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Introduction

Artemisia is a historically inspired drama about the creation of a painting and the brief but intense relationship between three women from three different social classes. The scenario is set in the late 1700s at the fictional English estate Wintershill House. When The Duke of Somerset hires a young female painter to paint a portrait of his wife, the three main characters suddenly find common ground in the sensuality and beauty of art. While painting, they are haunted by Artemisia, a hedonistic spiritual presence, and with her help, they discover freedom and courage to pursue both art and each other. When not painting, however, they must try and hide their true feelings from the Duke who, if he wants, can take everything from them.

The Characters

The scenario has four characters. Amelia the Painter, Elizabeth the Duchess, Hester the maid and the dual role of Artemisia/the Duke. The roles of Amelia, Hester and Elizabeth are more geared towards immersion and emotional roleplay. Besides their personal dilemmas, the characters share a common drive. They all long for beauty, intimacy and eroticism - all things their current lives do not provide. The dual role Artemisia/Duke is more analytical, geared towards functionality, and can influence the narrative through game mechanics.

Artemisia and the Duke are opposites, pulling the three women in different directions. One towards the art and pleasure of the moment, the other towards order and the established socialities.

Structure and narrative

The scenario unfolds in three acts, from August to October. Through a series of prewritten scenes, Amelia, Elizabeth and Hester are drawn increasingly to each other and to Artemisia. As the weeks pass by, they approach the completion of the painting and the inevitable farewell. The scenario has two types of scenes. 1) Scenes set at Wintershill House, which are played out while sitting around the table. 2) Painting scenes, which are set in an abstract space, played out physically and set to music.

Mood and setting

Artemisia is not aiming to be historically correnct scenario. It draws on the aesthetics and art of the period to create a hyper-feminine rococo universe where the mood is sensual and suggestive. The scenes should be saturated with sensations and descriptions of *heavy silk skirts, the smell of perfume...*

tickling ones nose, and the taste of a sweet but overripe peach dripping its juice down the chin, onto the bosom and sliding in under the dress.

The scenario will have many erotic undertones, but no explicit sex scenes. Instead, intimacy, longing and the sexual longings of the characters are expressed through the painting scenes, where the players, among other things, paint on each other with a dry, soft brush. Here, aesthetics and eroticism merge into one big metaphor of art.

The role of the facilitator

Artemisia is set to last about four hours, including start-up and workshop. As game facilitator, you will be setting the scenes, conveying the moods and help the players create feelings of sensuality and intimacy. In the painting scenes, you will be selecting music from the music catalog. The scenario begins with a workshop where you instruct the players in the different game mechanics.

On Fastaval 2024 If you facilitate this scenario at Fastaval 2024, you will be given a paintbrush at the venue. If you do not have anything to play music from, please contact me before Easter.



The Characters

Artemisia has three roles which can be characterized as immersive roles, while the fourth player will be playing two 'narrative' roles - the Duke/Artemsia - who has the ability to influence the story on a meta-level. Amelia, Elizabeth, and Hester live in an era where they are severly restricted by gender and class. At the beginning of the scenario, they are each trapped in a sad and quite existence, but longing for something more. Through the scenario, the players will explore how the characters' relationships with each other develop. The most straightforward interpretation is that the characters all fall in love and what they experience in the painting scenes is sexual. However, the scenario can also be a story about an undefined relationship, where Amelia, Elizabeth, and Hester fulfill each other emotionally and erotically...

but not necessarily bodily. It is up to you to interpret how real or abstract the relationship between the characters is.

Concerning the dual role, the Duke/Artemisia, the Duke will be present in the scenes at Wintershill, while Artemisia will be present in the painting scenes. Through a set of game mechanics, which you can read about below here, the Duke/Artemisia pull the other characters in opposite directions. On the one hand, Artemisia pushes them to give themselves completely to the art and each other, regardless of the consequences. On the other hand, the Duke has the power to either ruin them or reward them, depending on how well they retain the status quo and serves his agenda.

It is important to emphasize that Artemisia is NOT a story about a love triangle. The scenario is not about two people in conflict, fighting to win the third.

Rollernes dilemmaer

Amelia kæmper for at blive økonomisk uafhængig, så hun både kan male, hvad hun ønsker og forsørge på sin syge far

Elizabeth vil gerne ud af sin ensomhed, men er bundet til sit hjem og en mand, der presser på for at genoptage den ægteskabelige relation.

Hester drømmer om et liv, hvor hun ikke er nogens tjenestepige, men det vil betyde, at hun skal forlade Wintershill og hertuginden for altid.

This do not mean that there shouldn't be conflict between the characters – there absolutely can be. But the conflicts should not be tied to romantic jealousy.

The characters' choices and development

The scenario is a tragedy. At best, the characters end up in the same place, at worst, they lose much more than what they came with. The key choice for Amelia, Hester, and Elizabeth lies in how much they are willing to give themselves to Artemisia over the course of the scenario. How much will their encounters in the art studio change them, and what are they willing to sacrifice to feel, however briefly, the true pleasure and sense of completion, they find in art and each other?

By the end of the game Artemisia can decide if Amelia, Hester, and Elizabeth have created something beautiful enough that she may take up a new residence. Similarly, it is up to the Duke to decide whether he is satisfied with the painting in the final scene of the scenario - or if he has perhaps discovered something he should not.

The Duchess's portrait

During the scenario, players are NOT allowed to describe the portrait they are painting. The characters can articulate that they like it or make vague hints about what might be better - more light, less blue, why is her hair like that - but ultimately, the portrait should be a mystery existing only in the player's minds.



The Painter Amelia

Amelia has always known she could be a great artist but has not been able to establish her name as a great painter. Currently, she makes her living teaching drawing, however, she needs better financial independence to support her elderly father. The Duke's commission is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, especially for a female artist. Amelia has the ambitions to create a magnificent portrait, if only she is given the freedom to paint as she sees fit. Failing to satisfy the Duke's taste, she has no choice but to accept an offer of marriage from Sir Thomas, an older acquaintance of her Father.



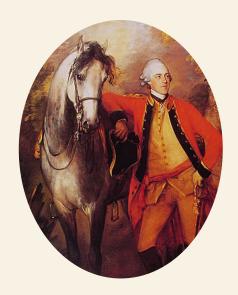
The Duchess Elizabeth

After three healthy children and 14 years of marriage, Elizabeth and the Duke now lives separate lives. For Elizabeth, it has become a lonely existence. She has attached herself to her maid Hester, who she sees as her only real friend and support. Elizabeth longs for intimacy and kindred spirits who share her passion for art and beauty, but she does not miss her husband. Lately, the Duke is seeking her out again, against Elizabeth's wishes. The portrait is his attempt to win her back so they can reassume a traditional marriage. Elizabeth does not know how much longer she can keep him at arm's length.



The Maid Hester

Hester has risen from being a lovely kitchen maid to becoming the Duchess's own lady's maid. Although she lives a better life than most common people, she dreams of something more. When the Duke is away from Wintershill, she and the Duchess share a special intimacy and Hester forgets that she is only a servant. Lately, the Duke has been soliciting Elizabeth's company increasingly and Hester is starting to doubt her future. She thinks about leaving Wintershill, which would mean never seeing Elizabeth again. Maybe Hester can make do without Elizabeth, but she doubts Elizabeth can survive without her.



The Duke

The Duke of Somerset is one of the richest and most powerful men in the country. At the beginning of the scenario, he has hired Amelia to paint a portrait of his wife, whom he wants to win back. The Duke is not a malicious tyrant, but a typical man of his time and class. He rewards those who are faithful and punishes those who oppose him and his interests. To symbolize the duke's power, the player is free to enter and leave any of the prewritten scenes (the painting scenes becoming the women's only sanctuary). The duke's player can freely control when he enters or leaves a scene.



Artemisia

Artemisia is a hedonistic, feminine, entity of art and pleasure. Artemisia's sole existence is about consuming pleasure, desires, aesthetics, and creativity. She is neither good nor evil, but compelled to push Amelia, Elizabeth and Hester into her world of art, eroticism and beauty, where nothing else matters. Artemisia's player has control over the painting scenes. Here she decides when the characters can talk, move, touch each other and paint. In this way, she can reward or punish the characters by either giving or depriving them of the physical contact and sensuality they all crave.

Historical inspiration, not historical accuracy When playing Artemisia, you should of course be inspired by the zeitgeist and the aesthetics of the time, but historical accuracy must never obstruct a good story. Don't overthink details about hairstyles or the cut of dress fashionable in 1780s.

The Setting

The scenario takes place at the fictional estate Wintershill House, placed somewhere in the south of England around 1780. This was a time when the richest lived opulent lives of luxury and the poorest existed in abject poverty. History books will tell us, this was a time of social and cultural upheaval, including new scientific breakthroughs, rapidly developing industry, and revolutions. However, for the majority of people, high and low, the world continued as usual, and modernity and the changing fabrics of society were not really part of everyday life. The general sentiment was, that the world did not need changing, for our Lord created it in his own image. The late 18th century was a time where fashion, as well as architecture and art, was slowly moving away from the rococo style (think Marie Antoinette) and into neoclassicism, inspired by ancient Greek and Roman sculptures and ruins. However, it remains an era where voluminous silk skirts, gauzy lace, high hair, and powdered wigs were still very much in vogue among the aristocracy.



Wintershill House

Despite its unassuming name, Wintershill is one of the country's most magnificent estates. Although the house has been extended many times since the foundational stones were laid, the facade is still symmetrical and harmonious. The estate is surrounded by large parks and forests. Here the Duke of Somerset pursues his passion for sport and hunting. He often hosts large hunting parties lasting several days. Wintershill House has a magnificent collection of art, crafts, and furniture which have been in the Duke's family for generations. Most impressive is the large art gallery, taking up the entire first floor of the east wing. Although the current duke has never been particularly interested in such things, he still sees art as his noble obligation. Together with his art-loving wife, he has expanded the collection considerably. The Duchess has brought both glamour and fame to the family by inviting some of the best artists of England and Europe, who in terms have immortalized her, her family and the nature around the castle on their canvases.

