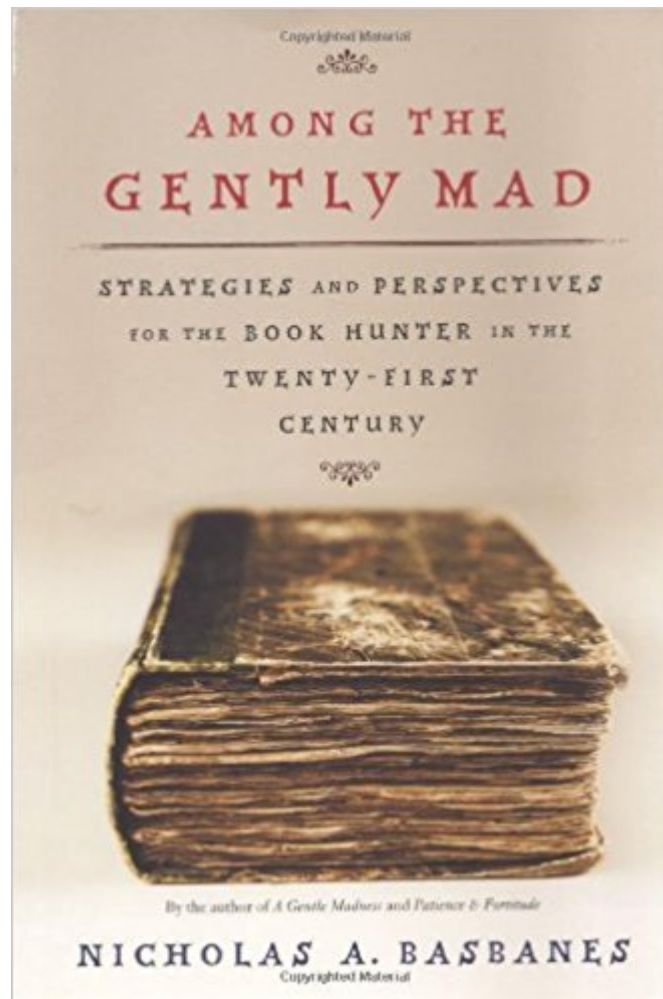


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# Among The Gently Mad: Strategies And Perspectives For The Book-Hunter In The 21st Century



## Synopsis

A field guide for the modern book collector From the author of *A Gentle Madness*-a book with more than seventy thousand copies in print that delighted bibliophiles everywhere-comes a twenty-first-century guide to book collecting that deals with both the traditional methods of acquisition and the electronic tools now available on the Internet. Sharing the superb insight he has gathered from booksellers over the years, Nicholas Basbanes offers a refresher course on the fundamentals that endure, while questioning certain practices of doubtful validity. Topics include how to determine if a book is a first edition, how to spot book club editions, the importance of dust jackets, scouting the flea markets, how to work the book fairs, and the importance of handling the goods, as well as discussing less tangible issues like spotting trends and having a focus. Then he takes a long look at the pros and cons of Internet buying, illuminating how you can use these electronic tools to your advantage and making this the book no modern collector will want to be without.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Nicholas Basbanes, who lives in North Grafton, Mass., is the author of two previous works: *A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes and the Eternal Passion for Books* (1999), a finalist for the National Book Critics Award, and *Patience & Fortitude: A Roving Chronicle of Book People, Book Places, and Book Cultures* (2001). Basbanes now adds a "Madness Redux" to his exploration of the world of books and to that species of human beings dubbed "the gently mad," the bibliophiles and

bibliomaniacs who would sell their shirts to buy nicely bound volumes. Among the Gently Mad is not for everyone. It is not for those who wonder why a person spends two weeks reading a book rather than watching a two-hour movie. If, however, you delight in frequenting yard sales, flea markets, book fairs, library sales, book stores, trade shows, antique shops, and thrift stores in search of printed treasures, then you will love Basbane's work. To be sure, serious book collecting can be frightfully expensive and often out of one's financial league, as, for example, the \$6.16 million dollars that was paid for the 1623 edition of William Shakespeare's dramatic works, commonly known as the First Folio, one that bore the prior ownership signature of the poet John Dryden. Somewhat less expensive was a first-issue copy of J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone that recently sold for \$15,000. However, one does not need to own a Gutenberg Bible (1454-55), the first work printed in Europe from movable type, or the Bay Psalm Book (1639), to be an avid book collector. Bibliophiles sometimes meet a tragic end, as related by an anecdote from chap.

Nicholas Basbanes has been a source of enjoyment for bibliophiles since publication of what is arguably the most enjoyable treatise on the book collecting culture, *A Gentle Madness*. In that book the heady heights of high-end collecting and the depraved depths of obsessive biblio-theft are expertly profiled. Equally delightful, his recent *Patience and Fortitude* has a place of honor on my 'books-on-books' shelf. While I have enjoyed many hours reading these books, which allowed me to circulate vicariously in book circles currently beyond my reach, I always wondered when Mr. Basbanes would write a book focusing on the everyman collector. With the publication of *Among the Gently Mad* my question has been answered, and the validity of the adage. "...be careful what you wish for..." has been affirmed for me. In a departure from his previous two works, the author not only provides delightful anecdotes on book culture, he has also constructed the most practical and up to date guide on the nuts and bolts of collecting available today. In the process he has laid bare nearly every trick and technique of collecting that I have picked up over the past several years. The internet has, in many ways, revolutionized book collecting. Mr. Basbanes describes in what ways, and provides helpful pointers on how to maximize the 'net's usefulness, including mentioning specific web sites of interest. This material is useful not only for the new collector, but the established collector as well. Additionally, traditional book collecting via catalogue, auction and scouting are not neglected - and testimonials of collecting technique from collectors and dealers abound. In short, if I were to begin book collecting today this is the first book I would buy, hands down.

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