfortably in his car, his parcel of selected books lying in the seat next to him, the mayor shifted into gear and began his drive home. Sounds of the city orchestra accompanied by a string of Latin lyrics drifted out of his speakers as he drove past the zoo, orchard and farm before finally pulling into his subdivision.

After feeding the litter of cats that met him meowing near the door, he settled into his favorite chair, book in hand, ready for an enjoyable reading of evening.

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# The Noun Town Mystery of the Library Looter



## Chapter 9

It was entirely unnecessary, but another note appeared in the newspaper several weeks later.

Dear Citizens of Noun Town,

Good word has reached me that you have become an army of readers! Thank you for taking my cause so seriously. Has anyone found my cache of fortune? Keep looking, I assure you it is there. Feel free to share your current findings, working as a team may be helpful.

Sincerely,  
The Library Looter

As expected, it created a rapid of reaction of rumors. The occupants of the town could no longer contain their portfolio of book blurbs, recommendations, and favorites. The blessing of book information gushed forward from one tribe of teens to another, one colony of

coworkers to the next, from one congregation to the church across the street until they were all talking and talking and talking about books.

Baskets of books continued to be checked out from the library. The cable company has issued a catalogue of complaints due to their large chunk of cancelations. School board members were rejoicing when the principals reported that reading levels at the local schools were escalating at unheard of rates. Children saved their reserve of birthday money to buy books at the newly opened book store downtown.

The shower of questions from the town still rang out, but they had changed. "Have you read the new historical fiction thriller?" "Did you hear that book I read last week finally made its way on to the New York Times bestseller list?" "When is the first book club meeting?"

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# The Noun Town Mystery of the Library Looter



## Chapter 10

Winter descended on the little town. A layer of snow covered the library lawn, and the yellow cautionary tape that had long been taken down was replaced by strings of colored lights. A festive garland was wrapped around the terrace railing and a beautiful wreath hung on the old oak door, welcoming library patrons to the building and the season.

As the librarian returned to her place of work for the first time since the incident last fall, she could see a kit of little kids reading and giggling in the children's corner. A pair of siblings were sharing a chair and a book while their father browsed through a dossier of recent book arrivals. Just beyond the family she saw an entire fleet of women young and old who had gathered for the recently started book club. Everywhere she turned she saw worshipers of the written word, wonder and enjoyment written clearly on their faces.

When her assistant, who was now acting as head librarian, saw her entering, the young woman gasped and attempted to stand. But the librarian, ever a rule follower, shushed her and silently slipped back out into the darkening evening. As a light snow begins to fall, the librarian reminisced over the past collection of months, catalogues of memories in her head. She wondered if the townspeople would ever be able to forgive her for intentionally mislead-ing them. She wondered if they too now understand the wealth to be found in words and that it was their treasure she had be writing of the entire time.

She smiled to herself as she shuffled a pile of books off the passenger seat of her husband's car and buckled her seat belt.

"Everything just how you left it?" he asked her.

"Oh no dear. It is much, much better than I left it."

"Do you feel good about your decision to retire?"

"Absolutely," she responded. "Now, on the way to the symphony, catch me up on the panel of candidates you had in mind for that council position."

## Collective Nouns

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# The Noun Town Mystery of the Library Looter



## Answer Key

### Chapter 1

- 1.crowd
- 2.department
- 3.mess
- 4.pair
- 5.parliament
- 6.forest
- 7.crew
- 8.gang
- 9.mass
- 10.staff
- 11.squad
- 12.team
- 13.section
- 14.syndicate
- 15.roll

### Chapter 3

- 1.audience
- 2.bundles
- 3.couples
- 4.clusters
5. yokes
6. masses
7. crowd
8. majority
9. faculty
10. cloud
11. heap
12. abundance
13. pair
14. clique
15. multitude

### Chapter 2

- 1.flock
- 2.ensemble
- 3.constituency
- 4.patrol
- 5.pack
- 6.mountain
- 7.duo
- 8.convoy
- 9.class
- 10.public
- 11.swarm
- 12.bunch
- 13.force
- 14.group
- 15.family