Wintershill House

Besides the Duke, Duchess and their three children, there are just about 30 servants living in the most upper and lower rooms of the house. The household boasts several kitchen maids, cooks, hall boys, servants, maids, a housekeeper, a butler, a nanny/governess, and the Duke and Duchess's personal valet and lady's maid. There are stable boys, coachmen, gardeners and under-gardeners, a gamekeeper, and a birdkeeper who looks after the Duke's precious collection of exotic birds. The house runs like a well-oiled machine, and everyone knows the family routines inside and out. At Wintershill House, people live a strictly hierarchical existence and nobody questions their assigned place.



Judith beheading Holofernes

In this sory the Duke of Somerset owns Artemisia Gentileschi's painting Judith Beheading Holofernes (1614-1616). The Duke do not like the painting, but Amelia, Hester, and Elizabeth each have their own intimate relationship with it. Equally because Artemisia emerges from the painting and because the characters mirror themselves in the different aspects of the painting. Elizabeth sees herself reflected in Judith, Hester in the servant and Amelie in the artist Artemisia Gentileschi. The painting tells the story about a beautiful Jewish widow Judith who, with the help of her faithful handmaiden, seduces and kills the Assyrian general Holofernes, whose army has occupied her village. It was a popular motif throughout the 15th to 17th century. Gentileschi has created an unusually brutal version of the story. Blood splatters and Holofernes looks imploringly out at the viewer as he draws his last breath. But the image is also a powerful portrayal of women that, unlike other versions of the subject, shows two strong, equal and competent women. Whether players take inspiration from the painting in the last scene, and the Duchess's portrait is handed over to the Duke is up to you.

On the last page of the scenario, you will find this painting as a full page. Keep it on display during the scenario so players can take inspiration from it in both the scenes at Wintershill and the Painting scenes.



Narrative and Structure

Act I takes place in August. The weather is hot with sweating bodies concealed under layers of fabric and stiffened stays. Wintershill House smells of roses from the garden and stale water from the nearby forest lakes. In this act, we meet the characters, and the players begin to develop the relationships between them. Through four prewritten scenes, we explore the burgeoning longing and intimacy between Hester, Amelia, and Elizabeth. The act ends with a painting scene where they meet Artemisia for the first time. She commences to open their eyes to a whole new world of sensuality.

Act II takes place in September, when trees and bushes are abounded with fruit and berries. The Duke hosts a large hunting party, which loosely frames the narrative. This act focuses on the dilemmas of the characters. The players explore Amelia's feelings about her possible upcoming marriage, as well as her artistic doubts; the Duchess' reluctance to return to her marriage; Hester's life as a servant and the gap between rich and poor that she experiences every day. In the second act, the characters and Artemisia can bring conflicts and emotions from the scenes at Wintershill into the painting scenes. In act II, there are five prewritten scenes at Wintershill and two painting scenes.

One that ends the act and one which you decide where to place.

Act III takes place in October, the week leading up to the completion of the painting. Amelia, Elizabeth, and Hester are, each in their own way, confronted with the life they will soon return to. The third act is about goodbyes and whether the three women can accept their fates. In the final scene, the players must decide whether to voluntarily show the Duke the finished painting or whether he will ultimately have to force himself to see it. This act has 5 scenes at Wintershill and one painting scene. Here the characters meats Artemisia for the final time.

Conclusion

The scenario can end in many different ways. Maybe you want to experience a dramatic finale where the Duke exposes everything in a fit of anger and passion. Or perhaps you wish to lean into a more subtle conclusion where the painting is handed over in silent suffering. It is up to you, to find the best way to end your specific story. But one thing is certain. Amelia, Elisabeth, and Hester will ultimately have to say goodbye

How to Play and Facilitate the Scenario

As a game facilitator, it is your job to support the players and help them create the best possible narrative. I have designed various tools for this purpose. The scenario consists of a workshop and two types of scenes - painting scenes and scenes at Wintershill. You will have different roles and tasks depending on which type of scene you play. The most important thing, however, is that you create a safe space for the players and let them know that they everything is going to go well. When preparing the scenario, I recommend listening to some of the music in the Artemisia, Fastaval 2024 playlist on Spotify – this will hopefully also set the right mood.

Workshop

Before the scenario begins, you must facilitate a pre-game workshop consisting of various exercises and scenes. It is your job to make sure all participants understand the scene types and mechanics at play, and make sure that all the players are prepared for the physical aspect of the scenario. It is especially important that everyone understand that this scenario involves movement and touching and that you articulate and align the participants' expectations for the game.

Scenes at Wintershill

These are the scenarios pre-written scenes. They must be played out sitting around the table and players are not allowed to touch each other. The players will be talking to each other as their characters, while also describe the setting, their actions, and how they interact with each other. Some scenes will be more dialog-heavy, while others will be more descriptive and lingering. Each scene contains suggestions for what might happen or tells you directly what should happen during the scene.

Not all characters are present in every scene. Those who are not part of a scene, will be observing from the sidelines, with the exception of the Duke, who sits ready to intervene if necessary. The Duke can insert himself in the scene by simply knocking on the table, as if he was knocking on the door.

What has the Duke heard and seen?

The Duke's player decides how much of the previous scene he has intercepted before breaking in. This creates a sense of surveillance and control, so Amelia, Elizabeth and Hester can't just declare their love for each other.



How to start and end scenes

Each scene starts with a short description that you either read out loud or paraphrase. This sets the scene in motion and conveys the mood to the players. There are two ways to end a scene.

- 1) The scene ends at a predefined point that you play towards. For example, the scene could end when someone *picks an apple* or when *someone gets a kiss*. The end point is usually quite open for interpretations, so players can take the scene in many different directions. You must tell the players what action stops the scene before you start. The ending point creates momentum in scenes that can be slow-moving.
- 2) You cut the scene as you see fit. The scene catalog clearly states how each scene should be cut and by whom.

Sensations

This is a 'narration mechanic' that the players can use in the scenes at Wintershill. Sensations show the characters' emotions and state of mind through verbal imagery. A sensation is akin to a short inner monologue, where the player uses one or more of the five senses - touch, hearing, taste, sight, or smell. The sensations are primarily a tool that gives you access to a character's inner self, but they also contribute to the overall aesthetic of the scenario. A sensation can be pleasant, sharp, violent, sexual, etc. The only limit is the player's own creativity.

If a player wants to come up with a sensation during a scene, all they have to do is say, "(character's name) senses...", followed by two, three to four sentences about their sensations. Examples of sensations:

Elizabeth feels repulsed by her husband in a scene but doesn't dare confront him. Instead, the player has a sensation: Elizabeth senses... He smells of old sweat and horse, as if he hasn't bathed for days. The sweat is poorly masked with expensive perfume, lingering in her nostrils.

Amilia and Hester stand next to each other in front of Artemisia's painting. Amilia is attracted to Hester: "Amilia senses... She hears Hester's light breathing which is the only sound in the vast gallery. She looks down and sees her chest rise and fall - up, down, up, down in an enchanting rhythm. She tastes a drop of blood in her mouth and realizes it is because she has bitten down on her own lip.

As game facilitator, you can also explicitly ask the players for a sensation. You can inquire generally or specifically with many or few keywords, depending on what the scene and the player require.

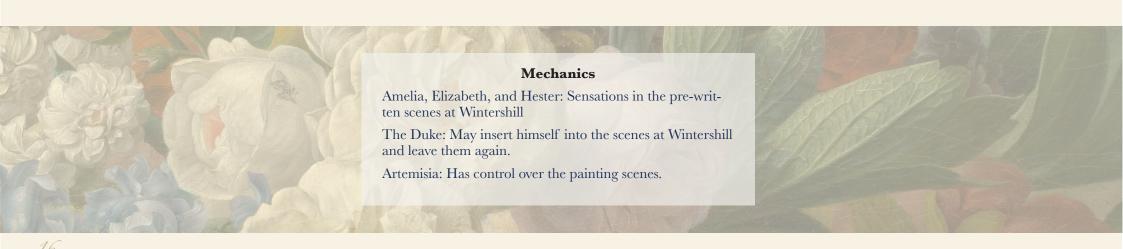
Examples:

What does Hester sense in the room? The wallpaper, the air, the carpet under her feet?

Tell me what Elizabeth senses?

Describe how Amilia senses the Duke? The sound of his riding boots? The feeling of his body heat as he comes close?

Only Amelia, Elizabeth, and Hester can use the sensations and they can only be acted out in the pre-written scenes. In the workshop, you will find several exercises to prepare the players to use the sensations.



Painting Scenes

Contrasting the scenes at Wintershill, the painting scenes are physical and direct. It is here Amelia, Elizabeth, and Hester meet with Artemisia to create the Duchess's portrait. Three of the painting scenes are fixed, while you can place the last one freely during the second act.

They are sensory breathing spaces for the players and characters, the only time they can touch each other or talk without feeling the surveillance of the Duke. Here, erotic tensions between the characters can develop, and the unspoken can be said out loud. The painting scenes are also the only place where conflicts and tensions can be played out openly. It is Artemisia's goal to have Amelia, Hester, and Elizabeth fully surrender to each other and to the art. She can engage with the characters conflicts by either helping them resolve their issues or use the tension between them as a creative spark.

It Doesn't Have to Make Sense

The painting scenes takes place in an abstract sensory space where the players move around to music, touching each other and painting on each other with a soft brush. The players are *not* supposed to role-play that they are painting a picture. They paint on each other to express art, intimacy, eroticism, sensuality, etc.

