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A Feast for the Mind

BY CARLOS J. QUEIRÓS
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Pull up a seat at Javier Sierra's *The Secret Supper* (Atria Books) and feast on a hot new historical thriller. The fast-paced story serves up a five-centuries-old enigma, though it's anything but stale. Already published in 32 countries, the book arrives on North American shores this March.

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Unlike Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, which is set in the present, the action of this novel takes place in 1497. Leonardo da Vinci is putting the final touches on "The Last Supper." Meanwhile, the pope sends an interpreter of secret messages to investigate troubling claims that the artist is a heretic. Why has he painted himself into the work with his back to Jesus? Where are the apostles' halos?

Solutions to the painting's long-standing mysteries cast the famous work in a new light. Indeed, the author says he hopes the novel "gives us back the capacity to read art."

In Sierra's nimble hands, historical research and fiction blend with ease. And the short chapters dash readers along at a quick clip, often leaving them to dangle from literary cliffs. This is a dinner invitation you won't want to miss.

Read more in our [one-on-one conversation](#) with Javier Sierra.

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