



# Norman Rockwell

*Laura Claridge*

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## **Norman Rockwell** Laura Claridge

Norman Rockwell's tremendously successful, prolific career as a painter and illustrator has rendered him a twentieth-century American icon. However, the very popularity and accessibility of his idealized, nostalgic depictions of middleclass life have caused him to be considered not a serious artist but a "mere illustrator"—a disparagement only reinforced by the hundreds of memorable covers he drew for The Sunday Evening Post.

Symptomatic of critics' neglect is the fact that Rockwell has never before been the subject of a serious critical biography. Based on private family archives and interviews and publishes to coincide with a major two-year travelling retrospective of his work, this book reveals for the first time the driven workaholic who had three complicated marriages and was a distant father —so different from the loving, all-American-dad image widely held to this day. Critically acclaimed author Laura Claridge also breaks new ground with her reappraisal of Rockwell's art, arguing that despite his popular sentimental style, his artistry was masterful, complex, and far more manipulative than people realize.

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