Even though it technically is Amelia who is the painter and thus paints Elizabeth, Amelia should not always be the one to holds the brush. Neither should Elizabeth always be the one who is painted on. The person being painted with the brush is both canvas and the painted object. The person wielding the brush is both painter and brush. The person who is neither canvas nor brush helps the others see and feel the art, so Artemisia can create the most beautiful picture. Artemisia ensures that everyone is both brush and canvas. The painting scenes may not make 100% sense to you, and that's okay. It's about surrendering to the senses without rationalizing too much.

Artemisia Controls the Scene

In the painting scenes, Artemisia controls the characters' senses. She has the ability to 'open up' the characters senses and 'shut them down' again. Artemisia's player chooses the order in which things happen in the painting scene. It is up to them when and if Artemisia fully opens all the characters senses, who wields the brush, and if a character should be cut of from one of their senses. For example, Artemisia may think that a character does not deserve to see or to be touched during a painting scene due to something happening in a previous scene. Artemisia is omnipotent, and she knows everything the characters have done and said throughout the scenario.

Artemisia's role in the painting scenes is thoroughly described in her character description, but you will also get a chance to discuss the painting scenes during the workshop.

In the music catalog, you will find an overview of the music to be used during the scenario with keywords describing the different moods and tempos of each track. A painting scene should last about two to three tracks. You don't recommend stopping the music abruptly to change tracks, instead you should slowly fade in and out of the songs. You are, however, more than welcome to reuse tracks if they develop a special meaning during the game.

Game startup and conclusion

The scenario opens with a short prologue where Amelia, Hester, Elizabeth, and Artemisia each take turn in describe their longings, while you listen to Bach's Air on a G String. When the music finishes, you are ready to play the first scene.

When the last scene is finished, Amelia, Elizabeth, and Hester are allowed to have a final sensation. Then the scenario ends once again with Air on a G String.

How the painting scenes unfold:

1) Beginning

The players stand on the floor with space between them and their eyes closed. Artemisia stands in the middle with Amelia, Elizabeth, and Hester around her. Nobody should be able to touch the others.

2) Music

You start the music, and Artemisia wakes up first while the other three remain standing with closed eyes, listening to the music.

3) Opening of the senses

Artemisia "opens" up the characters senses. When she speaks, they can open their eyes. When she says their name, they may speak, when she touches them, they may move, and when she hands one of them the brush, they can begin to paint.

4)Painting

While the characters "paint," they may freely speak and move, sharing the brush between them, but they always has to do as Artemisia commands. If Artemisia wants to "punish" the them during the scene, she can take the brush or shut down their senses through simple commands like stand still, be quiet, close your eyes.

5) End

The scene ends as you slowly lower the music until the room is completely silent, and the players return to their starting positions with Artemisia in the middle and eyes closed.



Presentation

Here you will find the presentation and workshop for Artemisia. Both are designed to prepare both you and the players to play the scenario.

Group Presentation

The presentation is the first thing the players will encounter before the game begins. Have a brief talk round the table where you get to know each other a bit and align your expectations so everyone is on the same page.

Boundaries and Safety

Talk about boundaries in relation to role-playing. It is important for everyone to clearly communicate where their personal comfort begins and ends. During the scenario there will be touching using hands and the paintbrushes. Ask the participants if there are specific areas on people's bodies where they prefer not to be touched. If you for example have a very ticklish player, some adjustments may be needed for the painting scenes. You can always revisit the topic of boundaries and touching after the workshop if necessary.

Make it clear that everyone can stop the game by saying "cut" or "stop the game" or by breaking character and talking directly to you.



Presentation of the Scenario

Present the story, setting, and the broad lines of the scenario. Here you can also address some of the expectations of the group, so that everyone will ultimately be playing the same scenario and working towards a common goal. Please feel free to add to or subtract from this list, if you think your group needs to additional information before the game.

- Three women from three social classes paint a portrait together. At the beginning of the scenario, they each live a quiet and unfulfilling existence, longing for something more intimacy, art, beauty, eroticism.
- During the painting process, they initiate an intimate/erotic relationship with each other and with the hedonistic, art entity Artemisia.
- The scenario is not a love triangle. The pressure on the characters are coming from outside the group.
- It is up to you and the players to interpret whether the characters have a sexual relationship or if they fall in love with each other on a more abstract level.
- The fourth role in the scenario is Artemisia/The Duke. Artemisia draws the roles into art and sensuality, and the Duke pulls the characters back into the status quo, through seperate game mechanics.
- The scenario develops through three acts where the characters become increasingly intimately connected, and their personal dilemmas slowly heightened.
- Players must choose how Artemisia influences their roles along the way. How much are they willing to risk experiencing this fleeting pleasure?

- Two types of scenes scenes at Wintershill and painting scenes. The former is played around the table while the painting scenes are physical, set to music.
- Artemisia controls the painting scenes.
- The Duke can insert himself into the scenes at Wintershill.
- Wintershill House and the 1780s as the setting.

The scenario draws inspiration from the period's art and aesthetics. Rococo -> Neoclassicism

Wintershill House is a fictional estate owned by the Duke of Somerset.

Wintershill House is a fictional estate owned by the Duke of Somerset.

A magnificent house with a magnificent art collection.

Artemisia Gentileschi's painting Judith Beheading Holofernes (1614-1616).

- The scenario should be suggestive and atmospheric, with erotic undertones. Descriptions and sensations are important components.
- The scenario ends with the painting being delivered to the Duke, either voluntarily or by him forcibly demanding to see it.
- Players are not allowed to describe the Duchess's portrait. They can only to express non descriptive opinions.



Warm-up I

Sensuousness: In this first exercise, you sit around the table after the presentation. First, have a brief discussion of what sensuousness and sensuality means to you. Ask the players how they define it and share your own thoughts as well. Once everyone has spoken, take turns describing something you find particularly sensual. It could be specific scents, textures, or weather phenomena like snow and rain.

Eroticism without sex: Next, take another round where sensuality is replaced with eroticism. What does eroticism (without sex) mean to you? Take turns describing things you find erotic but are not explicitly sexual. If you notice a player feeling unsure, let them know they can make something up if they feel link things are becoming uncomfortably personal.

Warm-up II

An Exercise in Sensation:

The players stand in a circle on the floor while holding hands. Their eyes can be either open or closed.

Play Bach's *Air on a G* string and join the circle.

Take turns saying one or two sentences, focusing on what you sense right at this moment while standing there together — what you feel, taste, smell, hear, and see. Encourage players to provide florid descriptions.

Continue with this until the music ends.

If you experience that some senses have been more challenging to articulate than others, such as taste or smell, you can facilitate a brief talk afterward discussing how they can be more actively used in the scenario.

Sensations

Here are two short scenes to help practice sensations as a game mechanic. Before you begin, explain or reiterate how the sensations functions in the game. It is a short inner monologue based on one or more of the five senses – sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. Sensations are a tool to reveal the character's emotions and desires through verbal imagery. They shouldn't prevent characters from discussing their feelings and desires. Instead, it is a way for the players to express the inner life of their character poetically. To clearly distinguish the sensations from the rest of the scene, I urge you to use a the third person for the sensation and the first person for all other interactions.

The scenes should be played sitting, and players must not touch each other. **Remember**, you can also ask players to articulate a sensation during the scene.

Scene I (two players): Two young people are sitting in a dimly lit café. They sit at opposite ends of an overly soft, plush sofa. The two young people have been friends for many years, but now their feelings and desires for each other have grown. They both want more, but struggle to say it out aloud, fearing that the other do not reciprocate their feelings.

The scene ends when you cut it.

If players are having trouble initiating the sensations, here are some suggestions which you can introduce during the scene: The smell of freshly roasted coffee. The sensation of the plush sofa against the skin. The feeling and taste of a dry mouth when becoming nervous. The sound of other guests, whose voices become a rhythmic backdrop. The sight of the other's perfectly curved lips moving as they speak.

Find the Right Tempo

In between the short practice scenes, you have the opportunity to discuss the scenes' pacing with the players. In my playtest, I experienced that the scenes became a bit too slow because the players used sensations a bit too much Take note of the players' flow now to make some adjustments to find the right balance between poetic and lingering, yet still allowing the players to progress with their story.

If you feel like it is necessary, you can repeat one of the scenes with more or fewer sensations.

Scene II (two players): The two young people from the last scene, went on to have a relationship but now they have split up. The definitive argument has lasted all night. They are both sad and unhappy but have both run out of angry words. Outside, the birds have started chirping, and it's slowly getting brighter. One of them are now packing their belongings, intending to leave the flat.

The scene ends when someone says goodbye.

Suggestions for things you can introduce: The sight of a clenched hands and white knuckles. The sound of the upstairs neighbors arguing. The floor feeling hard and cold under bare feet. The taste of a cigarette being smoked out the window and unbrushed teeth. The smell of the person who will soon be gone.

Painting Scenes

Because the painting scenes are so closely tied to the characters and their preceding actions, it's difficult to practice them before the scenario. Instead, have a conversation about how they function in the scenario. Distribute **page 18** and go through the different steps and rules of the painting scenes. Although it may seem like a lot of information right now, it all makes sense once you get started.

What are the painting scenes?

They are an abstract and poetic emotional space where the characters experience their desires and emotions melting together with art. Everything that happens in the painting scenes is symbolic, so players don't need to be 'pretend painting' a picture. The painting scenes are mood-based rather than action-based. They can be both a sensory oasis where the erotic relationship between the characters develops and serve as a space where Amelia, Hester, and Elizabeth can act out the conflicts, emotions, and tensions lying beneath the surface in the scenes at Wintershill. Players shouldn't read too much into Amelia being the painter and Elizabeth being the subject of the painting. Everyone will be taking turns being the brush, canvas, and observer. Remember that the painting scenes don't need to make logical sense but are about being swept away by art and emotionality.

