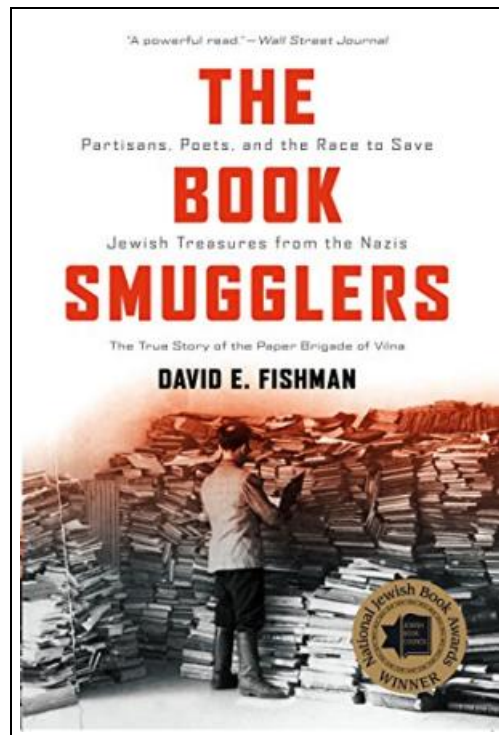


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THE BOOK SMUGGLERS: PARTISANS, POETS, AND THE RACE TO SAVE JEWISH TREASURES FROM THE NAZIS (HARDBACK)



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University Press of New England, United States, 2017. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. Winner of the National Jewish Book Award in the Holocaust category, 2017 *The Book Smugglers* is the nearly unbelievable story of ghetto residents who rescued thousands of rare books and manuscripts—first from the Nazis and then from the Soviets—by hiding them on their bodies, burying them in bunkers, and smuggling them across borders. It is a tale of heroism and resistance, of friendship and romance, and of unwavering devotion—including the readiness to risk one's life—to literature and art. And it is entirely true. Based on Jewish, German, and Soviet documents, including diaries, letters, memoirs, and the author's interviews with several of the story's participants, *The Book Smugglers* chronicles the daring activities of a group of poets turned partisans and scholars turned smugglers in Vilna, The Jerusalem of Lithuania. The rescuers were pitted against Johannes Pohl, a Nazi expert on the Jews, who had been dispatched to Vilna by the Nazi looting agency, Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, to organize the seizure of the city's great collections of Jewish books. Pohl and his Einsatzstab staff planned to ship the most valuable materials to Germany and incinerate the rest. The Germans used forty ghetto inmates as slave-laborers to sort, select, pack, and transport the materials, either to Germany or to nearby paper mills. This group, nicknamed the Paper Brigade, and informally led by poet Shmerke Kaczerginski, a garrulous, street-smart adventurer and master of deception, smuggled thousands of books and manuscripts past German guards. If caught, the men would have faced death by firing squad at Ponar, the mass-murder site outside of Vilna. To store the rescued manuscripts, poet Abraham Sutzkever helped build an underground book-bunker sixty feet beneath the Vilna ghetto. Kaczerginski smuggled...

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