

Stealing America

By

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It is the greatest heist in history. And much of it is true..

In 1901, the legendary Waldseemuller Map was found at Castle Wolfegg, Bavarian Germany. It had lain undiscovered for 400 years. It was the first map in history to chart America and did so - a full ten years before America was discovered! The mystery of the map's provenance and how it came to be drawn has never been solved..

The year is 1506, the pinnacle of the Renaissance and Florence is the artistic, intellectual, and scientific jewel in the Italian Renaissance crown and the wealthiest city in all Europe.

Christopher Columbus has returned from his voyages to the New World, but, after centuries of warfare Spain is broke and cannot afford her conquest of the Americas. Prince Philip of Spain hatches a bold plan for world domination. He will invade Florence, plunder her treasure which will finance Spain's conquest of the New World - and then The World!

Only one man can stop Philip - Machiavelli, the Renaissance's most brilliant mind and champion of Florence's artists, scientists, and republicans. But Florence has no army - well, a ragtail bunch of security guards who patrol the art galleries - and is utterly defenceless. Prince Philip leads the most fearsome military force on earth.

And Philip is supported by the most powerful man on earth, the fearsomely hardline warrior Pope Julian who is determined to destroy Machiavelli and those liberal, free-thinking intellectuals and artists determined to drag the world from the repression and superstitions of the Dark Ages.

When Amerigo Vespucci returns to Florence, fleeing from the Spanish because he claims **he** discovered the New World, Machiavelli hatches a... er, Machiavellian plot: he will steal America - an entire continent - from the Spanish!

But the proof of Vespucci's claims is protected in the most impenetrable fortress in all Europe - the Vatican.

Machiavelli forms a gang which includes Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, the beautiful model and aspiring artist, (Mona) Lisa and the brilliant young mapmaker Martin Waldseemuller to break into the Vatican.

Is the pen - and paintbrush - truly mightier than 150,000 Spanish swords?

Machiavelli and his gang must succeed, for the stakes are high: the Florentine ideals of democracy and liberty, priceless art and gold, and the freedom of not only plucky little Florence but the entire world.

Niccolo Machiavelli, Chancellor of Florence and the most brilliant mind of the Renaissance, unravels the plot but is powerless to stop it, for Florence has no army and is defenceless.

When Amerigo Vespucci returns to his native Florence claiming that he, and not Columbus discovered the New World, Machiavelli hatches a daring counter plot.

Florence will steal the New World from the Spanish!

Machiavelli forms a gang which includes a young and visionary map maker called Martin Waldseemuller; the genius Leonardo da Vinci (hard at work on his masterpiece, the *Mona Lisa*); Michelangelo (who is sculpting his masterpiece, *David*); and the master artist and forger Raphael. They will draw a map and prove Florence's claims to the New World. For muscle, Machiavelli assembles an army of twenty soldiers, well, security guards drawn from the Florentine art galleries actually.

It is the biggest heist in history. But it is also history's greatest gamble. For Spain, the mightiest nation on earth declares war on tiny Florence. How can a bunch of artists - and twenty security guards - defend unarmed Florence against the might of seventy-five thousand armed and trained Spanish soldiers?

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