

Chapter 29

In Chapter 29 of "The Art Thief," Meier presents a photograph of a stolen seventeenth-century gold-plated medallion to Breitwieser in an interrogation room. The police are uncertain about the extent of Breitwieser's thefts, having found little during their search of his home. With the holidays long past and no news from his family, Breitwieser, feeling desperate, eventually admits to stealing the medallion.

Meier subsequently shows Breitwieser another photograph, this time of a gold tobacco box—a piece he had stolen alongside Anne-Catherine from a Swiss castle. Breitwieser, wishing to escape his high-security confinement, confesses to this theft as well. Meier then surprises him with a collection of photographs depicting various stolen items, including an ivory flute and various silver belongings, leading to an overwhelming realization for Breitwieser that he has been outsmarted. Feeling cornered, he confesses to all 107 thefts depicted in the images.

Meanwhile, Meier comprehends the sheer scale of Breitwieser's crimes but maintains his composure as he listens to the confessions. A police report inadvertently left open reveals the story of a senior citizen, James Lance, who discovered numerous stolen items while raking through the Rhône-Rhine Canal. Over three days, in a police operation that mobilized up to thirty officers, an astonishing array of treasures, including silver chalices and an intricately carved ivory piece, were retrieved. The total haul of 107 items was estimated at fifty million dollars, linked to the couple the OCBC had been tracking.

With this breakthrough, Meier invites Breitwieser for a confession, and soon after spending seventy-nine days in imprisonment, he is dressed in his former clothing and transported under guard in a train car with other inmates. Despite his prior feelings of superiority, Breitwieser now feels vulnerable and anxious about his uncertain future as he travels to an unknown destination, reflecting a stark turn from his previous confidence.