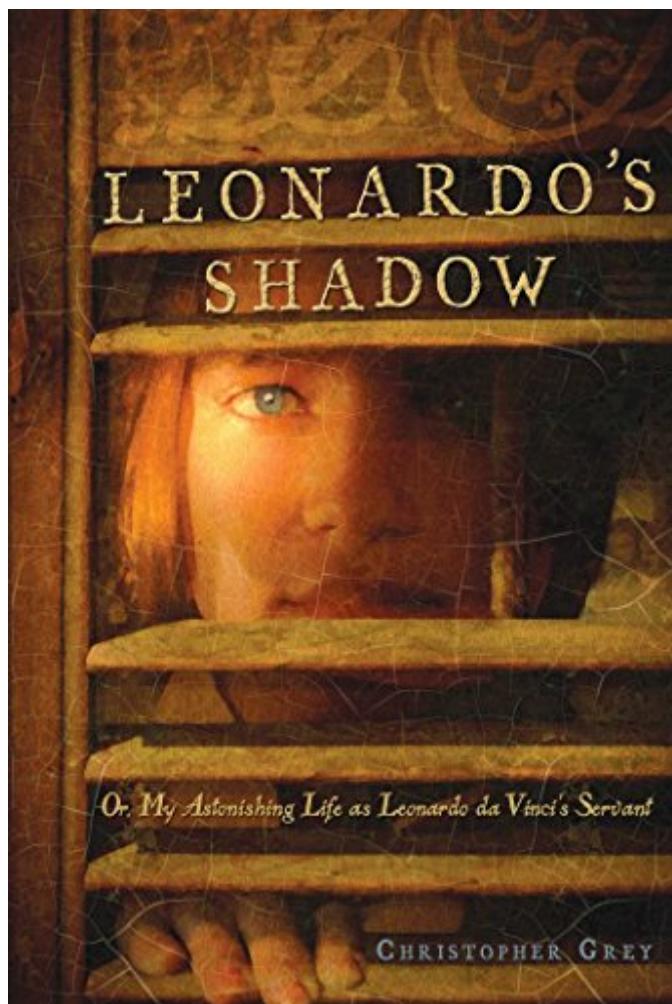


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Leonardo's Shadow: Or, My Astonishing Life As Leonardo Da Vinci's Serv



Synopsis

Milan, 1497. The height of the Renaissance. And for Giacomo, servant of the famous painter Leonardo da Vinci, it's the most difficult time of all. His Master has been working on the Last Supper, his greatest painting ever, for nearly two years. But has he finished it? He's barely started! The all-powerful Duke of Milan is demanding that it be completed by the time the Pope visits at Easter. And Giacomo knows that if Leonardo doesn't pick up his pace, the Duke may invite a young genius -- Michelangelo -- to finish the painting instead. Which means that Leonardo won't be paid, which means that Milan's shopkeepers (to whom he owes massive amounts) will take drastic measures against him. It's all down to Giacomo, and whether he can come up with a brilliant solution. And if he does, will his Master go for it? After all, Leonardo still doesn't seem to trust him. He refuses to teach Giacomo how to paint; he won't help him find his parents; nor will he discuss the significance of the medallion, ring, and cross that Giacomo was carrying when Leonardo found him. But with the secret arrival of a powerful stranger, Giacomo is about to discover much more than the answers he has been looking for. And he will also receive an invitation to help arrange a meeting that could change his life. . . and the future course of history. With more twists and turns than a spiral staircase, this thriller is as unique as its two heroes -- the most celebrated artist who ever lived, and a young man without a past, who will stop at nothing to find the truth about his life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Leaving a one star review is like tipping the waitstaff less than 15%--something I have only ever done in the worst of circumstances, which is to say almost never. Unfortunately, this book has earned it. I'll try to be succinct in my summary of the reasons why:1) As the "About the Author" section states, this is Christopher Grey's first novel--a fact which is painfully obvious, and explains many of the shortcomings, though I don't know why his editors didn't exert more force in improving the writing. For example, the use of present tense and many short, choppy sentences, while intended to create a sense of suspense and action, only serve to give the story an awkward, halting feel. Also, the random and needless direct addresses to the reader are poorly rendered to say the least, and rather than bringing the reader into the story, feel clunky and forced. One can't simply jump into second-person every hundred pages for a sentence. It's just annoying and out of place.2) da Vinci, who is in fact known for being exceptionally kind-hearted, likeable, and talented in the social arts, is portrayed as a self-important ass. He just comes across as a horribly unpleasant person. Not only does it contradict every historical source, but it makes for an unpleasant read, and a poor impression for young people learning about such an incredible human. Besides, who wants to read a 400-page novel about someone who is a total jerk?3) The plot (a generous term in this case) doesn't get started for until nearly 100 pages in.4) The one-liners of what Giacomo is thinking but not saying are not only annoying, but potentially quite confusing for young readers.5) The repeated attempts at puns are exhaustingly bad.

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