

A Display of Millais' *Ophelia* in a Museum of Art and Eggs

A short play

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AT RISE: A museum display of Sir John Everett Millais' painting "Ophelia." Perhaps it is a projection. Perhaps it's shielded by a pane of plastic or glass. Or perhaps it is ready to be ruined.

A museum GUIDE enters with a small group: JOHN, JANE, and RIVER. He carries with him a collection of eggs. He wears a weapon.

GUIDE

Okay, everybody! I'd like to welcome you back for your second adventure here at the Museum of Art and Eggs. We're going to dive right in this time and start with the assignment. You remember, yes? You were to take this painting and write whatever came to your mind about it. I'll start us off so no one feels any pressure.

Sometimes, the problem with killing yourself is that just as you're about to drown in a beautiful spot with beautiful flowers, you're taken by an intense desire to sneeze, so you lurch up with a doped-out face and you ruin all the romanticism. What's the point in dying if you don't look good doing it?

He takes out an egg and hurls it at the art.

JANE

Oh my god.

JOHN

Eggs are much more like cannons than I remember.

JANE

What?

JOHN

When I used to egg houses, you know, it wasn't so loud. That sort of boom! would wake up anyone in the neighborhood. How'd it get so loud?

JANE
It's the sound of an egg.

JOHN
She knows what I'm talking about.

JANE
They.

JOHN
They know what I'm talking about.

RIVER
I do?

JOHN
Sure. When you chuck an egg at a place, it isn't that loud.

RIVER
Do I look like I throw eggs.

JOHN
Yes.

JANE
No.

JOHN
Of course she does. They does. Do.

JANE
I don't think "egg thrower" is a look.

RIVER
No, it is. He looks like he throws eggs.

JOHN
Me?

RIVER
No, him.

JOHN

He does. I was right.

JANE

That's only because he just threw one.

RIVER

No, it's in his face. His face screams, "I throw eggs at stuff."

JOHN

Total egg-face.

JANE

That doesn't make any sense.

GUIDE

Did you all think I wouldn't notice that you're stalling? No one cares about the sound of eggs. Tell me, John, are you more frightened at the sound of a cracking egg or the view of it hitting something worth more than you've ever made in a year?

JOHN

That's just rude.

GUIDE

Then prove me wrong. What did you write?

JOHN

Fine. Well, suck on this:

This is what it means to be wet.
 She drowns herself surrounded by foliage
 because wood brings her such excitement,
 she doesn't know what to do with herself.
 Her hands, mouth, and legs are all open
 for one reason and one reason alone,
 but it's easier sometimes to die
 than to actually embrace pleasure.

He takes an egg from the guide and throws it at
 the painting.

GUIDE

Very good.

JANE

Good? It was crass. It was misogynistic.

JOHN

Oh, here we go. I'm the bad guy because I think sex is good.

JANE

You're the bad guy because you look at a dead girl and you see a whore.

JOHN

I never called her a whore.

JANE

She drowned herself in her own wet!

JOHN

Wouldn't you if you could do it?

JANE

I ought to throw an egg at you.

GUIDE

Eggs are for the art only, Ms. Jane.

RIVER

Hear that, John? You're not a work of art.

JOHN

Oh, yes I am.

RIVER

Really?

JOHN

Like all the paintings in here, you'll find I'm well-hung.

RIVER

Will I now?

JOHN

Oh.

RIVER

That's all it takes to make you reel it in? You're no fun.

GUIDE

If you're so fun, River, then it's your turn.

RIVER

Capitalism sucks.
There's always too much green,
and I hate that stupid fucking color.

They take an egg and throw it.

JANE

Oh, River.

RIVER

What?

JANE

Why would you do that?

RIVER

We're here to throw eggs.

JANE

No.

RIVER

We are.

JANE

It's not that. It's just... you made John look better in comparison, and I find that unforgivable.

RIVER

Sorry for offending you, Your Highness.