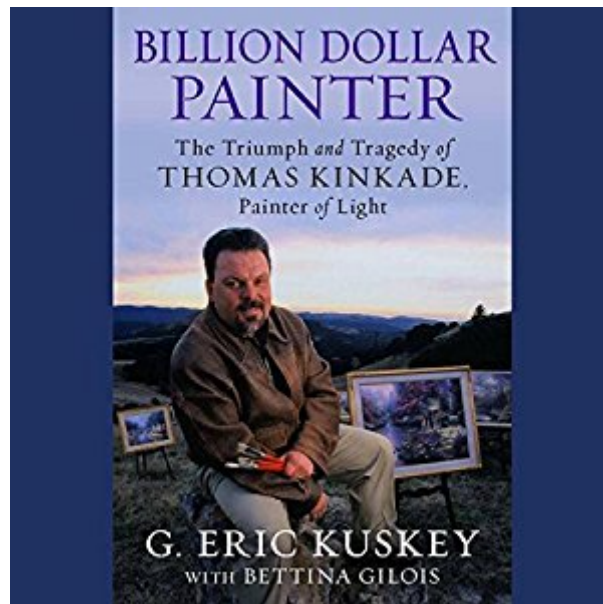


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Billion Dollar Painter: The Triumph And Tragedy Of Thomas Kinkade, Painter Of Light



Synopsis

The unbelievable true story of artist Thomas Kinkade, self-described "Painter of Light," and the dramatic rise - and fall - of his billion-dollar gallery and licensing business. He was just one man, but Thomas Kinkade ultimately made more money from his art than every other artist in the history of the world combined. His sentimental paintings of babbling brooks, rural churches surrounded by brilliant fall foliage, and idyllic countryside cottages were so popular in the 1990s that it is estimated that one out of every 20 homes in America owned one of his prints. With the help of two partners - a former vacuum-cleaner salesman and an ambitious junior accountant who fancied himself a businessman - Kinkade turned his art into a billion-dollar gallery and licensing business that traded on the New York Stock Exchange before it collapsed in 2006 amid fraud accusations. One part fascinating business story about the rise and demise of a financial empire born out of divine inspiration, one part dramatic biography, *Billion Dollar Painter* is the account of three nobodies who made it big. One was a man who, despite being a devout Christian who believed his artwork was a spiritual force that could cure the sick and comfort the poor in spirit, could not save his art empire - or himself. G. Eric Kuskey, former colleague of Thomas Kinkade and close friend until the artist's death in 2012, tells Kinkade's story for the first time, from his art's humble beginnings on a sidewalk in Carmel, California, to his five-house compound in Monte Sereno. It's a tale of addiction and grief, of losing control, and ultimately, of the price of our dreams.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I picked up this book because I knew very little about Thomas Kinkade, the man, though, like everyone else, I had seen his work everywhere from calendars to coffee mugs. I had read he claimed to be a Christian and had heard the rumors that he had committed suicide, which shocked me. Written by G. Eric Kuskey, a man who claimed to be his friend and business associate for 16 years, I thought the book might bring some insight into this apparent paradox. The author explains how he got on board the Kinkade team as the licensing agent when the business was starting to take off, and helped stamp the painter of light's images on everything he and Kinkade could imagine. The income from his work brought in millions, in addition to the sale of the actual paintings and their prints and other ventures, which altogether eventually grossed in the billions. Kuskey describes Kinkade's life well: growing up in poverty in a fatherless home and sometimes going hungry, his sincere faith, his diligent work ethic, his fun-loving spirit, and his alcoholism—the latter leading him into numerous embarrassing incidents and, in my opinion, was the real culprit that killed him. Kinkade's millions provided him with unlimited funds and the author tells us of his generosity, his multiple mansions, his collection of cars and toys, and his inability to confront his own problems, or those of his company. At one point the company had to file bankruptcy due to the failure of multiple Thomas Kinkade galleries around the country and the ensuing lawsuits.

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