

Chapter 79 A Fake Painting

The auction continued, and they placed a piece of classical oil painting for bidding.

It was a portrait of a majestic general and his men fighting bravely with the enemy. The vivid image, strong color tone, and well-defined strokes offered a powerful visual effect.

The auctioneer tapped the microphone and announced, "This oil painting, named Triumph, is a skillful work of art of the classical painter, Sirloin Yarbon, which depicts the victory return of General Leo Clarkson. Grady Cruz has donated this piece of work."

Loraine fell in love with the painting the minute she saw it, and she soon joined the bidding.

"One million!"

"One million and one hundred thousand!"
Curran immediately made a bid.

He wasn't ready to compromise. The bidding was tense. He was determined to acquire the painting.

The price of the oil painting gradually soared as

the bidding proceeded. In the end, Loraine and Curran were the only bidders left.

The two immediately became the center of everyone's attention.

Vickie was sitting beside Curran. Therefore, everyone seemed to notice her as well. She was flattered and seemed to enjoy the attention.

It looked like Curran still cared about her. She felt he was doing all this for her to get even with Loraine.

"Why don't you just give up, Loraine? The bid is too high for you. My boyfriend has a lot of money, but you're a different story. I'm afraid it will burn a hole in your pocket even if you ultimately win the bid."

Loraine wasn't bothered by the provocation. However, Marco frowned and felt he had to do something after hearing Vickie's mean words against Loraine.

"Do you really want that painting?" he whispered in Loraine's ear. "Perhaps, I can bid on your behalf."

Loraine glared at him, gesturing for him to leave her alone.

Marco's shoulders slumped in dejection. He

sighed and decided to give up his plans.

Lorraine had plenty of money. She never cared about the price of the product she wished to buy. If it felt right, she would go ahead and buy it regardless of the cost.

Lorraine continued to raise the bid, and so did Curran.

They continued to bid on the painting, and its price exceeded all the previous biddings. The atmosphere grew tense.

Lorraine was sick of it and made her final bid, which was enormous for a single painting.

"Three million and five hundred thousand!"

Curran was dumbfounded. He finally gave up.

Lorraine bought the painting at ten times its original price.

"Well done!"

Jennie applauded after Lorraine won the bid. She was proud of her best friend. Lorraine had done a magnificent job.

Vickie didn't expect Curran to yield. She bitterly walked up to Lorraine.

"Lorraine, you are indeed very brave and generous. Let me cut to the chase. Do you really have that much money?"

Lorraine rolled her eyes. "Don't make a fool of yourself, Vickie. Don't you know that every bidder has to go through the assets verification process before attending the auction?"

Vickie was here only because of Curran. Otherwise, she wouldn't be qualified to attend the auction. She had no idea about the rules and customs of the elite populace.

Seeing people eyeing her with contempt, Vickie gritted her teeth but couldn't find words to refute.

Just when everyone thought the bidding of the oil painting was about to end, Curran burst out laughing.

"Oh, don't be too excited, Miss Torres. You have spent three million and five hundred thousand to buy a forged painting."

The crowd let out a startled gasp when they heard that.

"What? The painting is fake? It can't be true!"

"Right. That's impossible. This is from Claude Charity Auction and has undergone expert evaluation. There's no way it's a counterfeit."

"This man is Curran. He has gained fame in the antique circle. If he claims it's a forged painting,

then it might be true."

Curran became cocky as everyone broke into a heated discussion.

He had been in the antique business for more than thirty years and specialized in buying and selling antique paintings. He had studied Sirloin's works and collected several other paintings of the renowned painter. Therefore, his observation couldn't go wrong.

"I request all of you to look at the forged painting. It indeed looks ingenious. We can tell that the imitator is also an excellent portrait artist. He has copied Sirloin's painting by using bright colors. I have to admit the forging techniques are admirable. One could hardly distinguish it from the original painting. The artist has effortlessly copied the color tone and painting techniques but failed to incorporate the subtle, unique style. The imitator started with bold strokes and ended with light ones. Hence, the uneven color distribution. So I believe this painting is not original."

Curran's analysis seemed reasonable, so his theory convinced most people and they looked at Loraine with strange expressions.

Jennie couldn't believe Loraine had competed

hard and spent three million and five hundred thousand dollars for a fake painting.

Her mind was a mess. She couldn't process the information.

She looked at Loraine worriedly, wondering what her friend was thinking.

To her surprise, Loraine seemed calm and nonchalant, as if she had expected such a thing to happen.

"Some people pretend to know everything and compete with others without any knowledge. Sometimes one has got to use their brains!" Loraine's calmness infuriated Curran, so he mocked her.

Vickie's face broke into a triumphant grin as she realized it was all a part of Curran's plan to trap Loraine.

"Oh, what a pity, Loraine! You've wasted three million and five hundred thousand dollars. You should have gathered information about the painting before bidding."

The two of them were carried away by the victory that they completely forgot Marco was still sitting beside Loraine.

"Mind your tongue!" Marco warned them coldly.

"The authenticity of the painting is for Claude Charity Auction to decide. Who gave you the right to gossip about it?"

Curran dreaded the Bryant family, so he restrained himself right away.

Vickie frowned with resentment when she saw Marco defending Loraine.

She couldn't believe Loraine got to marry the handsome, affluent Marco while she could only date a mediocre man like Curran. Although the two divorced, Marco continued to protect Loraine.

"Mr. Bryant, don't let this woman fool you. She dropped out of middle school and has led a dissolute life. She has no knowledge about all this. You and Loraine are divorced, so you better stay away from her. Otherwise, you'll be in trouble!"

Vickie slandered Vickie at every given opportunity so that people could repel her.

Marco became more furious with every word Loraine spoke.

"Curran, ask your woman to shut up. I will personally take action if she keeps slandering Loraine."