

When Life Takes a Turn – Chapter 0133

“Thank you.”

Zayn placed the painting flat on the table. He made note of the canvas material being very worn. It looked quite old. The linen canvas had yellowed with age, but the material was thick and rough. The oil paint was dried and hardened, giving it the effect of being painted from a past century.

Judging from the material, there were no weak points. Moreover, the piece of artwork was painted with cubism in mind. A layman would have no way of telling the real from the fake.

In fact, even an art lover would have a hard time recognizing it was forged. Anyone who could confirm it to be a counterfeit was certainly a connoisseur.

It was such a waste that Zayn specialised in such a niche field. As a young boy, he was pressured by his father into pursuing cultured pastimes such as music, chess, and painting. It also helped that he was exceptionally gifted in the arts. Combined with his honed skills and dedicated training, an average expert was no match for a prodigy like himself.

“Boss, I would like to inquire—how long has it been since the Cubism period?” questioned Zayn with an unsuspecting smile.

The owner grunted once before retorting, “You’re just a simpleton, just as I expected. Why accuse me of selling a fake painting when you don’t even know how long it’s been since the Cubism period?”

Zayn was not at all deterred by his brash remarks, instead he continued to smile. “Since you haven’t given me an immediate answer, I can safely assume that you don’t have a clue either. Is that right?”

The owner grimaced, confirming Zayn’s theory. He was, in fact, spot on. The owner of the antique store knew little to nothing about the Cubism period.

The middle-aged man from earlier chimed in, “The Cubism period spanned from 1909 to 1919, it’s been close to 100 years.”

Zayn maintained his smile, just as he had prior. “In other words, you’re claiming that this painting is at least 100 years old.”

“You can say that.”

“You’re lying!” Zayn objected abruptly, startling quite a number of people.

The owner lowered his voice threateningly. “How could I be lying? If you don’t manage to explain it concisely, you’re not walking out of this store alive!”

The corners of Zayn’s lips curled ever so slightly into a disdainful smirk. “I assume that it is common knowledge to everyone here in this room that a painting’s authenticity, besides examining the artwork itself, is determined by a number of other factors. For example, the material of the canvas, the original stretcher, and the layering of the paint which act as indicators during the painting’s appraisal. On the other hand, the latter indicators are significantly harder to forge, which means that they play the most crucial part in the whole process.”

The tomboy nodded to herself as she digested his words. She had a sneaking suspicion that whatever Zayn was talking about actually held an inkling of reasoning behind it.

“That’s true,” she said.

Zayn continued on, “Everyone is aware that it’s been 100 years since the Cubism period. Picasso’s artwork has been preserved for an eternity. However, even well preserved pieces will wear from time, and this piece is supposed to be very old indeed. Don’t you find it strange that the painting before us looks so new?”

The middle-aged man spat with a cold glare, “That’s all you have to back up your accusation? It’s obvious you’re just a layman!”

“What an attention seeker.”

“Calm down, I wasn’t done talking yet.” Zayn smiled as he explained, “The work of any renowned artist can be preserved for an extensive period of time, on the grounds that high-quality paints are applied. Despite this, such high quality paints will inevitably age over the course of a century. The oil paint on this painting looks like it hasn’t aged a day-how abnormal. This is an indicator.”

“Secondly...”

Zayn went on to elaborate his points with proper terminologies only a connoisseur would be eloquent with. The crowd consisted largely of art lovers, so the majority could roughly understand his long expositioning. Mr. Smith’s eyes lit up with each word that left Zayn’s lips. It finally confirmed her suspicions of the painting being a counterfeit.

“With all of that being said, I can affirm that this so-called Picasso piece is nothing but a counterfeit!” Zayn declared assertively, his voice resonating throughout the space, “The jig is up, you’ll be put to jail all because of your sad excuse of a counterfeit. You’ll be paying 600 thousand dollars for your crimes, so you’re not going anywhere for eight or ten years.”

As the words hung in the air, you could see the color drain from the owner’s face.