ARTEMISIA GENTILESCHI

Introduction and Prologue.

Artemisia Gentileschi was an extraordinary woman. She was born on the 8th July 1593 in Rome, Italy.

On her 63rd birthday she wasn't celebrating anything. Far from it! Since six months ago many people were dying in Naples, the city where she moved on, from the plague. She was able to escape the plague in Venice twenty-five years ago, but she feared this time she won't be so lucky. She thought about her family, they lived far away from Naples so they´ll be safe.

When she was 18 years old she wanted to show the whole world what a woman can do. Succeeded in showing that a woman can be just as good as a man, or at least just as good painter as a man.

She wrote her story and she put the pages in a box in her garden because she wanted to be forgotten.

Chapter 1: The end of Innocence.

Artemisia Gentileschi was born in the artist’s quarter in the grand city of Rome. His father was Orazio Gentileschi. He was a successful painter, so part of their home was used as his studio.

Artemisia started to get into art when she was about 8 years old. Her father took her to watch artists painting in their studios.

On Christmas Day, 1605, her mother and her sister died when her mother gave birth to her sister. After that, Artemisia’s paintings improved so much and Agostino Tassi, the new friend of her father, began to give her art lessons. She hated the lessons, because he watched her and made her feel uncomfortable.

One day, Tassi suddenly attacked her, covering her mouth with a cloth so she couldn’t cry out for help. He raped her and stole her honour. She was traumatised. Tassi continued visiting their home with his friend, as if nothing had happened.

Artemisia expressed her feelings through her artwork. She continued painting Bible scenes, but she chose the most violent events she could think of. Her father loved her painting, but once more, he didn’t understand the message hidden within it.

Chapter 2: From despair to victory.

The father of Artemisia sent a complaint to the court because of the crime that Tassi had committed. At that moment, Artemisia realised that she was only important because of her art.

Artemisia’s father was only interested in putting Tassi in jail, he didn’t show compassion for his daughter.

When it was the turn of Artemisia to tell her story, they used an instrument of torture in her hands. Her hands were cut and painful, she suffered a lot, but she always said the truth. The court found Tassi guilty and his father was euphoric. Suddenly, Tassi was declared innocent with the help of the Pope. This meant that Artemisia had lied and she would have to leave Rome as a criminal. There was only a solution, marriage to restore her reputation. So a few days after she was married to Pierantonio. Artemisia was so happy because she moved to Florence and she painted lots of paintings that were successful. She went to the Academy of Art and Drawing.

Chapter 3: Wife, mother and recognised artist.

Artemisia became a mother soon, and she had four children: three of them became sick because of the cold nights in Florence and died; and Prudenzia was the only one that survived.

Many people admired Artemisia's work and paid high prices for new paintings but the life in Florence was so expensive so she wanted to move back to Rome.

Two years after they returned to Rome,Artemisia gave birth to her fifth daughter, Francesca.After that, Pierantonio left home and never returned but Artemisia continued working hard to support her daughters.

By that time, her brothers began to sell Artemisia’s paintings to royal courts all around Europe.That made that Artemisia’s was offered the opportunity to travel to Venice with the Spanish envoy and work there under the protection of King Philip.

Artemisia and her daughters moved to Naples because of the plague in Venice, and lived eight years there until she was called to London where her father was painting for a Queen.They worked together until Artemisia’s father died.She continued painting in London,at the court of King Charles I.

Finally Artemisia returned to Naples.King Charles died so she started to paint herself as The Allegory of Painting.

Epilogue and cause of her death.

Finally Artemisia became the most important female painter of the 17th century.

Artemisia made paintings that transmit messages about women’s emotions, hopes and fears. What worried Artemisia is that in time she would be forgotten. But at the end she became a very important female painter.

After she left London, Artemisia went to Naples where she lived the rest of her life. Her last paint found was made in 1650, the exact date of his death is not known but approximately, she died in 1654, the cause of his death was the devastating plague that Naples suffered which killed her and many recognized Neapolitan artists. Nowadays there is a movie that talks about the life of Artemisia and the difficulties that she had in her life.