

# Da Vinci in Love

by  
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*A True Story.*

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# The Poem

*They wouldn't return your salute, don't bother.  
Don't you see the heads are thrust in collars?  
It is freezing cold!  
Even if you do extend your hand in affection,  
Reluctantly they would stretch out theirs from cozy pockets.  
For it is winter.  
So why bother? <sup>1</sup>*

“That was it?” she asks him with a disappointed face.

“Well, yeah, don't you like it?”

“No, no, sure, absolutely,” Silvia responds, “I mean, doesn't a poem suppose to rhyme or something?”

This slaps Leonardo in the face, very hard. He cannot believe his ears. He has stopped breathing. It is as if the time has stopped. He is no longer in his body; he is high in the sky, looking down on the whole situation, and trying—very hard—to make some sense out of it. Here he is, the greatest poet alive—at least this is what he thinks of himself—standing right before her, baring his soul, revealing the most profound truth about life itself, in most delicate form imaginable, and there she is, just a woman—granted not bad-looking—trying to fit the masterpiece that is generously presented to her into jingles! Looking for rhymes? F\*\*\*ing rhymes?!!!

The time resumes again. Leonardo let all the breath out at once, takes a deep breath, and says with grinding teeth: “The meaning, the core, the emotions are—”

“What the fox say, Wa-pa-pa-pa-pa-pow! Wa-pa-pa-pa-pa-pow!” Silvia's cell rings. ‘What Does The Fox Say?’ is the ring tone.

“Where are you now?” she answers the phone. “I am next to this

giant red car. Pete is talking to me.”

“Leo,” Leonardo jumps in.

“What?”

“My name is Leo.”

“Yeah,” she responds with a dismissive tone, and turns her face away.

“Can you see me now? I am waving my hand,” she says on the phone.

“What the fox say? Hatee-hatee-hatee-ho! Hatee-hatee-hatee-ho!” The song is heard from away, and it is getting louder and louder. Michele in his duchy sports car is approaching. The song is played from the even douchier loud speakers of his car.

“Where is my sugar? Theeeere she is,” Michele says the cheesy, played-out line.

What an untalented, illiterate, fake piece of sh\*\*, Leonardo thinks. “Cannot even make up his own lines. I bet he can’t even say a full sentence.” His shirt has most of the buttons unbuttoned. Hairy bastard, Leonardo thinks. He has a piece of fabric artlessly wrapped around his neck, might have meant to be an ascot. A giant ‘Giorgio Armani’ sticker is still on the side of his sunglasses. I bet it has fallen off multiple times, but he has used superglue to stick it back there, Leonardo thinks.

“Why are you so late? I am f\*\*\*ing bored,” Silvia asks while jumping on the front seat. Her big breasts bounce up and down. Is she wearing a bra? Leonardo wonders.

“Sorry babe. Traffic,” Michele responds dismissively. He is not even trying to sound genuine. His hand is on her knees, perhaps even up her short skirt; not quite clear from where Leonardo is watching.

“On a Tuesday?” she asks rhetorically. She had gotten very close to his face, staring right into his eyes to make him feel at least a bit guilty.

“Give me some sugar,” is all he responds, stealing a kiss from her. She rushes to her purse to reapply the thick red lipstick on her

lips.

Michele, out of words, steps on the gas pedal, and drives away quickly to wrap up the conversation part of their date. The car is gone, but the exhaust's thick smoke has remained, and spreads all over Leonardo. He coughs as he watches the car driving away, with Silvia in it.

His backpack falls off, and a couple of his books fall out on the ground of the parking lot. He takes a long look at them; they look a mile away from his reach. He reluctantly leans forward to pick them up. His head feels heavy. He grabs the backpack, but does not get up. The gravity invites him to fall, and he finds no reason to resist.

He sits down on the ground in the middle of the parking lot, staring at the direction that Silvia left with Michele. He hugs his knees, rest the side of his face on them, sighs, and says, "Why bother?"

The same pose in the church...

# True Love

Leonardo, sitting on the church floor, is hugging his knees. The side of his face is resting on them.

He raises his head, looks up, and finds a Jesus statue on a cross. He keeps watching it for a while. Jesus's head is way down, like he is about to give his life for the people's sin. That is the most poetic moment of Jesus's life, Leonardo thinks. Leonardo looks back, and finds the church benches all empty; no people, no audience. He turns his head to look back at the Jesus statue, lonely and uncelebrated. Leonardo sees himself on the cross. We are so alike, he thinks. I get Him, He, the ultimate poet, must get me too.