Touch - a brief exercise

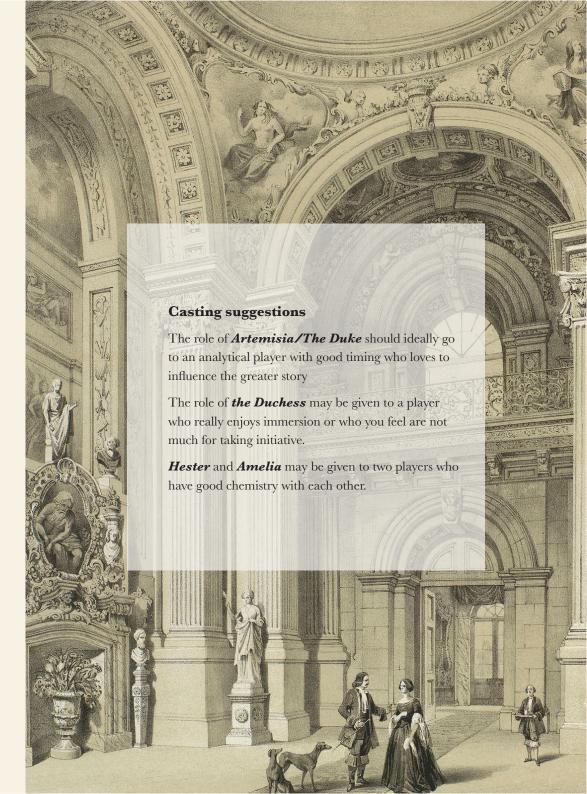
The players stand on the floor. You choose a track from the playlist, and they begin to walk around each listening to the music and you join them. When two people meet, they make eye contact while stroking each other's arms, touch hands, and possibly caress each other's faces. When eye contact is broken, they move on. Repeat until the music stops.

The exercise is not the same as a painting scene, but it prepares the players for the physical aspect.

Casting and the scenario's conclusion

Now you can assign the players their character. It is up to you whether the players choose a character for themselves or if you assign them a character based on the workshop. First, present the roles of Amelia, Elizabeth, and Hester with a few keywords and briefly explain how the dual role the Duke/Artemisia works.

As a final point, repeat the mechanics for the players - the sensations, painting scenes, and the Duke's ability to intervene in scenes. Make room for eventual questions.





Proloque

The prologue is a short storytelling sequence set to music.

While listening to J.S. Bach's Air on a G String, the players take turns briefly describing things that their character are longing for. Descriptions can be both abstract and concrete. "I long for physical closeness. I long to be recognized. I long to stand in the rain and feel the drops fall on my face. I long for freedom."

Artemisia/The Duke describes as Artemisia. When the music ends, you may begin the first scene.

Act I- August

The first act takes place in late August. The weather is warm, and the air is dense. The roads have been too dry for a long time, and dust whirls through the air. The nearby forest lakes smell of stale water, mixing with smell of roses from the garden. In this act, Amelia, Hester, and Elizabeth meet each other, and their intimate relationship commences. The mood in the act should be primarily positive and playful. The act ends with the first painting scene of the game, where Artemisia awakens that which has been slumbering in the subconscious of the characters until now.

Scene 1.1 Wintershill House

Present: all

It is late summer, and today is dense and humid. Regardless of class and disposition, the sweat is unavoidable seeping out from under stays and wigs. Amelia has just arrived at Wintershill House. She does not yet know how long she will be here. A servant leads her directly to the Duke, waiting on the first floor. He stands by a window in one of the galleries. On the way, Amelia passes Artemisia's painting. She does not yet know what the Duke expects from the portrait or why he has chosen her to paint it.

The scene ends, when you cut it



What must happen, and what can happen

Start the scene with the interaction between Amelia and the Duke, after a while, Amelia suddenly spots the Duchess and Hester, picking flowers in the garden. Make it clear that Amelia sees that the two women have noticed her – there is an exchange of gazes between them. Shift the focus of the scene to Elizabeth and Hester. The mood in the scene should be playful and flirtatious, the statues in the gallery smiling mischievously, and the thorns on the roses pricking teasingly. Switch back and forth between Amelia/the Duke and Elizabeth/Hester a few times.

Perhaps the four people meet at some point in the scene, either because the Duke calls for his wife or because Hester and Elizabeth meet them at their own initiative, however, that is up to the players.

If it is not brought up be the players, ask the Duke directly what he expects from Amelia and the portrait she is to paint.

The purpose of the scene

We experience the first meeting between the three women and, above all, the first glances and looks they share. In addition, the characters (and players) find out what the Duke expects from the painting.

Scene 1.2) A Meeting by the Stables

Present: Elizabeth and Amelia

For several days, Amelia has been trying to approach the Duchess Elizabeth to make some preliminary sketches. By chance the meet in front of the stables one morning. Amelia has brought her sketchbook. Elizabeth has come down to check on her favorite horse, which had a slight limp two days ago. This was the last place they expected to see one and other. A stable is not a suitable place for two such ladies. It is a place for working men and large animals, filled with dust, noise, and shit. No one dares to look directly at the Duchess; that would be too disrespectful, but she and Amelia acutely feel how the stable boys eye them while pretending to be working.

The scene ends, when someone utters the words "you are beautiful."

What must happen, and what can happen

During the scene, Elizabeth must see Amelia's sketches. If the players don't get there by themselves, describe how the winds blow Amelia's drawings, out of her hand, landing in from of Duchess. Maybe the Duchess finds a sketch of herself among the papers?

The purpose of the scene

The first intimate meeting between Elizabeth and Amelia.

Scene 1.3 Just an Apple

Present: Hester and Amelia

It is early evening. Outside by the herb and vegetable gardens, along the apple orchard, Hester has found a quiet moment alone with her thoughts. So has Amelia. She is sitting in the soft grass with her pencil and paper, sketching while eating an apple. The branches of the trees are hanging heavily under the weight of the fruit. This year will be good apple year. Hester has often dreamed of biting into a sweet and juicy apple straight from the tree. But the apples belong to the Duke, and it is forbidden for the servant at Wintershill to pick from any of the trees.

The scene ends, when someone picks an apple.

What must happen, and what can happen

What must happen, and suggestion to what may happen during the scene.

During the scene, an apple falls from a nearby tree, which now lies only stone's throw from Amelia's feet. Ask Hester if she sometime picked the apples as a child, what happened to the children who got caught?

The purpose of the scene

The scene is about having Amelia tempt Hester and the budding intimacy between them. At the same time, it allows the players to delve into Hester's life as a servant.

Scene 1.4 The Evening Ritual

Present: Elizabeth and Hester

It is evening, and Elizabeth is preparing for bed. Hester has helped her out of her fine evening gown, she is now wearing an ornate silk robe. With her hair let down Elizabeth is sitting by the dressing table starring into a large, gilded mirror. Hester brushes Elizabeth's hair while Elizabeth studies her face in the mirror. Every evening looks for signs of new creases and wrinkles. She massages her skin with a fragrant oil while Hester thoroughly examines hair, plucking out any grays. On opposite wall hangs a magnificent portrait painted of Elizabeth the year she turned 27.

The scene ends, when someone offers a kiss.

What must happen, and what can happen

At some point, ask Elizabeth to remember the painting of the portrait on the wall. Ask Hester to describe how her mistress was admired by the young painter. Was the Duke perhaps a little jealous? Is this why he has now chosen a female painter?

The purpose of the scene

We focus on Hester and Elizabeth's relationship. The players can investigate the internal dynamics and intimacy between the two characters. The scene also puts Elizabeth's fear of growing old front and center.

Painting Scene I

Amelia, Hester, and Elizabeth meet Artemisia for the first time and make the first brushstroke.

Adress to Hester, Elizabeth and Amelia: In this first painting scene, your budding curiosity and appetites are awakened. When Artemisia "opens" all senses, you will suddenly see the world with entirely new eyes. In this scene the first brushstroke will be placed on the canvas. No literally, but as a point you negotiate and play towards during the scene. When scene is ended, the first stroke of the brush has been places on the canvas.

To Artemisia: How is Artemisia, when first meeting her chosen ones? Flirty, playful, or something entirely different. Although Hester, Elizabeth, and Amelia do not know exactly who she is or what she is, they still all instinctively know her. Artemisia seen through them, knowing what they dream of and long for. If they create a painting, she deems beautiful enough, Artemisia may take that as her new residence.

Scenen should last around 2-3 music tracks

Suggestions for music: Monteverdi: L'Incoronazione, Mozart: Vesperae Solennes de Confessore, Handel: Il Trionfo del tempo,

Handel: Lascio ch'io pianga

Act II - September

The second act takes place during the month of September. Autumn is slowly beginning to show, and the hunting season has started. The harvest will soon be brought in, and the ripe fruit on trees and bushes are in desperate need of picking. In this act, the Duke hosts a hunting party, where he expects Elizabeth to play hostess. There are two painting scenes in this act, one fixed ending the act and one you can freely place.



Painting Scene II

Painting Scene II can be placed freely during the second act.

Adress to Hester, Elizabeth and Amelia: What state of mind do you bring to Artemisia? What are you trying to escape from? In this realm of beauty, pleasure, and desire, all your worries and troubles can be painted away. Here, you can freely speak, see, touch, and feel each other.

To Artemisia: It is up to you how the painting should be painted. Will Amelia, Hester, and Elizabeth be focusing on the hands, eyes, colors, or light and shadow? Remember that you can take inspiration from the things which has happened in previous scenes. How is Artemisia in this scene? Is she satisfied with her chosen ones, or are they burdened too much by the trivialities of everyday life, instead of cultivating the beautiful and sensual? How does Artemisia bring bring about the most beautiful painting?

