

LEONARDO DA VINCI

by EMILY HAHN

"Now he is making a great bird so he can fly through the air!"

The people of Florence roared with laughter over the news. Imagine a man trying to build a flying machine! The same poor fellow had tried to invent a diving suit, they said, and a ship that would sail under water. Surely this was the craziest man in all Florence!

That was almost 500 years ago, and the man was Leonardo da Vinci whom we know as one of the most creative minds in all history. True, he left very little evidence of his genius—a few paintings, a few pieces of sculpture, plans for a great statue that was never finished, and a number of notebooks filled with sketches and scribbles.

Yet one of those paintings, "The Last Supper," attracts more visitors than almost any work of art in the world. Another, "Mona Lisa," has kept art critics talking for 450 years.

And the notebooks of Leonardo have told us how he explored one subject after another—the flight of birds, the nature of sound, the travel of light—so that he might understand the way things work and by what principles they are governed.

As you read Emily Hahn's *Leonardo da Vinci*, you realize it was this magnificent curiosity that created the adventure of Leonardo's life—an adventure that makes exciting reading even today.

Illustrated by MIMI KORACH

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