Hopeless from everything else, Leonardo prays, for the first time in his life.

“Lord, you made me the great artist I am now! And you witness that I did nothing but celebrating your glory through art. My art is, however, unappreciated, so am I. I am not shallow like them to pray for fame, as true art will never be popular with the masses. But... but I wish there was at least some of your sheep who understood my art, and me through it, even a few would suffice, may be at least one. Lord, give me that one.”

“Sure, I'll give it to you, you said one, right?”

Leonardo is shocked. His unbelieving eyes stare at the Jesus statue. Jesus's head seems to be up now, looking directly at Leonardo.

“Over here Son!” A 50ish-year-old monk with a round, cute belly is responding. “Ha ha, just messing with you.” Leonardo, however, doesn't seem to appreciate his humor.

The monk continues: “It always boils down to one damn person, doesn't it? Oh, sorry, did I say damn? I retract.”

“What is your name Son?”

“Leonardo.”

“Leonardo, you remind me very much of Giuseppe. You know what happened to him, right?” The monk impatiently waits for Leonardo to say no.

“No. I don’t think I have met Giuseppe.”

The monk, quite satisfied, sits with an open posture on the stairs in front of Leo, between him and the Jesus statue.

“Giuseppe was a fine young man, like yourself.” The monk starts delivering his well-rehearsed lines.

He was not exceptionally handsome, tall, or rich, but he was fine. The fine man fell in love with a gorgeous, beautiful girl, as we all do, named Fiona. Fiona, however, was not an easy girl. Many were after her, and she knew damn well how precious she was. Yet, she saw something in Giuseppe, something special, something that made him distinct from the others, so she led him on. Days, weeks, and months passed by, and Giuseppe wouldn’t stop telling her of his love for her and how pure and true it is and he doesn’t want anything in this world but her.

One day Fiona said: “Alright, let’s see how true your love is. I will be yours if you could stand in front of our mansion for 100 days and nights. I will see you from my bedroom window, and I will send you a goodnight kiss from up there every night. In the morning of the 100th day, if you are still there, I will know for sure your love is true, and I will be yours, for all days to come.

“What did Giuseppe say?” Leonardo asks.

“He said yes, at once,” the monk responds.

He didn’t even think for a second. All he cared about was to prove his love to Fiona, and he didn’t care how big the challenges are that were placed before him, for he was truly in love. He went to the back of her father’s mansion, stood beside the wall, and stared up at Fiona’s window. The sun was scorching, but he didn’t mind; he just passionately stayed at the window, all day long. The night came,

Fiona was back home, and Giuseppe watched her through the window. Fiona changed her clothes, and danced to a cheerful music, as Giuseppe was joyfully watching through her window. Before going to sleep, Fiona came to the window to check if Giuseppe was still there, and there he was. Fiona smiled, blew a kiss down to him, turned the light off, and went to her queen-size bed, alone. Giuseppe leaned back to the wall as he was standing, and dreamed of Fiona.

Tomorrow morning, Fiona, well rested, got off the bed, looked outside, and found Giuseppe still standing there, eagerly looking through the window. The days passed by, one after another, and Giuseppe stood by her window through wind, rain, snow, cold, and hail; every single night impatiently waiting for Fiona to appear in front of the window; Fiona before going to bed would check if Giuseppe is still there, and would blow him a goodnight kiss; until Day 99.

It was a lovely day, not too cold and not too hot. The sky was clear and blue, inspiring hope. Throughout the day, a refreshing breeze blew through his hair, kissed him on his tired forehead, and reminded him how beautiful life is. A big, genuine smile had surfaced on his face. The joy was coming from somewhere deep within him. The night came, and Fiona came to the window, and saw Giuseppe still standing outside but with a big smile on his face. He must be excited about tomorrow, the 100th day, she thought. She blew him a goodnight kiss, turned off the light, and lay in bed thinking how to greet Giuseppe tomorrow morning, on the last Day. Giuseppe, the big smile still on his face, turned away from Fiona's window, and went back home.

“What?!” Leonardo exclaimed, shocked to his very core.

“True story.”

“Why?! There was only one night left. Why did he give up?”

“How would I know?”

“What?! Then what the... If... Then why are you even telling me the story?! This makes no sense, no sense at all.”