When the scene ends, a new part of the painting is finished.

Scene 2.1 *A letter from Sir Thomas* Present: Elizabeth, Hester and Amelia

Elizabeth is drawing a flower arrangement, with Amelia instructing her. The Duchess has had the last pale pink roses brought into the green morning room. This is her favorite room because the light always shines through the windows beautifully. Hester enters the room with a letter for Amelia. It is from Sir Thomas. When Amelia opens the envelope, a small piece of jewelry falls out, landing at her feet.

The scene ends, when you cut it

What must happen, and what can happen

During the scene, ask Amelia to describe the piece of jewelry. Is it a family heirloom, or is it the latest fashion? Ask Hester or Elizabeth whether they think the jewelry suits Amelia's personality.

The purpose of the scene

To remind Amelia of the life awaiting her if she fails to succeed with the portrait.

Scene 2.2 Master and the Servant Present: The Duke and Hester

It is a quiet gray morning, and the rain is drizzling softly outside. The water is washing away the sweat and dust of summer. Hester is tidying up the Duchess's clothes and preparing her things for the upcoming hunting party. Hester checks the riding clothes, brushes the hats and the boots and polishes riding crops. While meticulously and thoroughly arranging the clothes, she senses that she is not alone anymore. The Duke stands casually in a doorway, watching her work. He picks up one of the Duchess's gloves from a table, sniffing it and caressing it against his cheek.

The scene ends, when someone either cries or gets angry

What must happen, and what can happen

The players can take this scene in many different directions depending on which ending they move towards. If the scene becomes very tense, you can optionally describe how a bottle of perfume is suddenly knocked over, shattering against the floor, or have the wind blow a window open forcefully.

The purpose of the scene

The scene centers the power dynamics between Hester and the Duke, while also highlighting the Duke's agenda to win back his wife.

Scene 2.3 In the gallery

Present: Elizabeth and Amelia

Elizabeth is about to join the hunting party, which has just left for the first shooting of the season. She will not participate herself, but it is expected that she is present as a bringer of good luck. They have not had much time for painting this past week, as preparations for the hunt has drained Elizabeth's time and energy. Wearing her riding clothes and intricately styled hair, she seeks out Amelia in the gallery, who is standing in front of a small painting depicting a landscape close to Wintershill. I was made by Amelia's father.

The scene ends, when you cut it.

What must happen, and what can happen

During the scene, remind the players that they can see Artemisia's painting from where they stand. They sense the pleading eyes of Holofernes.

The purpose of the scene

The scene can either be about Elizabeth having to make a choice between art and her husband, or it can end up focusing on Amelia's artistic insecurities and her relationship with her father.

Scene 2.4 The Village

Present: Elizabeth and Hester

Once a month, Hester brings some food from the kitchen to her parents with the Duke's permission. They served the family for many years but have now grown old and are unable to work. They live in a small worn-out house in the nearby village, where most of the houses are owned by the Duke. Here they grow potatoes and cabbages and keep a small run of chickens. Hester's mother sells the eggs at the market, along with small wooden toys carved by her father. Today, Elizabeth has joined Hester. She has never been in one of the village cottages before. Upon entering the house, they discover that Hester's parents are not home.

The scene ends, when either Elizabeth, Hester, or the Duke can no longer bear to be in the house.

What must happen, and what can happen

During the scene, you may highlight some of the significant contrasts between life in the worn-out house and life at Wintershill. Perhaps, ask Elizabeth to describe if she perceives Hester differently here in the cottage than up at the estate.

The purpose of the scene

To remind Hester of her future if she remains in service at Wintershill. The scene also accentuates the class difference between Hester and Elizabeth.

Scene 2.5 An Unfinished Painting Present: Amelia and the Duke

Amelia has been working on the Duchess's portrait for over a month. So far, the Duke has not shown much interest in the painting, but now the hunting party has come to an end, and Wintershill is quiet once again. The only outsider left in the house is the painter. Amelia uses a small side gallery as a temporary studio. When she is not working on the painting, she keeps it covered to protect the surface. This morning, she finds the Duke present in the makeshift studio, standing in front of the cloth-covered picture.

The scene ends, when you cut it

What must happen, and what can happen

What must happen, and suggestion to what may happen during the scene. If the Duke uncovers the canvas, ask him his opinion. Does it befit a Duchess, or is it perhaps too daring or modern?

The purpose of the scene

The scene revolves around Amelia and her uncertain fate. We are reminded of what happens if the Duke does not like the painting. Will Amelia stand by her artistic vision?

Painting Scene III

Adress to Hester, Elizabeth and Amelia: What state of mind do you bring to Artemisia? What are you trying to escape from? In this realm of beauty, pleasure, and desire, all your worries and troubles can be painted away. Here, you can freely speak, see, touch, and feel each other.

To Artemisia: It is up to you how the painting should be painted. Will Amelia, Hester, and Elizabeth be focusing on the hands, eyes, colors, or light and shadow? Remember that you can take inspiration from the things which has happened in previous scenes. How is Artemisia in this scene? Is she satisfied with her chosen ones, or are they burdened too much by the trivialities of everyday life, instead of cultivating the beautiful and sensual? How does Artemisia bring bring about the most beautiful painting?

When the scene ends, a new part of the painting is finished.

Act III - October

The third and final act takes place in October, the week leading up to the unveiling of the finished painting. Outside, it is become cold and rainy. The leaves of the trees turn red and yellow, soon to die and fall to the ground. The Duchess's portrait is nearly done. Only the final details remain.



Scene 3.1 A Dead Bird

Present: Amelia, Hester and Elizabeth

Elizabeth's little yellow canary is dead. Yesterday, it was alive and well, chirping merrily in its cage, but now it lies at the bottom of the cage completely stiff and cold, with eyes dull and lifeless. Elizabeth is sitting in front of the cage in silence. She will not let anyone take the cage away, and she refuses to come down for either lunch or dinner.

The scene ends, when Elizabeth makes a decision.

What must happen, and what can happen

There is nothing specific which must happen in this scene. Let the players linger ont he symbolism.

The purpose of the scene

The scene is about the transient nature of beauty and Elizabeth's loneliness and fear of abandonment.

Scene 3.2 Make Room for the New Portrait Present: Amelia and Hester

The Duke has ordered Elizabeth's old portrait to be taken down to make room for the new one. Amelia helps Hester dismantle the large canvas. The old portrait was painted by one of the country's most celebrated artists, back when he was young and unknown. Initially, a lot of critics refused the painting; saying that the brushstrokes were too imprecise and the colors too muddy. But now the opinions of artists and critics has changed. Even though the painting has been removed from the wall, you can still faint outlines on the wallpaper.

The scene ends, when you cut it.

What must happen, and what can happen

The scene can center both Amelia and Hester. You could ask Hester how it feels to be in a place where everything can be so easily replaced? Is she just like the painting? You could also ask Amelia if it brings her hope to learn that space is being made for her painting. Or if she is anxious that she will never be able to paint a work an equal quality.

The purpose of the scene

It's the last scene alone between Hester and Amelia. They both know their time together is almost over.

Scene 3.3 This life we share Present: Elizabeth and the Duke

It is evening. The Duke and Elizabeth have had dinner together in silence. Outside, the autumn wind howls and Wintershill feels cold to the bone. Elizabeth has gone up to the nursery to check on her two youngest children, sleeping together in a big bed. Lit only by a single candle she kneels next to the bed stroking the fair hair of the youngest child. She sits quietly, listening to the children's light, rapid breaths. The Duke enters the room and sits beside her.

The scene ends, when the light either goes out or is blown out (both you and the players can cut the scene)

What must happen, and what can happen

Occasionally, one of the children moves in their sleep. Makes small sounds or whimpers but never wakes up.

The purpose of the scene

The scene is about the Duchess and the Duke's relationship to each other. The Duchess is reminded of everything she has at Wintershill and everything the Duke can take away from her.

Scene 3.4 Evening Ritual II

Present: Hester and Elizabeth

Note: This scene takes place directly after the previous

The Duchess returns to her chambers. Hester is present as always, and the usual evening ritual awaits. Elizabeth's hair is brushed, her face and hands massaged and oiled. Hester prepares her nightgown and readies the bed. The old portrait no longer hangs on the wall, making the room look completely different.

The scene ends, when you cut it

What must happen, and what can happen

Give the players space to linger in the scene. If necessary, tell the players that the Duke has brought in new bird for the Duchess. It looks exactly like the old one, but its chirping sounds oddly different.

The purpose of the scene

The scene mirrors the first evening scene between Elizabeth and Hester. Once again, we explore their relationship and how it might have changed..

Painting scene IV

While the first painting scene was about arousing the budding curiosity and appetite of the characters, this scene is about suppressing them and saying goodbye.

Adress to all: In this scene, you paint the final brushstroke on the canvas. Perhaps Artemisia will decide that the painting is beautiful enough for her to inhabit. When the scene ends and the music stops, Hester, Amelia, and Elizabeth can no longer feel Artemisia.

The scene should last about 2-3 music tracks

Suggestions for music: Purcell: *Dido and Aeneas*, Purcell: The *Fairy Queen*, Handel: *Lascio ch'io pianga*, Handel: *Salve Regina*

Scene 3.5 The Portrait

Present: Amelia, Elizabeth and Hester

The portrait is finally complete. The last brushstrokes are dry, and the varnish has been applied. The picture has been put on display for everyone to see, placed in the middle of the temporary studio. Elizabeth sits quietly on a chair, Hester tidies up mechanically, and Amelia has slowly begun packing her painting supplies into a large bag. Once Amelia felt that the painting was finished, they could no longer hear Artemisia. The silence is deafening.

