

Chapter 24

In Chapter 24 of "The Art Thief," Anne-Catherine earns her driver's license and buys a raspberry-red Ford Ka, allowing her to commute to work after moving out from her parents' home to a studio apartment on the outskirts of Mulhouse. Meanwhile, Breitwieser struggles with his life after Anne-Catherine leaves him; for four months, he refrains from stealing, feeling aimless without her. He occupies himself with temporary jobs and broods alone, leading him to eventually contact Anne-Catherine.

When they speak, Breitwieser expresses remorse for how he treated her, acknowledging his obsession and volatility while promising to let go of his past anger about their relationship, including the abortion. He conveys his love for her, claiming she is the only woman for him and admits that her absence has quelled his addiction to art theft. Conversely, Anne-Catherine, now with a stable life, cannot shake her addiction to the excitement she shared with Breitwieser, which involved clandestine art heists. Although she warns him against violence, she does not explicitly forbid him from stealing, preferring to maintain her own space free from art while rejoining him in the attic.

As their relationship rekindles, Breitwieser feels inspired again, retreating to local museums to steal artworks. By late 1999, he has amassed around 250 stolen items, primarily avoiding churches, having recognized Anne-Catherine's discomfort with those thefts. However, he eventually returns to them as they provide easy targets with valuable art. His collection grows, making their attic space increasingly cluttered.

In the new year, Breitwieser secures a well-paying job in Switzerland, which he juggles with his art theft. Determined to appease Anne-Catherine's craving for excitement through legal means, he organizes a romantic getaway to the Dominican Republic, where he refrains from stealing entirely. After this trip, he plans future vacations with her, yet Anne-Catherine remains cautious about his work in Switzerland, fearing the consequences of another arrest following their previous luck. Though theoretically agreeing to her caution, Breitwieser struggles with temptation as he drives past museums on his way to work .