

3 **ALL UNITS** Complete the text by writing one word only in each gap. If no word is needed, write (-).

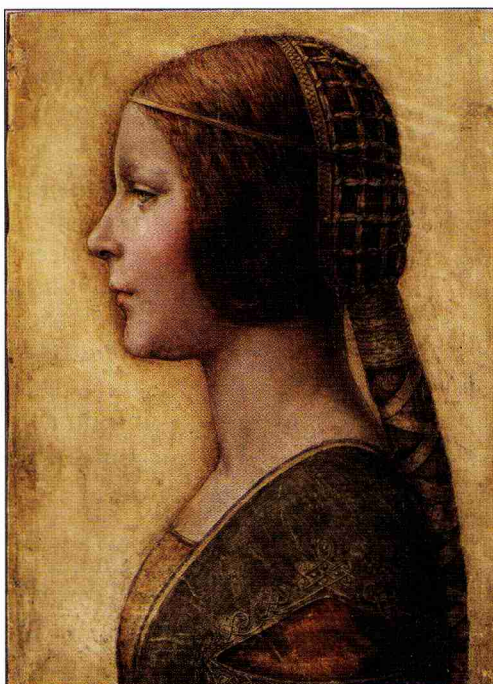
The da Vinci Mystery

Is this picture the work of an unknown artist or (1) painting by Leonardo da Vinci?

A TEAM OF ART HISTORIANS (2) been examining the picture at a laboratory in Paris. Tests have revealed a fingerprint near the top (3) the painting which is remarkably similar to (4) found on a da Vinci work in the Vatican. If the team (5) correct, the painting could be worth many millions of dollars.

The (6) was previously believed to be an early nineteenth-century work by an unknown German artist. (7) was sold at Christie's in New York in 1988 for \$19,000. In 2007 (8) was sold again for a similar sum to Canadian-born collector, Peter Silverman. Mr Silverman knew there was (9) special about the painting. (10) wasn't convinced (11) was a nineteenth-century work and so, last year, (12) discussed (13) painting with Dr Nicholas Turner of the British Museum. As a result of these discussions, Mr Silverman decided to begin a thorough investigation (14) the picture.

Professor Martin Kemp of Oxford University, an expert on da (15) work, believes the picture may be a portrait (16) Bianca Sforza, daughter of the Duke of Milan. The (17) daughter was only a teenager at the time, and the picture clearly shows a teenage girl. The costume and hairstyle (18) those popular with the nobility (19) late fifteenth-century Milan. Carbon dating analysis (20) confirmed this date. Further scientific evidence (21) been provided by infra-red photography. This indicates that the picture was painted by a left-handed artist. Leonardo da Vinci, as is well known, was left-handed.



Perhaps the most convincing (22) of evidence is the fingerprint found on the painting. (23) is from the top of the middle or index finger. The matching fingerprint is on da (24) painting of Jerome in the Vatican collection. This is undisputedly (25) work by da Vinci and was painted at a time when we believe he worked by (26) without assistants. There is therefore a strong probability that this is Leonardo's own fingerprint.

If it is proved that this is a painting by Leonardo then (27) can only speculate as to its potential value on the open market. We all know that (28) works by da Vinci are incredibly rare and, as (29) is the world's most famous old master, any work of (30) which does come up for sale is likely to reach a phenomenal sum.