



CASSANDRA

1898

BY EVELYN DE MORGAN

OIL PAINT ON CANVAS

97.8 X 48.3 CM

WHAT CAN WE SEE?

There is a woman, called Cassandra, with long, curly red hair wearing a blue robe and sandals. She looks angry and distressed. She is standing on a rocky outcrop, her feet surrounded by roses. Behind her, we can see the city of Troy that is on fire. Great plumes of smoke are billowing from the city into the light blue sky. In the city we can see a large horse that people are climbing out of.

WHO WAS CASSANDRA?

In Greek Mythology, Cassandra is a beautiful Princess. She is the daughter of King Priam and Queen Hecuba of Troy. Because of her beauty, the Greek God Apollo granted her the gift of prophecy; she was able to tell the future. However, when Cassandra rejected Apollo's love for her, he cursed her so that whilst always accurate, no one would believe her prophecies.

In the dramatic scene that Evelyn has chosen to paint, Cassandra is shown in front of a burning Troy, during the Trojan War between the Greeks and the city of Troy. The Trojan Horse, in which the Greeks hid to get

into Troy can be seen. Cassandra predicted the war, but due to the curse placed upon her, nobody believed her. This made her very angry, which can be seen in the painting.

HOW WAS THE PAINTING MADE?

This painting was made by applying oil paint to a canvas. Oil paint combined a pigment in an oil base. Evelyn would have mixed colours herself and also been able to buy tubes of readymade paint. Canvas is a fabric which would be stretched over a wooden frame. This is still a popular way of making paintings today.

INTRODUCING THE PAINTING TO CHILDREN

It is important to ask children to look closely at the painting. By discussing what you can see with your class and asking questions about the subject, they will begin to engage with the story behind the painting.

INVESTIGATING THE PAINTING FURTHER

Following this, try the '1, 2, 3 JUMP!' method. Ask children to count to three then imagine jumping into the painting. By doing this, they will engage on a deeper level with the imagery and subject matter of the painting.

USING THE PAINTING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

- The subject of this painting is taken from Greek Mythology. Read the story of the Trojan War with your class. *LITERACY/HISTORY*
- There were many events that led up to the Trojan War. From Paris choosing Aphrodite as the fairest in the land by giving her the Golden Apple. Ask your class to produce a comic strip showing the key events. *ICT/LITERACY*
- The city of Troy can be seen burning in the background of this painting. Think about the process of burning. What conditions do we need to create fire? The scientific process of burning is an irreversible change. Investigate other changes in materials. *SCIENCE*
- Apollo cursed Cassandra so that none would believe her predictions. Think about how this would make Cassandra feel. Do you remember a time when you felt like this? Write a diary for Cassandra in the lead up to the destruction of Troy. *ENGLISH/PSHE*
- Troy is an ancient city that doesn't exist anymore. It was located in modern-day Turkey. Investigate other ancient places and evidence for their existence. Plot these on a modern map of the world. *HISTORY/GEOGRAPHY*