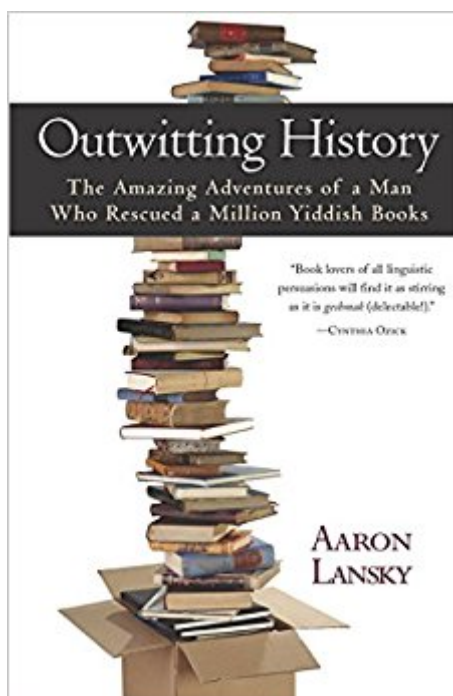


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Outwitting History: The Amazing Adventures Of A Man Who Rescued A Million Yiddish Books



Synopsis

In 1980, a twenty-three-year-old student named Aaron Lansky set out to rescue the world's abandoned Yiddish books before it was too late. Twenty-five years and one and a half million books later, he's still in the midst of a great adventure. Filled with poignant and often laugh-out-loud tales from Lansky's travels across the country as he collected books from older Jewish immigrants' books their own children had no use for. "Outwitting History" also explores brilliant Yiddish writers and enables us to see how an almost-lost culture is the bridge between the Old World and the future.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a superb book. I received it as an unexpected gift and started reading it without any expectations, but almost immediately was hooked. I am a longtime bibliophile and normally do focus on books and collecting and thought I have read about and studied everything about books and am therefore somewhat jaded, but in this fascinating story the author, the individuals, and the people as a whole captivated me enormously. To summarize, Aaron Lansky as a young student decides to help save a vanishing literature by collecting as many Yiddish books as he can. He then uses his vast enthusiasm, knowledge and energy to accomplish his most worthy goal. Scouring the country, he meets many elderly people with old books. But he mostly tells their stories which he learns in kitchens over ethnic food - every book comes with a story and some 'nosh'. These people all have had compelling, human, tragic, funny and enchanting lives. And the Yiddish literature also comes

through in his prose. He covers the general history of Yiddish language and literature in a very un-painful and fascinating way. Yiddish was regarded by intelligentsia as 'common' and so the literature was not prized the way authentic Hebrew texts were; in addition Yiddish was a product of the Diaspora and symbolic of subjugation and ancient deprivations. Thus in the later 20th century, most of these books were lightly regarded and often discarded. When Mr. Lansky began his quest these vibrant other-worldly books were in danger of being lost. Although most modern readers only know of Nobel prize winner Isaac Bashevis Singer, there were equally talented authors in all fields of literature who wrote in this lost language of a lost world.

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