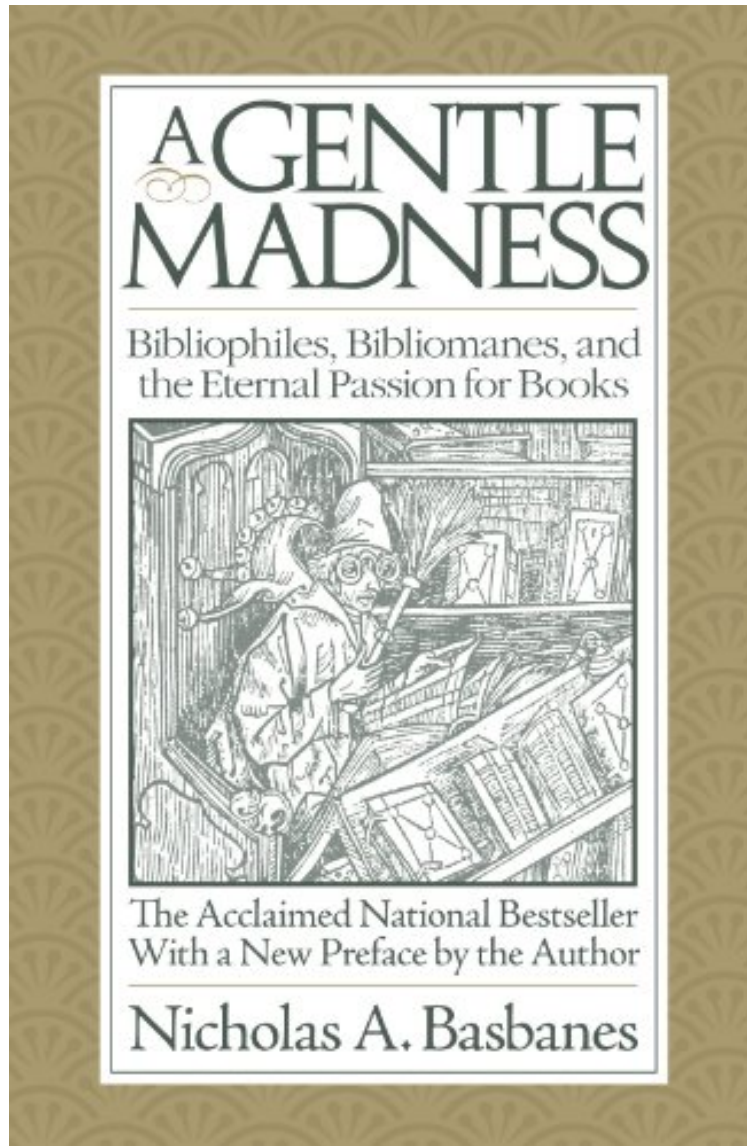


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## A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the Eternal Passion for Books

*Nicholas A. Basbanes*

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**Nicholas A. Basbanes : A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the Eternal Passion for Books** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the Eternal Passion for Books:

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ownership of a book almost as much as the reading of it. Although I am not sure the colorful characters in this book do indeed read their purchases, and needless to say they spend way, way more than I on their purchases, the fundamental urge to possess an object of one's desire is the same. Monks and spiritualists teach us that our possessions bind us, restrict us, and soon they are not our possessions but we become theirs. Happiness lies not in possessing things. A happy life does not require and indeed may depend on not having many possessions. In fact, the fewer the better, some may say. This book and the list of characters and the lengths they'll go to secure a possession will blow their minds. Our culture tends to be indulgent on collecting books. Sources of wisdom. How else would ancient manuscripts and documents of historic importance be preserved and handed down to next generations? While I appreciate the contribution of many of the high-minded collectors in this book, there are some that have just gone overboard and are lost - as is the case with the famed book thief who made himself sick by licking library identifiers off library books. All in all, a hearty recommendation to anyone who's interested in the topic of book collecting. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Great :) By Customer A history of various private book collectors going back to Classical Greece. My favorite is a father writing his 10-year-old son: I told you before to quit buying books! Why am I still getting bills from book dealers??? And No! I will not go to any more book auctions for you! Needless to say the child grew up and left house full of books in various countries. Or the guy who wanted to collect early California literary material. And later realized he had to gather early Mexican materials for context. And " " " " " Spanish " " " Or they guy who stole \$20 million dollars worth of books to keep in his house ! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Mr Roger Rudich as advertised

When first published, *A Gentle Madness* astounded and delighted readers about the passion and expense a collector is willing to make in pursuit of the book. Written before the emergence of the Internet but newly updated for the 21st Century reader, *A Gentle Madness* captures that last moment in time when collectors pursued their passions in dusty bookshops and street stalls, high stakes auctions, and the subterfuge worthy of a true bibliomaniac. An adventure among the afflicted, *A Gentle Madness* is vividly anecdotal and thoroughly researched. Nicholas Basbanes brings an investigative reporter's heart to illuminate collectors past and present in their pursuit of bibliomania. Now a timeless classic of collecting, no lover of books can miss *A Gentle Madness*.

.com What a delightful book about books and people who love books! As a second generation bibliophile, a possible bibliomane who had several people move out of my house a year ago because they erroneously believed that my books were taking over the household, and a devout employee of "Earth's Biggest Bookstore," I can vouch that Basbanes accurately describes the glorious role of book collectors as archivists of human knowledge, and -- in continual counterpoint -- sometimes pathologically obsessed book junkies. From *Library Journal* In Part 1 of this informative and well-written work, syndicated book columnist Basbanes explores the history of book collecting from antiquity to the 1940s. This ground has been covered before, but Basbanes retells his story well; and, as the extensive notes and bibliography show, he has done his homework. Part 2 portrays the state of collecting in the 1980s, using a series of sketches of notable figures in the field. The material here derives from extensive interviews and therefore provides information available nowhere else. For instance, Basbanes tells the moving story of Aaron Lansky, who has dedicated himself to rescuing books in Yiddish, and offers the fullest published account of Stephen Blumberg's theft of 23,600 books from 268 libraries in 45 states. Anyone interested in books will want a copy of this. ? Joseph Rosenblum, Guilford Technical Community Coll., Jamestown, N.C. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Booklist* Bibliophile Basbanes has written an exceptionally entertaining and comprehensive history of bibliomania, which turns out to be not so "gentle" an obsession after all. A tireless researcher, Basbanes relates the remarkable stories behind some of the world's most famous collections, from the legendary Alexandrian library to the libraries of Thomas Jefferson, the Folgers, and the Schomburg Collection. Basbanes also profiles an intriguing group of amateur collectors, including Carter Burden, a pioneer in the collecting of modern American writers, and Aaron Lansky, who almost single-handedly rescued Yiddish literature from landfills. The most enigmatic collector Basbanes portrays is Stephen Blumberg, whose notorious "Blumberg Collection" consisted of 23,600 rare books, all of them stolen from libraries. A surprising number of these stories involve nefarious dealings and vicious rivalries, proving that even in our digitized age, books arouse intense emotions, from worship to greed. Donna Seaman