### Chapter 4

- 1.population
2. town
3. thicket
4. galaxy
5. constellations
- 6.plague
7. member
8. bank
9. wealth
10. bushel
- 11.bulk
12. currency
13. expanse
- 14.host
- 15.Library



# The Noun Town Mystery of the Library Looter



## Answer Key

### Chapter 5

1. harvest
2. network
3. packet
4. bouquets
5. bevy
6. party
7. chain
8. anthology
9. nest
10. load
11. mess
12. list
13. troop
14. week
15. coven

### Chapter 7

1. line
2. illusion
3. crop
4. span
5. library
6. slew
7. mass
8. treasure
9. chapters
10. body
11. clutter
12. list
13. mob
14. caravan
15. array

### Chapter 6

1. town
2. feast
3. age-group
4. horde
5. batches
6. regiment
7. wad
8. body
9. platoon
10. host
11. section
12. subscribers
13. faculty
14. library
15. battery

### Chapter 8

1. knot
2. coast
3. cast
4. committee
5. board
6. council
7. anthology
8. parcel
9. orchestra
10. string
11. zoo
12. orchard
13. farm
14. subdivision
15. litter

# The Noun Town Mystery of the Library Looter



## Answer Key

### Chapter 9

1. army
2. cache
3. team
4. portfolio
5. blessing
6. tribe
7. colony
8. congregation
9. church
10. company
11. catalogue
12. chunk
13. board
14. reserve
15. shower

### Chapter 10

1. layer
2. strings
3. patrons
4. kit
5. pair
6. dossier
7. worshipers
8. collection
9. catalogues
10. townspeople
11. treasure
12. pile
13. symphony
14. panel
15. council

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Write Your Own  
Collective Noun  
Mystery



# Writing with Collective Nouns

## Directions

Choose 10 collective nouns from the index and write them below. Then, write your own Noun Town Mystery using your chosen collective nouns.

## My Collective Nouns

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## Pre-Write Planning

Where in Noun Town does your story take place?  
(School, post office, mayor's office, town dump, garden center, etc?)

Who are the characters in your story? (Students, fire fighter, baker, pet groomer, etc.?)

What will be the mystery? (a missing object, a stranger comes to town, a strange incident, etc.?)



Own  
oun

An illustration of an open book with a speech bubble containing a question mark above it, symbolizing a question or inquiry.

## This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# Writing Rubric

## Write Your Own Collective Noun Mystery



Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Task/Points	0	2	4
<b>Inclusion of Collective Nouns</b>	5 or less of the student's chosen collective nouns are included and used correctly.	6 or more of the student's chosen collective nouns are included and used correctly.	All ten chosen collective nouns are included and used correctly.
<b>Style/Writer's Voice</b>	The writer's style, including word choice, varied sentence make up/length, etc. is unsatisfactory and detracts from the overall enjoyment and meaning of the piece.	The writer's style, including word choice, varied sentence make up/length, etc. is adequate and does not detract from the overall enjoyment of the piece.	The writer's style, including word choice, varied sentence make up/length, etc. adds to the overall enjoyment of the piece in a way that is meaningful.
<b>Grammar</b>	Grammar and usage errors dramatically impede the reading of the piece.	Grammar and usage errors slightly impede the reading of the piece.	Few to zero grammar and usage errors.  Story reads cleanly and easily.
<b>Inclusion of Story Elements</b>	Student does not clearly include the story elements of character, setting and a plot featuring a mystery.	Student clearly includes two of the following story elements: character, setting and a plot featuring a mystery.	Student clearly includes the story elements of character, setting and a plot featuring a mystery.

