

A Heist: Rembrandts and Atonements

by Najee Brooks

It's the final days of winter, Boston's dusting the snow off itself and it's getting ready for much warmer days. Yet I'm sitting across an old classmate from middle school, Damon Sylvia, inside a dismal and musty apartment. Out in front of me, is a list, not a list of groceries or household appliances. Nope, it is a list of art-not for browsing neither- but to steal from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. The same place I work at, the place I'm supposed to protect as the security guard.

His friend, some gaunt fellow, who Damon called, Yuri plopped down next to me. His bright red eyes stitched to my soul, his glare felt unnatural as they read the contents of my existence. "Are you sure he's the guy, Damon," he asked. "Did you see how many comas there were? It'll be more for us two."

"Yes, Yuri. He's an old pal of mines, but you could leave," Damon said. "Didn't think so. Now, Rick you need to remember your role. When me and Yuri come to the door, we'll be cops and you have to buzz us in, because there's a 'complaint.'"

“Got it.”

Damon began rummaging through a duffle bag. “You’re our access key and if you get caught they already have a lot of info on you, which means they’ll have too much info on me.” Damon hands, Yuri a pistol from his bag, nothing too fancy, just something to get their point across. “Don’t forget to holster it in your belt tomorrow.”

Yuri nods his head, “Capisce.” He says.

“Wait, how will they have too much on you?” I asked.

“Because, you know my full name and where I stay. If you get scared and choose to rat us out, then we’re in trouble. Us and yourself as well.”

“Oh alright, so act like a victim?”

“Yes, Rick. Me and Yuri both aren’t going to treat you any different from the actual hostages, so you’ll be tied up and don’t play hero or, Yuri might pistol whip you. Now is there any more questions?”

Yuri and I glance at each other, then we shake our heads no.

“Good. Then there is no more to discuss,” Damon says.

It’ll be a blessing if we don’t get caught and we pull off the perfect heist, like the heists in films. Well stealing is a sin, so not technically a blessing from God, but still, it’ll be great if we can pull this job off. I hope God understands, I just can’t live this lifestyle any longer, it isn’t for me. Besides, I’m no saint and never was, I never promised, God I’ll do my best to carry out his will. I mean, I’m sitting among criminals. Two men who’ll greet, Satan at the gates of Hell with a grin and champagne.

“Rick, we’ll see you tomorrow. Don’t worry about getting your money, you’ll get it,”
Damon said.

“Just don’t back out on us,” Yuri said.

Maybe, Yuri’s the one going to hell and greeting the devil and all. Damon and I have a chance to make it into paradise. With a Hail Mary and few penances with the local priest, I’m sure we’ll do fine. Yeah, this may not be the conventional method of attaining riches, it may not be the average Christians first choice neither, but I could always repent.