



Stealing the Mystic Lamb: The True Story of the World's Most Coveted Masterpiece

By Noah Charney

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Jan van Eyck's *Ghent Altarpiece* is on any art historian's list of the ten most important paintings ever made. It is also the most frequently stolen artwork of all time. Since its completion in 1432, this twelve-panel oil painting has been looted in three different wars, burned, dismembered, forged, smuggled, censored, hidden, attacked by iconoclasts, hunted by the Nazis and Napoleon, used as a diplomatic tool, ransomed, rescued by Austrian double-agents, and stolen a total of thirteen times. In this fast-paced, real-life thriller, art historian Noah Charney unravels the fascinating stories of each of these thefts. Charney also explores psychological dramas that lurk within the history of art crime—and the ideological, religious, political, and social motivations that have led many men to covet this one masterpiece above all others.

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Editorial Review

Review

Kirkus, July 15, 2010

“Charney unsnarls the tangled history of Jan van Eyck's 15th-century *The Ghent Altarpiece* (aka *The Mystic Lamb*), 'the most desired and victimized object of all time.' With a novelist's sense of structure and tension, the author adds an easy familiarity with the techniques of oil painting and with the intertwining vines of art and political and religious history.... A brisk tale of true-life heroism, villainy, artistry and passion.”

Christian Science Monitor, August 30, 2010

"[A]ction-packed.... In scrupulous detail, Charney divulges the secrets of the revered painting's past, and in doing so, gives readers a history lesson on art crime, a still-prospering black market.”

Cleveland Plain Dealer, October 14, 2010

“Well-written and thorough, this book reminds us of the influence and fragility of art, our veniality and heroism, and the delights found in both the beautiful and the strange.”

Maclean's, October 14, 2010

“In Charney's hand, the story of the various heists often reads like a political thriller.”

Catholic Herald, December 13, 2010

About the Author

Noah Charney is the author of the international bestselling novel *The Art Thief* and is the founding director of The Association for Research into Crimes against Art, an international nonprofit think tank. Currently professor of art history at the American University of Rome, he lives in Italy with his wife.

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