

Lesson 3

READ THIS STORY #2, Advanced

The Sistine Chapel

The Sistine Chapel was built in 1484 for a Catholic pope. The chapel is known as the place where Cardinals meet to elect a new pope. It's also famous for its works of art.

The chapel is usually crowded because so many people come to marvel at the frescoes. Frescoes are created by painting on moist plaster with pigments dissolved in water, which creates vibrant colors.

The side walls of the chapel are covered with depictions of stories from the Old Testament. The frescoes on the walls were painted by a variety of Italian artists.

But the most famous frescoes were painted by Michelangelo. They are located on the vaulted ceiling of the chapel. Michelangelo had to lie on his back while painting the ceiling, and it took him four years to complete the project.

It's easy to develop a crick in your neck when you try to study Michelangelo's paintings. If you carry a small mirror and focus it on the ceiling above you, you can avoid some neck pain.

After several hundred years, the frescoes had accumulated layers of soot and grime. So a few years ago, the frescoes were cleaned. Now the original bright colors used by the artist have been revealed.

But some people were disappointed. They had become accustomed to viewing the figures through the grime.