

Story of Las Meninas

A long, long time ago, about 300 years ago, existed a very important painter named **Velázquez**. Diego de Silva y Velázquez. He lived in Madrid, but not in an ordinary house, in a palace. Do you all know why? Because he was the painter for the king and queen, and they controlled all of Spain.

The king and queen were named Felipe IV and Mariana they had a 5-year-old daughter. Her name was Margarita. Margarita was beautiful; she had long, abundant, blonde hair. She wore a very strange dress, it was so long it touched the floor; it was hard and wide like a lamp.

The king and queen wanted to have a life-like painting where they looked realistic, a portrait. Unlike today, back then cameras did not exist, so they decided that Velazquez would be the best person to paint the life-like portrait.

“At your command your majesty. Right away I am going to my workshop to make your portrait” said Velazquez.

And he left happily from the throne and he went to his workshop, which was a room full of paintings. It was a huge room and all of the walls were covered in paintings. He got a huge canvas and put it on an easel, and he got his paintbrushes, his pallet, and he began to paint:

“It’s so quiet, it’s so nice to work like this”

In the back of the workshop there was a door that was closed, but someone had opened it and then many people started to enter the room and make a lot of noise.

“Ugh, the peace and quiet has ended,” thought Velazquez.

It was the king and queen’s young daughter Margarita that

wanted to see Velazquez paint. She loved to watch how he poured the paint into the pallet, how he drizzled the paint on the paintbrush and how the paint filled the canvas.

"Oh, you are drawing the faces of my dad and mom," said Margarita.

With her came the two ladies in waiting, Agustina and Isabel, the whole day they were waiting on her.

"I'm thirsty, give me water," said the young girl.

Quickly, Agustina got the vase, she filled it with water, and she kneeled and gave it to her.

"This is not how we ask for things," said a voice from behind. It was the protector named Marcela, who watched Margarita all day.

"There is a way to say it, please, bring me water?"

"You have to learn to behave like a great princess" said Diego, Margarita's other protector.

But Margarita was not listening to neither Marcela nor Diego because in that moment she looked out of the corner of her eye and saw someone enter through the other door in the workshop. It was her parents, the king and queen, they also came to see how the portrait was coming along and to see what Velazquez was doing. The lady in waiting, Isabel, saw the king and queen and was very polite to show respect.

"Woof, woof..."

"But, what is this? You have forgotten me! Also, a dog has entered. I can't work with all of this racket," thought Velazquez. It was the dog that Margarita preferred, a big, calm mastiff that was always guarding his owner, and he was tired so he didn't see any danger for his owner, he decided to lay down, there was

no more noise, and with this opportunity he decided to sleep a little bit.

It was also difficult because Nicolasito Pertusato did not stop hitting him or annoying him. Nicolasito was a small boy, with thin legs and long hair, and all day long he was causing trouble. Do you all know why? Because he wanted to make the princess laugh, so that she wasn't bored and she would be happy all day long. Nicolasito had a friend named Maribarbola who was a dwarf, and although she was much older she didn't look like it. She told a story that finished when the king and queen entered and with that she decided it to be still and sit up straight so she wouldn't offend them, but Nicolasito was not sitting still.

But, now who entered through the door? It was Jose, the guard of the palace. His job was to always be waiting in the rooms and hallways in the palace where the ordained were, and to have the keys for all of the doors in the palace, he stayed in the door surprised to see the king and queen in Velazquez's workshop.