“Not a fan of subtle endings, huh? Alright, then I have the perfect story for you.”

“No, no no. No more stories from you, please! Can I just be alone?”

“Alone, like the great Zhong Fu?”

“Who is Kung Fu?”

“Zhong Fu, only the wisest monk in the whole of China.”

“Oh no,” Leonardo sighs.

“Listen up. It’s a true story. Krishna, a young Maharaja Kumar in India fell in love with Anushka...”



# From India with Love

Krishna, a young Maharaja Kumar in India fell in love with Anushka, a beautiful Daandia dancer he met during Dussehra festivals. He couldn't stop thinking about her, day or night. He was obsessed with her. He would dress up as farmers so people don't recognize him, and would sneak into parties just to get a chance to watch her dancing. This goes on and on for weeks until he finally gathers the will to reveal his love to her. That evening, he took a bath in the holy river, burnt the finest incense to perfume himself, put his fine royal clothes on, rehearsed his lines, and went outside the town where Anushka's folk had camped. It was already dark when he reached their tents. He didn't know which tent is hers though. He stood by aside in the dark, watching the tents for a while. Finally, he recognized her coming out of the largest tent. Krishna, half excited half terrified, approached her. He couldn't imagine living if she rejects him. He was near the Anushka's tent when he feels someone's hand tapping on his shoulder.

“Can I help you?”

Krishna turned, and saw a giant, scary guy with a big imperial mustache covering half his face.

“Yes. I mean no, thank you. I am meeting a friend here, there, in that tent.”

“That is my tent. Who is your friend?” The giant guy didn't sound friendly. Krishna swallowed his spit, and said: “Not... Not a friend exactly. She is a dancer, Anushka is her name.”

“What do you want from my daughter?” The giant guy said angrily as he got closer to Krishna. His mouth was half-open, and his teeth were shining out. They looked sharp and pointy. Krishna felt that Anushka's giant father might devour him any second. He

wanted to swallow his spit, but his mouth was as dry as the Thar desert.

“Ma... Ma... Marriage, intention marriage, if your permission to.”

“Wait a minute, I think I know you. Aren’t you the son of Maharaja Arjun?” Anushka’s father took a friendlier tone.

“Yees, yes I am.” Krishna felt a bit safer, and continued more confidently. “And I mean nothing but respect for you or your daughter. I am truly in love with her, and I want to marry her.”

“Young man. I am afraid we are from Shaivism sect.”

“Good, Great!”

“Well, are you?”

“Me? No. My parents, Maharaja and Maharana,” Krishna said with pride, “are from Shaktism.”

“Well, there is your answer, young prince. This is the line that even royalty can’t cross,” Anushka’s father said, and left Krishna.

“But... But I am in love.”

“Too bad,” Anushka’s father replied without turning around. There was no sympathy in his voice. He reached his tent, and met Anushka at the entrance. Anushka looked back, and noticed sad Krishna standing there, dazed and confused. This was the first time that Anushka saw Krishna. She smiled. Her father held her hand, and forcefully turned her towards the tent. She obliged. She put one step inside the tent, but then paused a bit. Her father insisted with a gentle push on her back. She turned her face back, and took a last look at Krishna. Krishna’s eyes were full of tears. She disappeared into the tent, and he fell to his knees; his forehead hit the ground, and he started crying his eyes out. Frogs from the nearby lake, and his cry were the only audible voices in that darkest night.

“What did he do?” Leonardo asks the monk.

“What could he do? Religion was in the way. With the right power one could bend the laws of physics created by God, but no one, no one can mess with the laws of religions instated by men.”

“So he just gave up?!”

“Well, he tried, and God knows he tried hard. He cried for a week, nothing, fasted for a month, nothing, took refuge in a temple for a year, nothing. He got weak, skinny, and bearded, yet he was still in love as much as he was the first time he saw Anushka. Nothing could drive her love out of Krishna’s heart, for he was truly in love. His parents, worried that they might lose their only son, desperately turned to the eldest Hindu monk in their kingdom.”

“Was it Kung Fu?” Leonardo asks impatiently.

“No,” the monk chuckles at Leonardo’s naiveté, “and it is Zhong Fu, Zh, Zh. This monk was legit, but he was no Zhong Fu. Zhong Fu was the real sh\*\*”; did I say sh\*\*? Sorry, I retract. The Hindu monk told them about him though.