The scene ends, when you cut it

What must happen, and what can happen

This scene can be taken in many directions but nothing specific has to happen. The players can destroy the painting or reluctantly hand it over. The duke can reveal that he knows what has been going on, or he can remain ignorant. There can be intense drama or oppressive silence. All endings are equally valid. The duke must intervene in the scene. If the player does not do so themselves, you knock on the table and ask the duke to enter the scene.

The purpose of the scene

This is the final scene. The characters know that their time together is coming to an end.



Concluding the scenario, Amelia, Elizabeth, and Hester will do one final *sensation*. The sensations can be an extension of the previous scene, but they may also indicate what might happen to the character afterwards.

When you have listened to Bach's *Air on a G String* one last time, the game ends.





The Painter

Amelia was born into an artist family. For as long as she can remember, it was just her and her father. He was a successful landscape painter and engraver who owned his own print shop. It was him who first recognized her talent and she also made her apprenticeship under him. He gave her the education that great talent requires and, more importantly, the recognition she deserved. Her father often told her that he knew she would become a great artist, and she always believed him.

Amelia was schooled more like a boy. Among her father's circle of friends and clients was a wealthy businessman with a large collection of Greek and Roman sculptures. He generously allowed the young Amelia to spend time in the collection so she could make her sketches. It was a happy time, although it was completely improper for a young girl to around naked statues. Fortunately, virtue and decency meant less to her father than cultivating her artistic talent. Amelia was often left alone in the large gallery longingly drawing and caressing the marble skin of Venus and Diana.

At nineteen, she had the honor of presenting a painting at the Royal Academy's spring exhibition. Amelia was one of only three women to do so. The distinguished members of the academy, all agreed that Amelia's self-portrait as a painter was one of the highlights of the exhibition, although some critics thought it was too soft and feminine.

It was the first and last time she exhibited at the art academy.

When Amelia was twenty-two, her father had a stroke alone in their small house. He survived but had lost most of his mobility. Amelia had to abandon her planned trip to Rome and Florence in order to run the print shop full-time. At first, things went reasonably well, but without her father heading the business, customers and friends slowly went elsewhere. Eventually, they had no choice but to sell the shop. The money has been used to pay for her father's care, so Amelia could paint and make a name for herself, but they are running out fast. Amelia has started teaching drawing and watercolor to the daughters of wealthy families. The salary is small, as only established artists make good money teaching, but at least they are neither homeless nor hungry.

Only rarely does Amelia have time to paint. She carries a sketchbook everywhere with her and draws when she can—a flower, a carriage, a beautiful woman here and there—but it never amounts to more than that. The studio in the attic where her father taught her shapes and colors has been scrubbed clean and rented out to a young poet of dubious talent. In her thoughts, Amelia is ready to accept that painting is slowly fading from her life, but her heart yearns to hold a brush again. Every night when she goes to sleep, she is haunted by ideas and dreams of subjects and motifs, each one more beautiful and grander than the last.

Sketches in black and white can be beautiful in all their rawness, but nothing compares to the art of painting. Soft brushstrokes and the saturation of colors—nothing delights, pains, and takes one's breath away quite like a painting. The thought of never painting again makes her cry. She wants to enrich the world with beauty. This is what she is made for.

Two months ago, she received a marriage proposal from Sir Thomas Moore. The same businessman whose sculptures captivated her as a young girl. In the intervening years, he has become a widower, living in a large house in the fashionable part of London with his children. The eldest only a few years younger than Amelia. As his wife Amelia could easily provide for her father, giving him a dignified retirement. She would become a respectable married woman, but all they are allowed to paint are flowers displayed in living rooms or the trees in their garden, never Greek mythological heroes, historical battles, or beautifully curved bodies.

Amelia had almost accepted Sir Thomas's offer when she received the letter from the Duke of Somerset. This letter made her hope, as she has never dared hope before. A painting of the Duchess's is a magnificent commission, the likes that only few artists can boast of. For Amelia, this is her last chance to establish a name for herself as a painter and live independently.

Sir Thomas has agreed that their official engagement can wait until the portrait is finished. If it becomes a success, Amelia will decline the marriage proposal. She has heard from other London painters that the Duke of Somerset is not much interest in art and that the painting is a special gesture to the Duchess. Amelia knows that she can create something glorious if she is allowed to paint completely freely.

Many years ago, Amelia visited Wintershill House with her father, as he sought to paint the area around the grand estate. He spoke with deep respect and humility to the young duchess, complementing the forests, the house, and the colors of the landscape. Amelia remembers the large gallery and all the paintings, and the beauty kept there. It made a lasting impression on her. The Duchess herself appeared like one of the statues in Sir Thomas's collection. Amelia felt a deep-seated urge to reach out and touch her pale skin, as she would a marble sculpture. She heard herself gasp as the women looked at her softly. She will not remember Amelia, but Amelia remembers her.

Then she was just a shy young girl, but now she returns as a painter in her own right.

About Artemisia

Artemisia is a feminine spiritual presence, residing in one of the Duke's paintings. At the beginning of the scenario, Amelia has met her once before. Her name was Diana then, stepping forth from a sculpture in Sir Thomas's art collection. Artemisia gave the young Amelia a glimpse of what true beauty and sensuousness meant. She whispered pure beauty to her, and together they drew it forth on her bare marble skin. Amelia has chased that moment ever since, trying to capture it in her paintings. Since then, she has only sensed fragments of Artemisia in small moments of pleasure, but she has not given up hope that they will meet again.

Judith Beheading Holofernes by Artemisia Gentileschi

Judith Beheading Holofernes is a Renaissance painting that, in this story, is part of the Duke's art collection. It depicts the beautiful Jewish widow Judith, who helped by her handmaiden, beheads the Assyrian general whose army has besieged her city. It is from this painting that Artemisia manifests herself. Amelia remembers seeing the painting during her first visit to Wintershill. Then, the motif scared her, and she was haunted by the wild gaze of Holofernes at night. Now she thinks of it often without fear. It has taught her that she need not limit herself to pleasant and appropriate motifs. A great artist must dare to paint untamed and brutal subjects. Beauty also exists in the rawness of reality, depicting the world as it truly is.

Amelia Gray

24 years of age

Painter and drawing teacher.

Unmarried, but almost engaged to the businessman Sir Thomas Moore

Amelia in bullet points

Talented painter, but has failed to achieve success

Artistically ambitious - wants to create something timeless

When not painting, haunted by ideas and inspiration

Considering marriage to Sir Thomas to support her father

The portrait is her last chance for independence



The Duchess

Elizabeth was only 20 years old when she got married. She was very beautiful, and he was very rich, so in that respect, they were the perfect couple. Everyone said so. Her mother had thoroughly prepared her for the duties of a duchess, and today Elizabeth can proudly say that she has not brought shame upon either of the families. She has given birth to three healthy children, the eldest being almost an adult now. She has stood by her husband's side, as a faithful wife, even when he was unbearable. Never questioning his actions, never complaining, and always dressed in the latest fashion, moving, and speaking gently and elegantly no matter how exhausted she was. All the noblemen from Liverpool to Dover were envious of the Duke of Somerset. When he took lovers, she took music lessons. When he was drinking and partying, she read Milton in bed. When he rode out hunting, she made sure his favorite dishes were prepared from the game he brought home. That was her life for many years.

The Duke has never been malicious towards her, but he was never interested in understanding Elizabeth as a person. While he loved hunting, feasting, and boisterous political debates into the wee hours, she longed for connection and intimacy. However, when he visited her bed, he was mechanical and brusque, and when dining together, it was often in silence. He showed no interest in her passions and pursuits.

When she humbly asked him to accompany her to exhibitions or to the opera, he always replied that the show would only bore him, so she had better go alone or take her mother.

When Elizabeth gave birth to her third child, she subsequently fell seriously ill. It was then decided that no more children were needed now that several heirs were living and well. From that decision was made, Elizabeth and the Duke have lived separate. Elizabeth continues to be the good hostess when there are guests at Wintershill, but otherwise, they see each other as little as possible. Instead, she is spending her time expanding the already enormous art collection. Unlike the Duke, she has brought fame and glamour to the family, inviting artists from London, France, and Italy to Wintershill. She has played her role as duchess to perfection, but Elizabeth herself has almost disappeared.

The older she gets, the more a vast loneliness creep in on her. At Wintershill, one is never alone, but one is also never in company. There is always a servant in the corridor or a gardener trimming a rosebush when walking by, but these are not people Elizabeth can talk to. They have other tasks and chores than listening to music sent from Vienna or reading aloud from the latest writings by Goethe. They probably wouldn't appreciate it if they had the chance.

If only she could, she would immediately snap her husband and all his hunting buddies away and fill Wintershill with art, music, and beauty. In every room, there would be a painter or a singer. They would have balls in the art gallery, and the paintings would come to life and participate in the dancing. Servants dressed in white would serve delicate pink cakes and champagne in crystal glasses from trays made of mother-of-pearl. Thus she has plenty of time to daydream.

The many hours alone have marked not only heart but also her face. When looking at herself in the mirror, she no longer sees the same beautiful young woman with fine skin and clear eyes, but a middle-aged woman with too much makeup. Elizabeth fears old age more than loneliness. Her beauty is the last part of her real self. The rest of her has been grinded down by her life at Wintershill.

The only person who keeps the gloomy thoughts a little at bay is Hester her maid. She makes the stifling and melancholic life at Wintershill melt away, most days. When Hester brushes her hair or laces her dress, she feels lighter and freer. She allows herself to be playful with Hester, almost childish when she knows the Duke is away to London. They take her two youngest children on picnics and in her head, Elizabeth pretends they are a family. Then she feels young and beautiful again.

She even lets Hester call her Elizabeth instead of "my lady" when no one else is listening. It feels equally wrong and right.

