

Chapter 28

In Chapter 28, titled "The Art Thief," we delve deeper into the plight of Breitwieser, who, after being arrested, is left in a bureaucratic limbo as he awaits the approval of an international search warrant. This time drags on, and he feels increasingly isolated, receiving only a single phone call to the French embassy, which offers no assistance. His emotional state deteriorates as he awaits a letter from his girlfriend, Anne-Catherine, believing that she may have overheard something crucial before his arrest, which intensifies his sense of abandonment.

After a painfully long wait, Inspector Meier visits. Despite Breiwieser's determination to remain silent, he ultimately succumbs to pressure and agrees to confess during an interrogation. He fabricates a story about his interest in classical music and claims he visited the Richard Wagner Museum to learn more. Under questioning, he invents an excuse to explain the absence of a train ticket.

Breitwieser goes on to describe his impulsive theft of a bugle, claiming it was meant as a Christmas gift for his mother, and insists he did not intend to sell it. He discusses the details of the heist candidly, even sketching a layout of the museum, and maintains that he acted alone without any weapons. As the interrogation continues, he deceitfully professes innocence, stating that aside from this single incident, he has committed no other thefts.

Afterwards, he learns that he must disclose the location of the bugle, claiming it is hidden at his mother's house. He expresses a desire to return the instrument to the museum, hoping his plan will spare his family from legal repercussions and result in a lenient sentence for himself. He sends letters to both Anne-Catherine and his mother, imploring them to assist in returning the bugle, albeit without much faith in their responses.

As days pass and the international search warrant is finally approved, law enforcement arrives at his mother's residence, led by Meier. Despite Mireille Stengel's initial denial and her insistence that her son hasn't brought anything home, the officers proceed to search. However, much to their disappointment, the attic reveals a stark emptiness—no musical instruments or valuable artifacts.

The chapter underscores Breitwieser's growing despair and guilt, juxtaposed with his attempts to manipulate the situation, reflecting the complexities of his character amid the unraveling consequences of his actions.