‘Go East, young man.’ the Hindu monk said, ‘where the wisdom lies.’

He told them that Zhong Fu is the greatest Buddhist monk since the Buddha himself, nobody has seen him in the past 200 years, and the legend says that he is living on top of the tallest pillar in the magical Zhangjiajie mountains in China.

“If anyone knows how to save your son, that would be Zhong Fu, the legendary monk,” the Hindu monk told them.

Desperate to have their son saved, they dispatched him to China, to look for Zhong Fu. Krishna climbed over the Himalaya mountains in Tibet, passed through the notorious Tibet desert, which he barely pulled through, until he reached the magical standing pillars in Zhangjiajie. He found the tallest one, stood by it, and realized that he cannot even see where the top ends. It was as if the pillar reaches over the clouds, directly to the skies. As frightening climbing the pillar was, Krishna was passionate to find his answers, and no fear could have stopped him.

He started climbing it with his bare hands. A snake bit him, an eagle attacked him, and he was about to fall off three times, but he kept going since he had no fear of death; life meant nothing to him

without Anushka. As miraculous as it was, he eventually managed to reach the top of the tallest pillar, alive. He was exhausted, and so he passed out right there at the edge of the pillar.

He woke up feeling that something is poking him. He opened his eyes, and found Zhong Fu, the legendary monk, right above him, blocking the sun. Zhong Fu looked like a thousand years old: a big hunchback, all hairs white, and eyebrows so bushy that they covered the eyes like curtains. His beard was so long that it was almost touching the ground.

“You are late!” Zhong Fu said.

“You were expecting me?!” Krishna is stunned.

“Ask me your question, in your own words.”

Krishna sat up, and got into Seiza position to show respect.

“Anushka is my impossible love, and yet I cannot get her out of my heart. I feel like she and I are the only people in this world, and if she is not with me, I will be all alone.”

“I actually know what you mean. I am myself pretty lonely up here. Have you tried masturbation?”

“What?!!!” Krishna was all shocked and shaken.

“What?!!!” Leonardo is all shocked and shaken. “What is wrong with you?! What the hell are you talking about? Who do you think you are talking to? I am an artist. I plow my heart day and night. I bare my soul to figure the ultimate truth. I am an artist. I form cultures, I recreate human, I... I...”

“Eye, eye, ear, nose; you are all from the same face to me. Sorry, Okay?” the monk tries to calm him down. “People don’t come here, unless they are dying or in love. You are so young, I thought you are having woman issues. Same recipe always works for them all—well, almost always. Sorry, alright? You are different, I get it now. I didn’t know you are an... artist you said? Really?”

Krishna nods. He is still breathing angrily, but his rage seems to be settling.

The monk genuinely feels bad about what happened, and wants

to make it up to him. He continues: “Unfortunately, I don’t have an artist story to tell—”

“Good.”

“—well, not yet I don’t.”

“Do you like... build statues or something?”

“I am a poet, and a painter.” Leonardo’s voice is a bit hoarse after all that yelling.

“Poems are not quite useful around here; we already have a thick book to read, if you know what I mean,” the monk chuckles, “but paintings, huh?” The monk is stroking his chin. He looks back at the empty wall behind him, and says: “This wall is indeed a bit naked, and your art can take care of it. Let me cut you a deal. You offer a good painting of Santa Maria, we put it up there, and tonight I will shoot up an awesome, top-notch, super prayer for you to get you exactly what you want.” The monk pauses. “What was that again?”

“Ha, yeah, like your prayer is going to make a difference?”

Leonardo says with a chuckle.

“Of course!” the monk frowns. “My prayers are always accepted, 100% guaranteed. I see holy spirit every night, in my dreams. People call me super monk around here.”

“You?!”

“Yes. Me!” the monk is a bit offended.

“Like a genie?!” Leonardo asks mockingly.

“Nooo! Like a monk. We are in the church. Now, quit nagging like a baby, and tell me what was it that you wanted?”

Leonardo doesn’t quite believe the monk, but he likes the idea of painting Santa Maria; there is something calming in painting that attracts him. Besides, he is desperate and hopeless, so he might as well just play along.

“Okay, why not?” Leonardo responds with a reluctant tone. “My art would be appreciated, by at least one of the God’s fine people.”

“Appreciated, one, fine, you got it. Can you finish the painting by next Sunday?”

You will get your painting, Leonardo thinks; there was no need for so much rambling, and bullsh\*\*ing about prayers.