Over the past six months, the Duke has been much more at home and Elizabeth senses that something is shifting. He has insisted on dining with her, he has visited her chambers to politely converse, and he has bought her several expensive gifts. Elizabeth fears that he is regretting their arrangement and wants to return to their old marriage and the marital bed. Physically she could still give him more children, but that is not the only thing she fears. Elizabeth don't want to live as husband and wife again - it would be going from one loneliness to another. If he would only take a new lover instead. Elizabeth don't know how much how much longer she can keep the Duke at an arm's length. How do you say no to a person who regards a yes their God-given right?

The Duke has hired an unknown female painter to paint Elizabeth's portrait. A young, untested artist, who is supposedly talented, but whom Elizabeth can shape with her sense and knowledge of art. It is almost unbearable how well he knows her after all. The gesture tickles Elizabeth's vanity, but she is also acutely aware that it will require repayment. The portrait is, nevertheless, her last chance to be immortalized before her beauty completely fades away.

About Artemisia

Artemisia is a spiritual presence that has taken up residence in one of the Duke's paintings. At the beginning of the scenario, Elizabeth has not met her in her full form. However, aspects of the spirit have been quietly present in Elizabeth's life. Artemisia is like a déjà vu - a sweet, warm feeling of familiarity that still feels foreign. Artemisia has stood by Elizabeth's side in all of life's small moments of complete pleasure and beauty. She is present in the taste of the perfect apple from the orchard. She strokes Elizabeth's cheek when a piece of art or music takes her breath away, and she holds both their hands in the most intimate and profound moments with Hester.

Judith Beheading Holofernes by Artemisia Gentileschi

Judith Beheading Holofernes is a Renaissance painting that, in this story, is part of the Duke's art collection. It depicts the beautiful Jewish widow Judith, who helped by her handmaiden, beheads the Assyrian general whose army has besieged her city. It is from this painting that Artemisia manifests herself. Elizabeth has always been drawn to the painting. Perhaps because the Duke has always despised it. Every time she sees it, she is sucked into the depths of darkness and the sharpness of light. Elizabeth feels a kinship with Judith. They have both had to sacrifice their bodies and use their beauty for the sake of their people and family. Elizabeth wishes she had the same strength and power.

Elizabeth Georgina Howard Hertuginde af Somerset

36 years of age

Married to the Duke of Somerset

Mother of three and mistress over thirty servants at Wintershill

Elizabeth in bullet points

Tired of playing the perfect duchess

Seeking likeminded who share her passion for art and beauty

Lonely in her life at Wintershill

Feeling old and afraid of losing her beauty

Deeply connected to Hester, but their relationship is undefined



The Maid

Both of Hester's parents were servants at Wintershill House, as were their parents before them. Everyone Hester grew up with could recount generation after generation in service to the Wintershill House either as farmers, craftsmen, or servants. Except when attending church on Sundays, Hester has never set foot on land or been in a house not owned by the Duke of Somerset.

Hester entered service at Wintershill House at age 13. She began as third kitchen maid, responsible for keeping the fires burning in the stoves and scrubbing the enormous pots and kettles. Down the kitchens, the master and mistress were never seen. Ingredients came in, dishes went out, but for Hester and the other kitchen maids, their employers were close to mythical. She had worked at Wintershill for over three years before she saw a member of the family.

The kitchens were a harsh and ugly place, so when Hester got the opportunity to advance to chambermaid, she didn't hesitate. Hester still remembers the first time she went upstairs, helping to wash the floors of the grand gallery. For an hour, they dragged heaps of heavy buckets of water through the house. When she finally looked up the room almost blinded her. The walls were saturated with enormous gold-framed paintings of people so lifelike she feared they would jump out in front of her.

The ceiling was painted to resemble the heavenly realm with angels and other biblical figures hovering above her, only clothed in light fabric and bare skin. The experience of the gallery awakened something in Hester that she didn't know existed. For days, she searched for another opportunity to go upstairs. When standing in front of the paintings, it was as if she were being swept into a strange world of beautiful colors and beautiful people. It became her sanctuary. It was in the gallery that Hester saw the Duchess up close for the first time. While the Duchess was being captivated by the art, Hester stood behind a side door, looking at her through a crack. The young Duchess was as mesmerizing as the paintings. The perfectly shaped hands, the wavy hair, and the dazzling smile. Hester felt instantly drawn to her.

The contrast between upstairs and downstairs has always unsettled Hester deeply. The servants' quarter are dark and low-ceilinged, with air thick of body odors and stale food. Many of the older servants are rough looking, sunken in, and often toothless. They display all the signs of years of hard labor. When looking at them, Hester sees her own future. The servants and peasants at Wintershill are forced to toil for the Duke but are punished for the slightest misstep and defiance. The Duke can tolerate nothing but complete obedience. Those who do not die while in service or leave in bad standing are allowed to retire into small leaky cottages in the nearby village, living out their final years. This is where her parents live now.



Through nearly 17 years at Wintershill, Hester has held many different positions. Every time she was promoted, she began planning how she could move up the latter again. The more she advanced in the downstairs hierarchy, the more ambitious she became. In recent years, Hester has held the prestigious position of the Duchess's personal lady's maid. No one in her family has ever held such a high position. Her family is immensely proud of her. She is able to live a life far better than that of her parents.

Hester and the Duchess's relationship has become unusually close over time. Like all servants, she had of course heard of the close bond that can form between a mistress and her lady's maid, but she had no idea it would feel like this. When the Duke is away, the Duchess becomes almost like a playful child. She giggles and frolics, and Hester sometimes don't know how to act. She wishes she could fully reciprocate Elizabeth's sweet and loving mannerisms, but she dares not. What would happen if it were discovered? Yet Hester calls the Duchess Elizabeth instead of "my lady" when she knows they are alone. It feels both entirely right and very wrong.

After the birth of her youngest child, the Duchess became very ill. Since then, the Duke and Duchess have lived separate lives. This was her reward for many years scandalless marriage and three healthy children.

Now Elizabeth fears that the Duke wants to reassume a traditional marriage. It has made her moody and withdrawn. The Duke's constant presence is a reminder to Hester that she will never be anything but a lady's maid. She cannot advance any further. Contrary to the Duchess, the Duke is ever conscious of his rank and rights. Hester sees him watching everything and everyone. She fears not only for herself but also for her elderly parents, who still live at his mercy. She has often considered leaving Wintershill. Perhaps she could find work in a factory in one of the larger cities, but that trajectory is full of uncertainties. Besides, if she left, it would be forever. She would never be able to return to Wintershill, and she would never see Elizabeth again. Perhaps Hester can manage without Elizabeth, but she doubts Elizabeth can survive without her.

The Duke has hired a young female painter to execute the Duchess's portrait. Hester is dizzy at the thought of a young woman traveling freely around the world alone to paint. She is equally fascinated and shocked by the choice of artist. But the news of the portrait also stirs Hester's longing for the grand gallery and the beauty of the arts. It has been a long time since she felt alive, complete, and unbound, like when she first saw the painted ceiling at Wintershill.

About Artemisia

Artemisia is a spiritual presence that has taken up residence in one of the Duke's paintings. At the beginning of the scenario, Hester has not met her in her complete form. She has only experienced Artemisia fleetingly a few times in her life. Artemisia is the sensation of forgetting everything around her and sinking into a sweet and beautiful moment where the mind finds peace and nothing hurts. She is small glimpses of complete enjoyment and sensuality. It was Artemisia who gently stroked Hester's hair the first time she saw the gallery at Wintershill. Just as it was Artemisia who gave her the courage to call the Duchess Elizabeth instead of "my lady."

Judith Beheading Holofernes by Artemisia Gentileschi

Judith Beheading Holofernes is a Renaissance painting that, in this story, is part of the Duke's art collection. It depicts the beautiful Jewish widow Judith, who helped by her handmaiden, beheads the Assyrian general whose army has besieged her city. It is from this painting that Artemisia manifests herself. Hester has always been drawn to the painting. The women in the painting are not delicate and humble flowers but determined and resourceful, with strong hands and fleshy arms. The handmaiden does not passively observe but acts on par with Judith. In her thoughts, she has named the handmaiden Esther.

Hester

31 years of age (or thereabouts)

Lady's maid to the Duchess of Somerset

Unmarried

Hester in bullet points

Has risen quickly in ranks among the staff at Wintershill

Desires more than a life in service

Seeks refuge in beauty when life becomes too harsh and ugly

Feels deeply connected to the Duchess

Considering leaving Wintershill



The Duke

The duke of Somerset is one of the country's wealthiest and most powerful men. He owns vast lands in southern England, including the magnificent Wintershill House, where his family has resided for generations. The Duke is a typical man of his time and class. He rewards those who are loyal and punishes those who oppose him and threatens his reputation. The Duke has been married to Elizabeth fourteen years. Although the Duchess comes from a much lower ranking noble family, she has always been a suitable wife, unfailing in her duties. Together they have three children, with the eldest soon to become an adult. His great passions are for hunting, sports, partying, and politics — enjoying a drinking and debating till the early morning.

When the duke and duchess are not at home at Wintershill, they are in London taking in the city's many diversions. He has always expected Elizabeth to faithfully accompany him and accommodate the life he wished to live. Mostly she has done this without complaining. She was always standing tall and beautiful by his side, looking the other way when he took new mistresses, more or less publicly. After the birth of their youngest child, she became seriously ill, and for many weeks, he feared losing her and regretted not cherishing her better. Afterwards, they decided not to have any more children and began to live separate lives. The freedom from fulfilling her marital obligations was his gift to her.

Elizabeth has used her freedom to pursue her passion for art and music. Of course, she could never be allowed to travel alone away from Wintershill House, but she has had the freedom to spend all the money she wanted, inviting one insipid painter after another. The overcrowded gallery and art chamber are increasingly overflowing.

