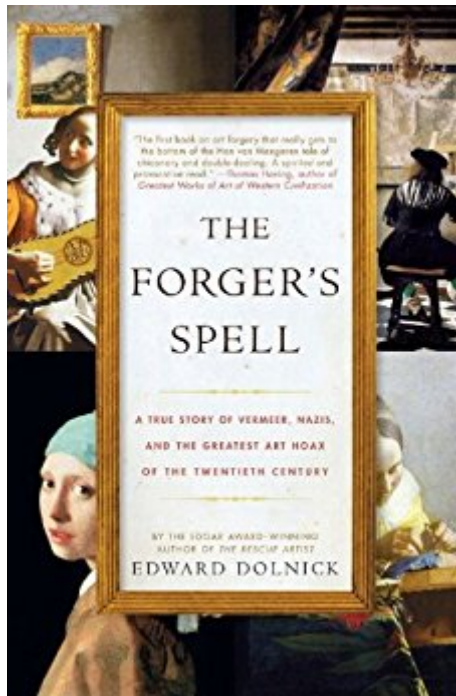


The book was found

The Forger's Spell: A True Story Of Vermeer, Nazis, And The Greatest Art Hoax Of The Twentieth Century (P.S.)



Synopsis

As riveting as a World War II thriller, *The Forger's Spell* is the true story of three men and an extraordinary deception: the revered artist Johannes Vermeer; the small-time Dutch painter who dared to impersonate him years later; and the con man's mark, Hermann Goering, the fanatical art collector and one of Nazi Germany's most reviled leaders.

Book Information

File Size: 4569 KB

Print Length: 384 pages

Publisher: HarperCollins e-books (October 13, 2009)

Publication Date: October 13, 2009

Sold by:Â HarperCollins Publishers

Language: English

ASIN: B001BAKUXA

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #213,326 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #30

inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Arts & Photography > Art > Art History > Regional > European

#57 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Arts & Photography > Art > Art History > Schools, Periods &

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Customer Reviews

Han Van Meegeren was a mediocre artist with an enormous ego. Convinced that his talents were being maliciously ignored by the Dutch artistic community, he used considerable patience and ingenuity to develop a way of forging paintings by some of the greatest artists of Holland's Golden Age, especially those of Johannes Vermeer. His activities peaked during the Great Depression and the Nazi takeover of Holland during World War II, a time period when the Dutch were especially vulnerable as they looked for reminders of a more peaceful, prosperous, past. When I first opened this book I looked at the illustrations first. Comparing the Van Meegeren "art" with the real Vermeers completely confused me. If someone like me with no art training could spot the differences between sublime works like "Girl With A Pearl Earring" and travesties like "Christ at Emmaus," why on earth

couldn't experts and cognoscenti do the same? Edward Dolnick does a good job of explaining the role preconceptions and prejudices play in evaluating a suspect painting and the way the milieu of the period affects judgement. Therefore, in the 1930s the Van Meegeren forgeries could pass muster because they displayed generally accepted views on beauty. Ten years later they were very obviously fakes because by then they looked out of date, which a true masterpiece could never do. I found Dolnick's discussions of the methods forgers use and the ways forgeries are detected the most interesting parts of this book. I disliked Van Meegeren at first, but he grew on me despite myself for the sheer brazenness of his gall and his obvious delight in fooling so many experts for so long.

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