Michelangelo Buonarroti, commonly known as Michelangelo, was born on March 6, 1475, in Caprese, Italy. He was the second of five sons in his family. His father, Ludovico di Leonardo di Buonarroti di Simoni, was a magistrate which put the family in the lower end of the Florentine social scale. From an early age, Michelangelo showed a great interest in art, which was not appreciated by his father who saw artists as lowly manual laborers. However, at the age of 13, Michelangelo was apprenticed to the painter Domenico Ghirlandaio, one of the most successful fresco painters in Florence. This apprenticeship marked the beginning of Michelangelo's illustrious career in art. Michelangelo was not just a painter, but also a highly skilled sculptor, architect, and poet. His work in these different fields of art was revolutionary and he is often considered a key figure in the High Renaissance period. Some of his most famous works include the statue of David, the Sistine Chapel ceiling, and the architectural design of the dome of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Each of these works showcases Michelangelo's mastery of detail, his understanding of the human form, and his ability to convey powerful emotion through his art. Michelangelo's David is one of the most recognizable statues in the world. Carved from a single block of marble, the statue stands at an impressive 17 feet tall. It was commissioned by the city of Florence to serve as a symbol of the city's republican virtues. The statue depicts the biblical hero David, not after his victory over Goliath as was traditional, but before the battle, capturing the tension and concentration in his face. The statue's size and the detail in the muscles and veins showcase Michelangelo's understanding of human anatomy, which he studied extensively by dissecting corpses. The Sistine Chapel ceiling is another one of Michelangelo's most famous works. Commissioned by Pope Julius II, Michelangelo worked on the ceiling from 1508 to 1512. The ceiling is covered in frescoes, a type of painting done on wet plaster, depicting scenes from the Bible. The most famous of these scenes is The Creation of Adam, where God is reaching out to touch Adam's finger. Despite having little experience with fresco painting before this project, Michelangelo managed to create a masterpiece that is considered one of the greatest works in Western art. In his later years, Michelangelo turned his attention more towards architecture. He was appointed the chief architect of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome in 1546, a position he held until his death. His most significant contribution to the basilica is the design of the dome. The dome stands at a height of 136.57 meters from the floor of the basilica to the top of the external cross, making it one of the tallest domes in the world. Michelangelo's design for the dome was not fully realized until after his death, but it remains a testament to his architectural genius. Michelangelo was also a prolific poet. He wrote over 300 sonnets and madrigals, a type of secular vocal music composition. His poetry deals with themes such as love, spirituality, and art. Many of his poems are addressed to Tommaso dei Cavalieri, a young nobleman who was the object of Michelangelo's platonic love. His poetry is considered as deeply emotional and personal, providing an insight into the mind of this great artist. Michelangelo's work ethic was legendary. He was known to work tirelessly, often sleeping in his clothes and boots. He was so consumed by his work that he often neglected to eat or sleep. This intense dedication to his work often resulted in physical illness. Despite his poor health, Michelangelo continued to work until his death at the age of 88, an unusually long lifespan for the time period. Despite his success, Michelangelo often struggled with feelings of inadequacy. He was known to be a perfectionist, and was never fully satisfied with his work. He often left projects unfinished and even destroyed some of his own work. He also struggled with depression throughout his life. His letters and poems reveal a man who was often in conflict with himself and his art. Michelangelo was deeply religious, and his faith influenced much of his work. However, his relationship with the Church was complicated. He often clashed with his patrons, including several popes, over his artistic vision. Despite these conflicts, Michelangelo's work for the Church, including the Sistine Chapel ceiling and the Pieta, are considered some of the greatest religious artworks of all time. Michelangelo died on February 18, 1564, in Rome. His body was brought back to Florence, where he was buried in the Basilica of Santa Croce, according to his wishes. His tomb, designed by Giorgio Vasari, is adorned with allegorical figures representing Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, the three fields in which Michelangelo excelled. More than 450 years after his death, Michelangelo's influence on the world of art remains unparalleled. His works continue to inspire artists and captivate audiences around the world.