After living separate lives for four years, the Duke is beginning to miss his wife. He naturally longs for her body, but he also genuinely misses her presence and essence. Therefore, the Duke has decided to win Elizabeth back. For the past six months, he has made extra efforts to seek her out and talk to her about her interested, even though he finds them a bit dull. He has even read a couple of her favorite books and given her quite a lot of new jewelry. With each approach, Elizabeth withdraws further, to his frustration for the Duke is not a man accustomed to rejection. Especially not from his own wife, whom he owns by law and who should obey him according to God. He could force her, but his patience has not quite run out yet. Instead, he has now hired a young female painter to create a portrait of Elizabeth, so that she can once again be immortalized by the art she loves so much.

The Duke 1/2

Elizabeth: The Duke's wife and mother of his three children. They have lived separately for four years, but now the Duke wants to renegotiate their agreement.

What he doesn't know: Elizabeth feels deeply lonely at Wintershill House, yet she still doesn't want to take him back. Elizabeth has an intimate and inappropriate relationship with the maid, Hester.

Amelia Gray: The Duke has hired her by recommendation of her soon to be fiancé, Sir Thomas Moore, as a gesture of affection. By hiring a young, untested female painter, the Duke believes he can influence the painting so that it is entirely to his liking. He is not fond of artists who push the boundaries of what is beautiful and appropriate. He does not like art such as the painting of Judith Beheading Holofernes.

What he doesn't know: If the painting is a success, Amelia will break off her engagement and live independently. Otherwise, she is forced to marry Sir Thomas to support her sick father.

Hester: The Duchess's maid, who takes care of her every intimate need. Like other maids, she can probably be bribed or threatened to reveal her mistress's secrets. Her elderly parents were also servants at Wintershill.

They now live in a small house in the local village, which they rent from the Duke.

What he doesn't know: When he is not present, Elizabeth and Hester behave as if they are equals. Hester calls the Duchess Elizabeth when they are alone instead of "my lady." She often dreams of leaving service and Wintershill.

Scenes at Wintershill

The Duke is only present in the prewritten scenes at Wintershill. A few scenes have him there from the beginning, but mostly the starting point is an interaction between Amelia, Hester, or Elizabeth. As the Duke's player, you have the opportunity to insert the Duke into any scene and leave it again. It is a symbol of the Duke's unrestricted power at Wintershill.

The scenes at Wintershill are played out while sitting around a table. To intervene in a scene, you just have to knock on the table and role-play the Duke entering the room. It is up to you how much, or how little, of the preceding conversation the Duke has heard. If you want the Duke to leave the scene, you just describes him leaving.

In the final scene, you get to decide if the Duke is satisfied with the painting, if he thinks it has been a waste of time and money, or if he might have realized that he been fooled by his wife and employees all along.



Artemisia

Artemisia is a feminine hedonistic art entity, who has taken up residence in the artwork Judith Beheading Holofernes, painted by the historical figure Artemisia Gentileschi. In this story, the painting hangs at Wintershill House owned by the Duke of Somerset. Artemisia is a spirit living to consume beauty, pleasure, and sensuousness created by and happening between humans. Artemisia is oblivious to human concerns about financial difficulties, marital unhappiness, or class hierarchies. She despises ugliness, suffering, sorrow, and repressed emotions. All she wants is for her chosen ones, is to enjoy, create, sense, and love as much as possible. Artemisia is neither good nor evil - but tragically neutral. Never satiated and always seeking more. Artemisia loves her chosen ones deeply and intensely in the moment. But when that moment is over and the enjoyment and beauty are depleted or reality intrudes too much, she moves on to a new home in a new artwork. In the final painting scene, Artemisia can choose whether the artwork they create together is beautiful enough for Artemisia to inhabit it.

Artemisia knows everything happening and being said between the characters at Wintershill. Feel free to incorporate conflicts and interactions into the painting scenes to further develop the story and the relationships between the characters. Artemisia has also been present at important moments in the characters' lives, where she has shown them glimpses of complete happiness and pleasure.

Amelia

Artemisia revealed herself fully to Amelia when she was a young girl, sketching nude statues in Sir Thomas Moore's gallery. Here she emerged from a statue of the goddess Diana. It was an intense awakening for Amelia, who has since pursued Artemisia through her paintings, albeit without success. Lately, Amelia has mostly been thinking about money, not painting much, even though Artemisia sent beautiful shapes and motifs to her dreams.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth has often met smaller fragments of Artemisia throughout her life. Artemisia has often kissed the Duchess's cheek in the grand gallery at Wintershill and embraced her when she wore her most splendid dresses. Artemisia feels most powerful when the Duchess is alone with Hester, although it is increasingly rare now that the Duke is seeking to win back his wife.

Hester

Artemisia has only presented small glimpses of herself to Hester on rare occasions. The first time Hester stepped into the grand gallery and the first time she called Elizabeth by her first name instead of just "my lady." Hester has a craving for great beauty and pleasure, but her life has mostly been filled with toil and ugliness. Artemisia fears that Hester is too anchored in her life as a servant.

The Painting scenes

The painting scenes are physical semi-live scenes, set to music. Artemisia has control over the scenes, determining when the players can move, speak, see, and touch each other. She opens the characters' senses but can also shut them down again. The painting scenes take place in an abstract space where art, intimacy, and eroticism merge. So, there is no need to pretend-play that you're painting on an actual canvas. For example, if you're going to explore the beauty in a hand or the eye, it is your job to make sure the group examines everyone's hands or look deeply into everyone's eyes. Compare them and have the characters touch and describe each other. It is also you who facilitate the use of the brush. The players use the brush to paint on each other as a way to express eroticism and sensuality. It is not just Amelia who should be painting because she is the painter or Elizabeth who should be painted on because she is the subject.

The painting scenes don't need to adhere to a specific logic. They are poetic and emotional rather than a concrete representation on how to paint a painting. You can incorporate conflicts and tensions from previous scenes into the painting scenes. Artemisia's goal is to be present in the moments of beauty and pleasure. That might lead her to spur the tension in conflicts or she might try to resolve them.

The structure of the Painting Scenes

Beginning: The players all stand up with space between them and their eyes closed. Artemisia stand in the middle of the group with the brush in her hand.

Music: When the music starts, Artemisia wakes up and steps out from her painting, while the other three remain standing with their eyes closed.

Opening of the senses:

When Artemisia first speak, the characters may open their eyes
When Artemisia say a character's name, that character may speak
When Artemisia touch a character, they may move
When Artemisia hand them the brush, they may paint

The Painting: The characters can now begin to paint the picture by "painting" on each other. They can freely speak, move, and share the brush but must always do as Artemisia commands. Artemisia have complete control over what happens during the painting scene. If she chooses, she can open just one player's senses, to paint, caress, and whisper words to them alone while the others watch. Or let a player stand still with closed eyes while everyone else paints and touches them

Punishment: Artemisia might get angry with the characters if they have done something in previous scenes or in the painting scene that she doesn't like. She can take the brush away from them. Or she can take away their senses so they cannot move or speak. This is done with short commands like "quiet," "stand," "close your eyes".

Conclusion

Scenen slutter ved at spilleder langsomt dæmper musikken, indtil der er helt stille og alle er tilbage til deres startposition med Artemisia i midten.

Music Catalogue

Bach: Air on a G string

Instrumental, Beautiful, poetic, sadness, intimacy 3 min 25 sec

Handel: Il Trionfo del tempo

Soprano, Playful, rhythmic, shifting from sweet to powerful 5 min 24 sec

Handel: Lascio ch'io pianga

Soprano, Beautiful, melodic, aching 5 min 18 sec

Handel: Salve Regina

Soprano, Gloomy, imploring, heartfelt 6 min 7 sec

Handel: Xerxes

Soprano, Melodic, powerful, theatrical 2 min 43 sec

Monteverdi: L'Incoronazione

Duet, Slow, sweet, harmonious 5 min 40 sec

Mozart: Vesperae Solennes de Confessore

Soprano and choir, Beautiful, soothing, melodic 4 min 16 sec

Pergolesi: Sabat Mater

Duet, Intense, hypnotic, the last minute of the song is dramatic 3 min 42 sec

Purcell: Dido and Aeneas

Soprano, Melancholic, heartfelt 3 min 53 sec

Purcell: The Fairy Queen

Soprano, Melancholic, slow, atonal in some places 4 min 15 sec

Vivaldi: Four Seasons, Winter

Instrumental, Building tension, tempo-filled, dramatic

4 min 15 sec

Overview of Acts and Scenes

Act I August

Prologue

Scene 1.1 - Wintershill House

Present: Alle

Scene 1.2 - A Meeting by the Stables

Present: Elizabeth and Amelia

Scene 1.3 - Just an Apple

Present: Amelia and Hester

Scene 1.4 - Evening Ritual

Present: Hester and Elizabet

Painting scene I

Act II September

Painting scene II

Can be placed freely during the second act

Scene 2.1 - Letter from Sir Thomas

Present: Amelia, Hester and

Elizabeth

Scene 2.2 - Master and the Servant

Present: Hester and Hertugen

Scene 2.3 - The Gallery

Present: Amelia and Elizabeth

Scene 2.4 - The Village

Present: Hester and Elizabeth

Scene 2.5 - An Unfinished Painting

Present: Amelia and Hertugen

Painting scene III

Act III October

Scene 3.1 - A Dead Bird

Present: Amelia, Hester and

Elizabeth

Scene 3.2 - Make Room for the New

Present: Hester and Amelia

Scene 3.3 - This life we share

Present: Elizabeth and Hertugen

Scene 3.4 - Evening Ritual II

Present: Elizabeth and Hester

Painting scene IV

Scene 3.5 - The Portrait

Present: Amelia, Hester and

Elizabeth

Epilogue

