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The Genius Of Leonardo Da Vinci



Synopsis

Artist, engineer, pacifist, inventor: Leonardo da Vinci was a genius of a very particular kind. This introduction to his life and work is vividly retold through the eyes of his young apprentice, Giacomo, making it easy for young readers to relate to his story.

Book Information

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Age Range: 7 - 10 years

Grade Level: 2 - 7

Customer Reviews

This engaging picture-book biography of Leonardo da Vinci is told from the perspective of his 10-year-old assistant, Giacomo. He looks on in wonder as Leonardo paints the Mona Lisa, designs a flying machine--and, less impressively, plays practical jokes on him. The basics of Leonardo's life are all here, including his habit of buying and releasing caged birds and his reluctant move, late in life, to the French court. But young readers will learn most about da Vinci's ideas--on painting, science, and the nature of time. Cleverly interleaved with short quotations from the master's own writings, *The Genius of Leonardo* leaves a vivid impression of what it must have been like for a child to be an apprentice to such a genius. A nice touch is that Leonardo doesn't know everything: Giacomo's last question, about the moon, is beyond him, and Leonardo's assistant is left to speculate about knowledge and inventions yet to come. As in the spectacular *A Boy Named Giotto*, Bimba Landmann's gorgeous paintings are melancholy and oddly--but strangely aptly--medieval looking. (Ages 9 and older) --Richard Farr --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Intelligent as its text may be, this apprentice's-eye view of Leonardo da Vinci is overshadowed by the illustrations. The picture-book biography offers a glimpse of the master's later years, including his paintings of the Mona Lisa and The Last Supper. Visconti incorporates comments from Leonardo's notebooks as he imagines exchanges between the great artist and an inquisitive but not always dependable young servant. Landmann, whose artwork was ideally matched to *A Boy Named Giotto*, here seems stylistically at odds with her subject. Her eerily elongated figures, with their mask-like Byzantine faces slanting down upon their necks, take on perpetually mournful postures. The greenish skin tones, the arid landscapes and the forceful stillness of the compositions contribute to a generally morbid air that the illustrator's splashes of silver ink do little to dispel. Landmann's renderings of Leonardo's sketches and of his Mona Lisa are swift gestures, a shorthand that implies the audience's foreknowledge. Readers who want to learn the details of the Italian Renaissance leader's life, scientific explorations and artwork would do better with Diane Stanley's *Leonardo da Vinci*. Ages 7-up. (Sept.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

OUTSTANDING BOOK FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS, HAS AR VALUE FOR SCHOOL TESTS

Wonderful story biography of Leonardo, with illustrations by Bimba Landmann that grab your eyes and make the story more intense. This book presents a likeable, personable Leonardo that your child will connect with. Vocabulary builders: surpassed, cosmos, portraits, furious, genius, mysterious, eavesdrop, illuminates, deprived, center of gravity, ideal, calculate, barbaric, equestrian, fresco, alter, technique. Great for any age.

When I first saw the cover and title for this book, I was pretty sure I wasn't going to like it. The illustrations did not remind me of Leonardo Da Vinci. I was ready to be disappointed. Instead, I was surprised when I found myself enjoying the book. I like the portrayal of Leonardo and his apprentice. The genius of the man is portrayed while still keeping him imperfect. Leonardo doesn't have answers for all of life's questions. Still, the book reminded me how fascinating math and science can be while reminding me why the Renaissance is such a fascinating time in history. All around, this is a wonderful book.

The illustrations by Bimba Landmann are amazing, making the book a work of art. The text is meaty, telling us a lot about Leonardo and his ideas (with direct quotes). Kids will relate to the

mischievous character of Giacomo, Leonardo's 10-year-old assistant, who frequently annoys his famous boss. I would recommend this book for anyone age 6 to adult!

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