

A DAY AT THE MUSEUM

Written by
Haley Hennes

hhennes@elon.edu
858.663.9253

FADE IN:

INT. WITTIKER ROOM – DAY

The room is dark and empty. The framed artwork on the walls cast creepy shadows across the wooden floorboard, and the statues look dull in their corners.

There is complete silence until FOOTSTEPS are heard. Classical MUSIC swells as a tour group enters the room. The room automatically becomes brighter.

Everyone in the tour group is wearing a set of headphones. The headphones are transmitting a satellite audio recording of the museum tour. We assume the classical music is coming through these audio devices. While we can hear this, the tour members can only hear it through their headsets. The music fades out and the TOUR begins.

GUIDE

Welcome to the Tinker Museum of Art. To make this an enjoyable experience, please attend to our museum rules. No photography, food, or pets allowed.

A man in the group takes out a cell phone and starts texting.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

And no cell phones.

The man sheepishly tucks cell phone back into jacket pocket.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

Thank you.

You are in the Wittiker Room. This room is dedicated to the rise of modernism and displays art of the late 19th century.

Turn to your left to see Honore Daumier's unfinished *The Third-Class Carriage*.

The entire tour group turns noticeably to the left.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

Disinherited masses of the 19th-century industrialism are Daumier's specialty.

He tries to be revolutionary by focusing his composition on the lower class but the dark shadows and insignificant look on the faces of the French poor do little to endear them to the viewer.

Another example of French realism is on the eastern facing wall. Marie-Rosalie Bonheur's *The Horse Fair*.

The tour group turns and walks to the opposite facing wall. DANNY, a young man in the group, stays facing the Daumier painting. Looking around, he notices that he is the only one left on that side. He quickly rushes to join the group at the next painting.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

An ode to the turbulent changes of the industrialism age as noted in the rearing horses and loose brushstrokes.

Clearly, Bonheur stole her style from the Classical model of the Parthenon frieze and Gericault.

This depiction of equine drama was so captivating to uncouth viewers, they eagerly bought engraved reproductions of the work, making it one of the most well-known paintings of the century. Replicas can be found in the museum's gift shop.

Now we must move on to the "paintings by the moment" of the French impressionists. Walk to the next room, please.

The tour group files out to the next room, Danny at the end.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

(only in Danny's headset)

Wait. You did not take time to linger at the Millais.

Danny hesitates in the doorway between rooms and looks around.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

Go on. It's on your right. Next to the poor excuses for American art.

Danny shuffles over to the *Ophelia* painting.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

Ah, Millais. Now here's a true artist. A poet of meticulous detail but without that ugliness of the industrializing world or limitations of those strict Realists.

DANNY

(reading from sign)

Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

GUIDE

(overjoyed)

Yes! You are familiar? You know, I think there's something you must see. The museum just acquired a Rossetti. It's currently not on display, but for a fellow appreciator of good art. . .Why don't you go through the door behind you.

Danny looks around.

DANNY

What door?

GUIDE

(exasperated)

The door. The door. It's right in front of you!

Danny walks over to the opposite wall and sees the wall is really a door. He opens it to reveal a hallway.

GUIDE

Great. Now, the second door on your left is the collection storage room.

INT. COLLECTIONS STORAGE ROOM – DAY

Danny hurries into the room. The room is filled with metal shelves where art pieces sit painstakingly labeled. Wrapped canvases lie against the wall.

GUIDE

I believe it's over on the table.
No, not that table! The one over
there on the left.

Danny shifts through the canvases on the table.

GUIDE
(expectantly)

Well?

DANNY

Uh...I don't know what I'm looking
for.

A NOISE outside stops the possibility of the guide's
reply. Startled, Danny dives under the table. He
bumps a cabinet where a vase sits. It CRASHES to the
floor.

GUARD (O.S.)

Did you hear something?

Danny stares unbelievably at the broken shards.

GUIDE

It's only a Daum. An ugly one at
that. In fact, I think you've
improved it.

FOOTSTEPS grow louder outside the room. The sounds
shake Danny from his reverie.

DANNY

I need to get out of here!

Danny climbs up on the table and starts poking at the
ceiling.

GUIDE

(amused)

What do you think you are doing?

DANNY

(while struggling
to get the vent
off)

Escaping. . .through the ceiling. .
.Like James Bond, you know.

Danny gives up his fight with the ceiling.

GUIDE

You do know, there is another door.

Danny swings down from the table and rushes to the door in the back. Just as he reaches the door, the GUARDS burst in the room.

GUARD

Hey, you! Stop!

Danny flees.

INT. GALLERY ROOM – DAY

Danny runs through the gallery. The guards are fast behind him.

GUIDE

(whispering)

Stairs. Go up the stairs.

Danny creeps behind the statues and runs up a flight of stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY – DAY

GUIDE

You are going to want to go out the third door on your left.

Danny attempts to open the door. He runs into the wall.

GUIDE

That's the trompe l'oeil.

DANNY

(clutching
forehead)

Why would someone do that?!

GUIDE

(dryly)

It's art. The door is to your right.

Danny opens the correct door.

INT. MUSEUM LOBBY – DAY

The exit sign beckons in the distance. Danny crouches behind a pillar, ready to make his run past the ticket attendant.

A hand comes down on his shoulder and a walkie-talkie BEEPS.

INT. WITTIKER ROOM — DAY

The walkie-talkie blares STATIC. A guard leaning next to a doorway wakes up. Another guard, who is slightly overweight, walks up behind him.

FAT GUARD

(laughing)

Fell asleep, again, huh? Nothing ever happens on this job. I was wondering why you didn't answer my call.

Sleepy guard notices Danny sitting on a bench writing in a notebook. He starts walking out of the room.

FAT GUARD

Hey, where are you going?

SLEEPY GUARD

I'm checking on the new Rossetti.

He walks out.

FAT GUARD

New Ross-et. . .This museum ain't got anything new in over twenty years!

FADE OUT.

THE END