Planning sheet is turned in with final copy of story: \_\_/2

Student includes a title: \_\_/1

Work is turned in on time: \_\_/1

Total Points \_\_/20

Teacher comments and feedback:

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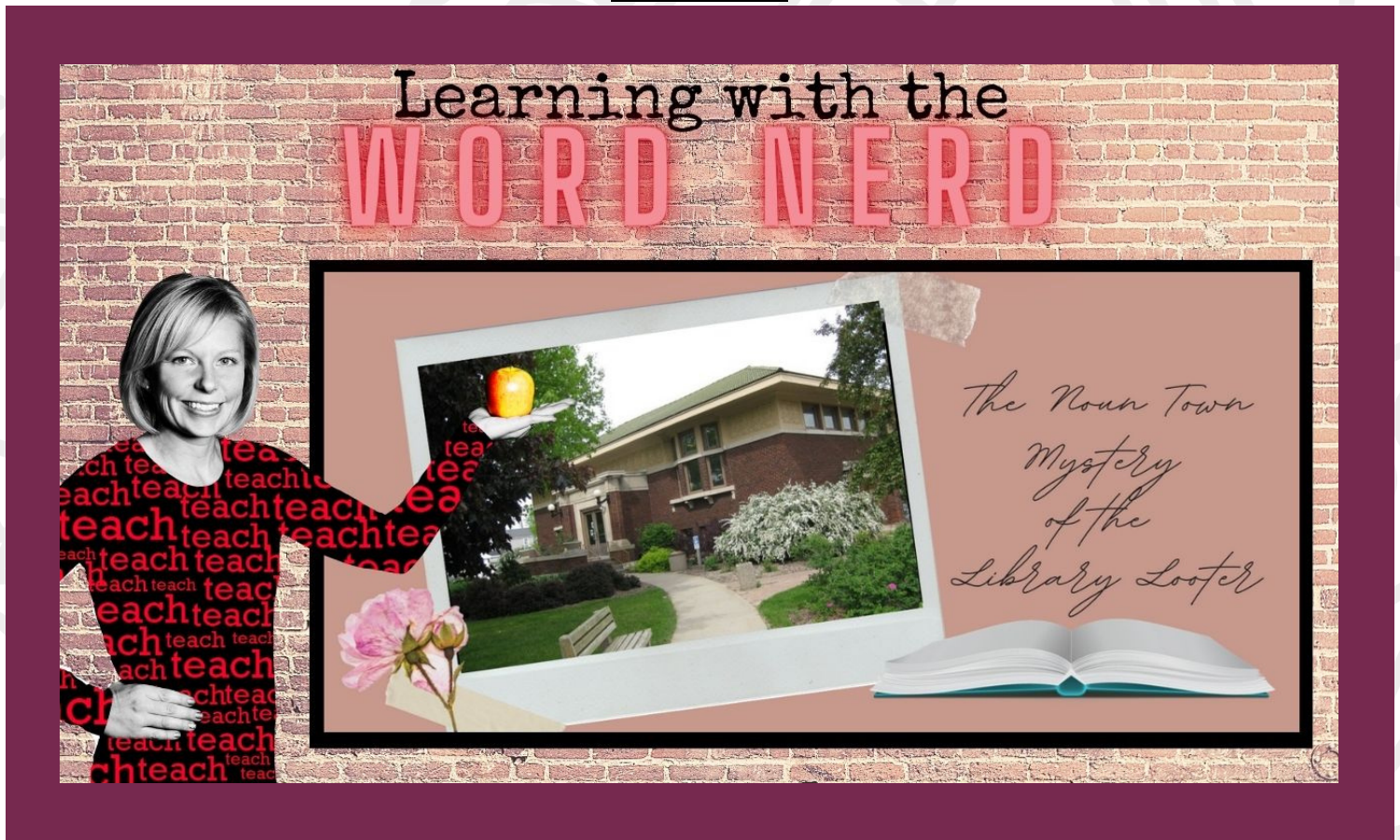
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# ***THE NOUN TOWN MYSTERY OF THE LIBRARY LOOTER***



VIDEO



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ALONG WITH THE AUDIO VERSION OF THE  
STORY.

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