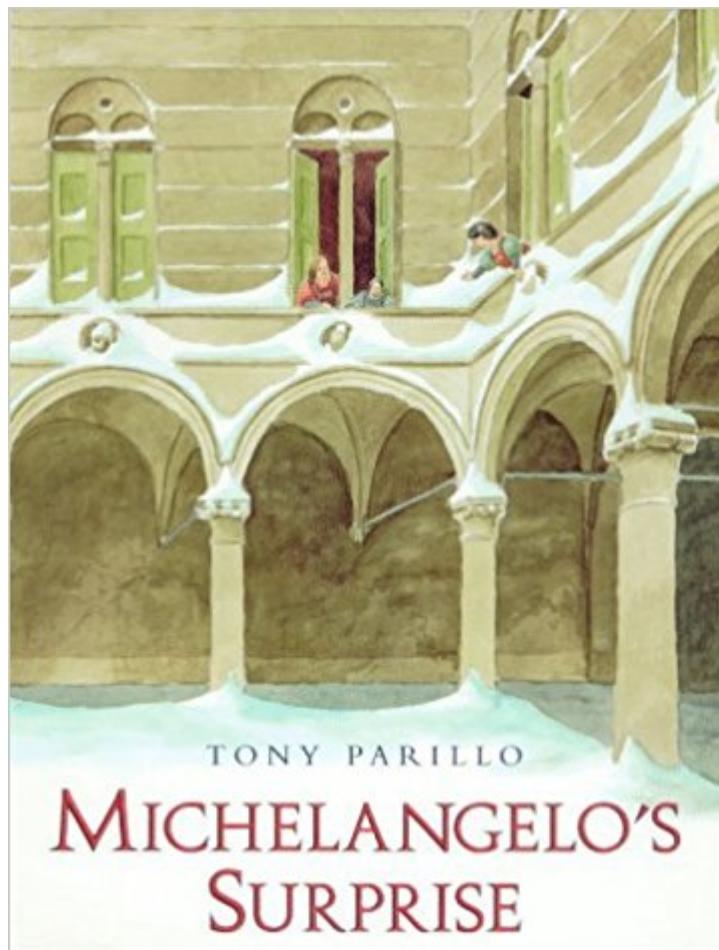


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# Michelangelo's Surprise



## Synopsis

Piero, a page in the Medici court in fifteenth-century Florence, hunts through the palazzo for his father and finds him helping the artist Michelangelo sculpt a snowman. "The tour of the Renaissance palazzo is good and provocative, while the paintings are architecturally savvy and washed in Mediterranean color."-Kirkus Reviews

## Book Information

Age Range: 3 and up

Hardcover: 32 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,132,857 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #58 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Renaissance #98 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > European #2727 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Art

## Customer Reviews

A nifty historical tidbit inspired this debut picture book: in 1494, after an unusually heavy snowfall, Piero de' Medici had Michelangelo brought to his palazzo to sculpt a snowman. But Sandro, the youngest page in the palazzo, does not know what Signore Piero has in mind when he calls for "Ser Buonarroti's" son, and Sandro runs off to find his father, the chief steward, for the answer. The story is mostly a vehicle for a tour of the bustling palazzo: Sandro runs through the loggia, past balustrades and through the great hall. He finally finds his father?the tallest man in the palace?supporting Michelangelo on his shoulders as the young sculptor creates a snow statue. Parillo's watercolors highlight the architecture of Florence; the first spread is a lovely bird's-eye view of the Duomo and surrounding buildings covered by snow. However, Parillo's figures, though expressive, are somewhat broadly painted, and this detracts from the overall effect. Otherwise, a graceful and original work. Ages 4-8. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

PreSchool-Grade 2-The premise for Parillo's first picture book is a little-known anecdote about Michelangelo. Although no sources are cited, an endnote states that, in 1494, Piero de' Medici summoned the 19-year-old artist during a snowstorm to create a snow sculpture. Unfortunately, the book does not live up to the possibilities inherent in such a nugget. The author sets the stage with a young page, Sandro, overhearing de' Medici's request to fetch Michelangelo. Wondering why the ruler has summoned the artist, Sandro combs the palazzo to find his father, who knows everything about the household. In the end, the boy finds his father helping the sculptor. The search, however, is neither interesting enough to stand on its own nor enhanced with any narrative details. In addition, while Parillo is adept at rendering architecture and sculpture, his figural painting is less successful. The bodies are inconsistent in scale in relationship to one another and to their backgrounds. The faces are poorly executed and the overuse of unfinished portraits-both in the story and on the walls-leads to the conclusion that this is artistic weakness rather than aesthetic intent. For picture-book treatments of Renaissance masters that more convincingly convey the excitement of their subjects, try Nils Jockel's Pieter Bruegel's Tower of Babel (Prestel Art, 1998) or Nancy Willard's Pish Posh, Said Hieronymous Bosch (Harcourt, 1991).-Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Perhaps Tony Parillo's book, Michaelangelo's Surprise, should be retitled, "Parillo's Surprise." This children's book is a must for anyone and everyone who has ever been to Florence, Italy. The artistic pages of this book are incredibly wonderful and fun to look at, not just for children. Mr. Parillo must have worked extremely hard on this book because it reminds me of visiting a church or museum in Italy. The more you look, the more you see. It is a wonderful book for children; it has the capacity to introduce them to the architecture and beauty of the Italian culture. Kudos for a wonderful work of art!!!

I had great expectations for this book, but was quite disappointed. The illustrations are cartoonish, and only one page is devoted to Michaelangelo's actual work on the snowman. The fact that this story is real is what motivated me to buy it, but, alas, the book is a page-by-page hide-and-seek search for the narrator's father. (Is he in the kitchen? No-o-o. Is he in the stable? No-o-o.) So much more could have been done with this story, so much more! My 6 year old tried to act politely interested, but was as bored as I.

I was magically transported to a romantic time and place. The fantastic pictures that author/artist

Parillo has created takes this book well beyond the typical children's storybook. It is truly glorious! My children adored it and I loved it. This is one is a "keeper."

This was not my kind of book. This is a good book for those interested though. I wish it was more detailed to grab my attention more. It was an ok book.

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