

# La Espera (Cristóbal Toral)

## Exercise 1: Describe and Guess

**Instructions:** Look at the painting carefully and answer the following questions using **modal verbs for speculation** (*must, might, could, can't*) and other hypothesis expressions (*it seems that, it looks like, perhaps, maybe, etc.*).

1. Who are these people? What might be their relationship?
2. Why are they standing there? What could they be waiting for?
3. What might have happened before this scene?
4. How do you think they are feeling? Why?
5. What could be inside their suitcase?

*Example answer: "They must be a family waiting for something important. Maybe they are emigrants who have left their home behind."*

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## Exercise 2: Complete the Sentences

**Instructions:** Complete the sentences with a logical hypothesis using **modal verbs or speculation expressions**.

1. If they are carrying a suitcase, they must...
2. They might be standing there because...
3. The background looks dark, so perhaps...
4. If they have been waiting for a long time, they could...
5. The lights in the distance might symbolize...



## Exercise 3: Discussion in Pairs

**Instructions:** Work in pairs. Imagine you are two people passing by and seeing this scene. Have a conversation discussing your ideas about what is happening. Use modal verbs and speculation phrases.

### Example dialogue

- A:** Look at that family, they seem lost.  
**B:** Yes, they might be waiting for a train that never arrives.  
**A:** It looks like they have been traveling for a long time.  
**B:** Maybe they have nowhere to go...
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## Exercise 4: Creative Writing

**Instructions:** Write a short story (150-200 words) imagining what happened **before and after** this scene. Use the **past modal verbs** (*must have, might have, could have, can't have*) to express hypotheses about their past.

**Example beginning:** "This family must have left their home in a hurry. They might have lost everything and now they are waiting for someone to help them. The night is falling, and they start to wonder if they have made a mistake..."

## Expressing Hypothesis and Supposition in English (B2 Level)

### 1. Modal Verbs for Hypothesis

- **Might / May / Could** → To express possibility.
  - *The family in the painting might be waiting for a train.*
  - *It could be that they have been abandoned in the city.*
- **Must** → To express a strong assumption.
  - *They must be feeling lost and anxious.*
- **Can't / Couldn't** → To express a strong impossibility.
  - *This can't be a happy moment for them.*

### 2. Conditional Sentences for Hypothesis

- **Second Conditional** (hypothetical situations in the present/future)
  - *If they had a home to return to, they wouldn't be standing there with their suitcase.*
- **Third Conditional** (hypothetical situations in the past)
  - *If they had left earlier, they might have caught the last bus.*

### 3. Other Useful Expressions

- **I suppose / I imagine / I guess**
  - *I imagine they are waiting for someone to pick them up.*
- **It seems / It looks like**
  - *It seems that they are in a deserted part of the city.*
- **It is likely / unlikely that...**
  - *It is unlikely that they know exactly what will happen next.*
- **There is a chance that...**
  - *There is a chance that they are immigrants arriving in a new country.*
- **They appear to be...**
  - *They appear to be exhausted from a long journey.*

## Activities

### 1. Complete the sentences with the correct modal verb (*might, must, can't, could*).

1. The characters in the painting \_\_\_\_\_ be a family looking for shelter.
2. The city in the background \_\_\_\_\_ be a modern one, but it looks quite empty.
3. They \_\_\_\_\_ have been waiting for a long time because they seem tired.
4. The artist \_\_\_\_\_ be trying to convey a feeling of loneliness.

### 2. Choose the best answer to complete the sentence.

1. The dim lights in the painting suggest that...
  - a) The city is full of life.
  - b) It is nighttime, and the atmosphere is melancholic.
  - c) The family is celebrating something.
2. The suitcase in the painting...
  - a) Must contain important belongings for the journey.
  - b) Can't be heavy because it looks small.
  - c) Might be empty since it's just a symbolic element.
3. The family appears to be waiting...
  - a) For someone to guide them.
  - b) For a celebration to begin.
  - c) For a bus they have already missed.