Did you know that Caravaggio once threw a plate of artichokes at a restaurant waiter? Yeah, he was pretty crazy sometimes. Fortunately, however, his wild temper never got in the way of his painting.

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio was born sometime between 1571 and 1573 in a town called Caravaggio-henceforth his name. He was alive during two different time periods—the Renaissance and the Baroque. The Renaissance was a time of renewal—the word is French for “rebirth”. People were more accepting of unusual art than they were in the medieval times, and the artists started to paint much more realistically. Caravaggio was one of these painters. The Baroque, on the other hand, is known for art that contains very dramatic scenes. The era’s name is Portuguese, meaning “a pearl of irregular shape”. In other words, these times were very different and experimental.

Caravaggio was apprenticed at the age of eleven to Simone Peterzano after his father died. Two to four years after his apprenticeship ended, Caravaggio’s mother died. This could’ve either been in 1590 or 1592. Having no parents, he moved to Rome. It was here that a man named Lorenzo Sicilano was attracted to Caravaggio’s art. Caravaggio worked for Sicilano for a time, but it wasn’t very long before Sicilano’s art became unpopular. It was for this reason that Caravaggio left Sicilano.

Caravaggio had a very wild personality. Not only did he throw artichokes at a man, he killed a man named Ranuccio just because of a disagreement over a tennis match score! For this reason, he fled to Naples to avoid imprisonment, but he was prohibited from entering that city again. He had to flee many more times because of stabbings/wounding, attacking authorities and guards, and for causing brawls that led to injury.

After escaping the grasp of police yet again, Caravaggio traveled to Messina. It was there that the Pope of Rome allowed him to go back to the city where the tennis match incident occurred. On the way back to that city, Caravaggio was attacked by unknown assailants and was left for dead. He didn’t die then, but a few days after he trekked to civilization, Caravaggio died of pneumonia. It was the year 1610.

Caravaggio usually painted very large pictures, as they were meant for churches, and they always stirred up major controversies. After all, he always did like a good painting that led to dramatic or violent consequences. When Caravaggio began to paint, he had a good understanding of art because his father was an architect and knew different art styles. He started out by painting very realistic pictures of fruits and flowers and other still life, but since this style only lasted for about 5 years, it’s not the kind of art he is known for. After this period he began to paint religious pictures—pictures of biblical people in biblical stories. The Catholic churches saw this as a huge opportunity for them because the Protestant Reformation was happening. This was a time when people drifted away from Catholicism. The churches wanted to put Caravaggio’s paintings in their buildings because they thought that it would draw people back to the religion. They thought right. Before they knew it, people were crowding inside and outside of the churches just to see Caravaggio’s art.

Although Caravaggio had a bizarre life, he had an incredible style of painting. He would take people off the streets and use them as models for his pictures. Then he set up a lantern in such a way that the lighting created an astounding effect. In his pictures,