Advanced - Story 9

Class Objective- I am able to read and understand a story.

Concept A: Story:

When Italian handyman Vincenzo Peruggia stole the Mona Lisa from the Louvre in 1911, he made her the most recognizable painting on the planet. The famous painting was recovered two years later. The handyman named Peruggia had been hired by the Louvre to make protective glass cases for some of its famous works, including the Mona Lisa. He hid in a closet overnight. In the morning he removed the painting, hid it under his smock like shoplifters, and was going to simply walk out of the building. He discovered the door was locked. Peruggia removed the doorknob, but still it wouldn't open until a helpful plumber opened the door with his key Zap, the painting was gone. It was 24 hours before anyone even noticed the Mona Lisa was missing.

The French newspapers made war with the government which ran the Louvre. The image of the Mona Lisa was splashed across the world. For the first time there were lines outside the Louvre, just to see the empty space where the painting had hung. X marks the spot where the painting used to hang. The theft launched it into becoming a household name for people who had no interest in art. If one of the group of seven paintings had been stolen then maybe it would be the most famous painting in the world, not the Mona Lisa. Over the next two years, the bungling police investigation dragged on. The police even interviewed Peruggia twice, but he must have mixed them up because they said he couldn't possibly be the man behind the burglary. The sixty detectives that were on the case had failed to find the thief. It was like a football game where the police were bageled by Peruggia.

Two years later, an art dealer in Florence received a letter from a man saying he had the Mona Lisa. It was signed "Leonardo." The man was of course Peruggia. Peruggia, who had a lot of Italians in his family tree, claimed to have stolen the artwork to return her to her native Italy. He thought that he would get up on a soap box and be a national hero. He couldn't believe it that the police would twist his words, and call him crazy and sentence him to seven months jail. Tourists now can only hope to pirate the image with camera phones. There have been many tell all books about the theft.

Reference: https://www.idiomsbykids.com/index.php?story=59

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