

The Man Who Made Vermeers: Unvarnishing the Legend of Master Forger Han van Meegeren

Jonathan Lopez



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It's a story that made Dutch painter Han van Meegeren famous worldwide when it broke at the end of World War II: A lifetime of disappointment drove him to forge Vermeers, one of which he sold to Hermann Goering in mockery of the Nazis. And it's a story that's been believed ever since. Too bad it isn't true. Jonathan Lopez has drawn on never-before-seen documents from dozens of archives to write a revelatory new biography of the world's most famous forger. Neither unappreciated artist nor antifascist hero, Van Meegeren emerges as an ingenious, dyed-in-the-wool crook—a talented Mr. Ripley armed with a paintbrush. Lopez explores a network of illicit commerce that operated across Europe: Not only was Van Meegeren a key player in that high-stakes game in the 1920s and '30s, landing fakes with famous collectors such as Andrew Mellon, but he and his associates later cashed in on the Nazi occupation.

The Man Who Made Vermeers is a long-overdue unvarnishing of Van Meegeren's legend and a deliciously detailed story of deceit in the art world.



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