“I can finish it tonight,” he says confidently.

“Tonight?! Wow, you must be very good.”

“Everything is in my head already. Pouring it on a canvas wouldn’t take long.”

“Alright then. That is our covenant. Hmm, no, that is too biblical; let call it a deal. You bring the Santa Maria’s painting tomorrow, and I guarantee you will find your wish granted by then.”

The monk is leaving. After a few steps, he stops, pauses for a beat, turns, and says: “Make her smile. It would be a good vibe for the church.”

# The Painting

It is night, and Leonardo is about to do his first painting for the church, of Santa Maria, the virgin mother, the girl who was never touched. He picks up the brush, and doesn't hesitate even a bit to start painting. He knows exactly what to draw.

He starts with the eyes. The eyes are full of energy, as if they are emitting the light instead of receiving it. They look directly at you as if she is alive, and communicates with you through the painting. The eyes are widened as if she is smiling and happy, but there are also little drops of tears accumulated in the corner of the left eye. The wet eyes create a mirror effect, and you could see some reflections on them; the reflections are vague though, and each time you look at them you read them differently. It is as if the eyes are speaking with you, telling you a new story each time you look at them; showing you what you should see or what you want to see. The pupil is as dark as night with a tiny image of a man reflecting from them. It is as if you are looking down into an endless well, looking for answers, but the only thing you see down there is your own reflection in the pure water at the bottom of the well.

That was the eyes. Then, he adds ears, nose, lips and stuff, and signs Leonardo Da Vinci at the bottom.

Leonardo takes a step back to see his painting from a distance. Could a portrait be more perfect, Leonardo thinks; could art be more divine? His eyes are tired, but he can't take them off the painting. He sits on his wobbly, wooden chair, slowly pulls his knees to his chest, hugs them, rest the side of his face on them, and stares at his painting. Minutes pass by, and he doesn't make a move. He just stares at the painting, as if he is trying to find himself in her, and her eyes. An hour passes by, and he is still as stone, as if he is asleep or

dead. His eyes are open though, and keep staring at his masterpiece.

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Leonardo slowly opens his eyes. He has the biggest smile on his face. He is as happy as a child. It is as if he has just been resurrected from the dead, coming back to earth from Heaven. His eyes are seeing the ceiling. He doesn't want to move. He wants to freeze the moment as long as possible. Gradually, he realizes he is lying in bed. He remembers himself sitting on the chair though. Weird!

Was it just a dream? He wonders.

"The painting!" Leonardo says while worryingly jumping out of the bed. He looks at the easel, but there is no painting there.

"Damn it, Damn it, Damn it," Leonardo cries while holding his head between his hands. He notices a canvas lying on the floor on its front. He wishfully reaches for the canvas, turns it over, and yes, it is her, with the same merciful eyes staring at Leonardo. Leonardo hugs the canvas tight, and says: "I knew you were not just a dream. I knew it."

He cannot wait to unveil her to the world.

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"Congratulations! This is the greatest piece of art imaginable," Leonardo is having a shower-conversation with himself.

"Master Da Vinci, what is the key to your success?"

"If the artist is honest and truthful, and speaks from deep in his heart, then the art will also be pure and well-received by hearts."

"That was amazingly poetic. Are you also a poet?"

"As a matter of fact, I am. Painting and poetry are just different mediums that art flows through them. A true, free-spirited artist is never confined within a particular medium."

"Where did you get the inspiration?"

"From sky, spring, flowers, and you."

"Oh, that is such an honor, thank you."

"Ohhh you're welcome."

"Oooh thank you."



“Ohhh you’re welcome.”

“Oooh”

“Ohhh”

“Oooh”

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Leonardo has a smug smile on his face. He is watching himself in the mirror. There is a look of confidence in his eyes. A towel is wrapped around his waist. As his eyes are still on himself, he pours some hair products on his palm, and combs it through his hair. After playing with his hair for a while, he wears perfume from an expensive-looking bottle. His eyes are still on himself in the mirror. “Watch out world, here comes Leo, and his art,” Leonardo says to the mirror.

Leonardo has put his shoes on. The painting under his arm, he is ready to exit his home when he notices a note on the door that says, “Papa, Watch, Before Noon”. He is not thrilled by seeing the note. He goes back, and picks up an old-looking pocket watch from the table, puts it in his pocket, and leaves his apartment to reveal his masterpiece to the world.

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