

# MUSEUM PIECE #2

by William Ivor Fowkes

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**MUSEUM PIECE #2***A Ten Minute Comedy***by William Ivor Fowkes***A confrontation with Velázquez's Las Meninas*

**SYNOPSIS:** Four American tourists at the Prado Museum in Madrid confront *Las Meninas*, Velázquez's masterpiece, and argue about their conflicting reactions to the painting until a supernatural event derails their visit.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS***(2 females, 2 males)*

DIEGO (m) ..... Artistic. Influential. *(32 lines)*  
 JOSE (m)..... Easily impressed. Obsequious.  
 Possibly gay. *(19 lines)*  
 THERESA (f)..... Sensitive, but opinionated and  
 entitled. *(28 lines)*  
 MARIA (f)..... Brash, rude, and a little dim-  
 witted. *(29 lines)*

**CAST NOTE:** These characters may be played by actors of any age, race, ethnicity or physical type.

**TIME:** Present day—an afternoon.

**SETTING:** Prado Museum in Madrid

**SET:** A bare stage.

**OPTIONAL PROJECTION:** *Las Meninas*, a painting by Velázquez. The projection stays on until the lights flicker, as noted in the script.

**AT START:** *DIEGO enters. Points out at the audience.*

**DIEGO:** *(Calling offstage.)* It's over here, guys!

*JOSE, THERESA, and MARIA enter. All four stand still and stare out at the audience for a moment, as if evaluating them.*

**DIEGO:** *(Finally.)* It's overwhelming, isn't it?

**JOSE:** *(Finally.)* Mind-blowing!

**THERESA:** *(Blasé.)* It's all right.

**MARIA:** *(Childishly.)* I don't like it.

**DIEGO:** It's beautiful!

**JOSE:** To see it—in person!

**THERESA:** It's too busy.

**MARIA:** I don't get it.

**DIEGO:** It's historic.

**THERESA:** It's big—I guess that's something.

**MARIA:** I'm bored.

**DIEGO:** I could stare at it all day!

**THERESA:** *(Pointing.)* Like that stuck-up little girl there. Who cares?

**DIEGO:** She's a princess.

**THERESA:** I'm sick of all these paintings of royalty. I thought Spain was supposed to be a democracy now!

**JOSE:** What about her dress? The colors. The forms... I could eat it right up!

**MARIA:** Hey, that reminds me—you think they've got a cafeteria here?

**DIEGO:** We came to see this painting.

**MARIA:** No, YOU did.

**DIEGO:** But you agreed to come along!

**MARIA:** *(Petulantly.)* I thought you said we were going shopping for bags at Prada.

**DIEGO:** You're such a philistine! This is the "Prad-O"! One of the world's greatest art museums.

**THERESA:** Let's just make him happy and focus on the stupid painting.

*ALL stare intently at the painting.*

**MARIA:** (*Suddenly very enthusiastically—mocking.*) Oh, NOW I see! It's beautiful! I love it! I just love it! (*Disinterested again.*) OK—can we go now?

**THERESA:** (*Pointing.*) Look—is that a man in a woman's dress?

**JOSE:** I think it's a midget. Or a dwarf... Oh, I'm sorry—I mean a little person.

**THERESA:** So, it's a LITTLE man in a woman's dress?

**JOSE:** I think it's a little woman.

**MARIA:** Guys, I'll meet you at the gift shop. But before I go, I just wanna say—little or otherwise, that's one ugly woman! ...Adios.

*MARIA starts to leave.*

**DIEGO:** Maria!

**MARIA:** (*Pausing—annoyed.*) What?

**DIEGO:** We came all this way. Let me help you appreciate it. Then, I promise, we'll all go to Prada so you can buy some bags.

**MARIA:** And shoes!

**DIEGO:** And shoes. (*Pointing.*) Now, look. Do you get the self-referentiality?

**MARIA:** The what?

**DIEGO:** The way the artist is staring out at us.

**THERESA:** Oh yeah—look at that! Like he's painting us.

**JOSE:** Well, he's obviously NOT painting us, so who IS he painting?

**MARIA:** The little ugly woman and the snotty princess—who do you think he's painting?

**JOSE:** But they're facing US.

**THERESA:** Maybe he's painting their backs.

**MARIA:** A much better idea!

**DIEGO:** No—look at the mirror on the wall in the back. See—it's reflecting a couple standing like they're posing. The king and queen probably. (*Getting excited.*) See—the painter's looking out at us—like he's painting us—or he's painting SOMEBODY. The mirror's reflecting what he's painting—WHO he's painting.

**THERESA:** Oh, wait. I see... Yeah, that makes sense... Very cool!

**MARIA:** Why didn't he just paint the king and queen like a normal person? It woulda been a lot more interesting than all these random people.

**JOSE:** I think they're very interesting. Like that stately fellow in the doorway. See—like he's just stopped by to check out the royal couple while they're having their portrait done.

**MARIA:** More likely to check out the artist, by the look of him.

**DIEGO:** It just proves my point.

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