

Titanic Thompson: The Man Who Bet on Everything

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Capturing the spirit of a freewheeling era, this rollicking biography brings to life the gambler-hero who inspired *Guys and Dolls*.

Born in a log cabin in the Ozarks, Alvin "Titanic" Thompson (1892-1974) traveled with his golf clubs, a .45 revolver, and a suitcase full of cash. He won and lost millions playing cards, dice, golf, pool, and dangerous games of his own invention. He killed five men and married five women, each one a teenager on her wedding day. He ruled New York's underground craps games in the 1920s and was Damon Runyon's model for slick-talking Sky Masterson. Dominating the links in the pre-PGA Tour years, Thompson may have been the greatest golfer of his time, teeing up with Ben Hogan, Sam Snead, Lee Trevino, and Ray Floyd. He also traded card tricks with Houdini, conned Al Capone, lost a million to Minnesota Fats and then teamed up with Fats and won it all back. A terrific read for anyone who has ever laid a bet, *Titanic Thompson* recaptures the colorful times of a singular figure: America's original road gambler. 20 black-and-white illustrations

A former senior editor at *Sports Illustrated*, Kevin Cook is the author of *Titanic Thompson*, *Tommy's Honor*, *Kitty Genovese* and *The Dad Report*. He lives in New York City. "Here's a wonderful contradiction: a delightful, breezy account of the most outrageous grifter who ever worked the dark side streets of the American dream. If there'd been any money in the pro game back then, he might have been the most talented golfer of a generation that included Nelson and Hogan. He became, instead, the premiere con man of the twentieth century who never held public office. If this was fiction, you wouldn't believe a word of it. You still might not believe it, but it's all true, and it's all here."

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Mark Frost, author of *The Greatest Game Ever Played* and *The Match*

"Kevin Cook's biography vividly illuminates the life of Titanic Thompson, perhaps the craftiest golfer and poker player-and certainly the most dangerous hustler-of his, or just about any, generation."

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James McManus, bestselling author of *Positively Fifth Street* and *Cowboys Full*

"Titanic was a legend, one of the toughest, smartest gamblers of all time. Kevin Cook's terrific book brings him back to life."

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Doyle Brunson, two-time winner of the World Series of Poker, member of the Poker Hall of Fame

"Even money you're going to read this book in a night, maybe two. Five to one you're going

to practice shuffling cards or throwing quarters against a wall or chipping golf balls into a shot glass when you're finished. Ten to one you're going to claim you can throw a peanut over a three-story building. Hundred to one you're going to get married a bunch of times, kill a few people, make and lose a fortune and...oh, read the book and find out. You won't be disappointed."

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Leigh Montville, author of *The Mysterious Montague*

Other Books

The Catering Industry Employee.

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