



Patience & Fortitude: A Roving Chronicle of Book People, Book Places, and Book Culture

Nicholas A. Basbanes

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In 1995 Nicholas Basbanes introduced a resonant phrase to describe the obsessive passion people have had over the past twenty-five hundred years to possess books, a condition more commonly known as *bibliomania*, one he christened in his book *A Gentle Madness*. Reviewing the work in the *Washington Post*, Pulitzer Prize-winning critic Michael Dirda judged it to be a gallery of wonderful characters, "each more appealing than the last."

Now, in *Patience & Fortitude*, Basbanes continues his discursive adventures among the gently mad, expanding his focus to probe the more comprehensive concept of book culture. Visiting many key "book places" around the world, he talks with a striking variety of kindred spirits, each one a living testament to the unending relevance of these essential artifacts in our lives.

Drawing its title from the unofficial names of the marble lions that guard the New York Public Library on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, *Patience & Fortitude* explores the changing form of the book over the centuries and describes the nature of the institutions that have evolved to contain them, including academic, public, private, and national repositories.

Using the same narrative technique that made *A Gentle Madness* a national bestseller, Basbanes employs a lively balance of scholarly research with investigative journalism to document many pertinent book stories that have not been told before, and offers unprecedented depth to others that have barely scratched the surface. Picking up seamlessly where its predecessor left off, *Patience & Fortitude* profiles the experiences and thoughts of all kinds of dedicated "book people," be they librarians, readers, writers, bookmakers, booksellers, preservationists, or collectors.

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