

OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/ENGLISH IB/TOPS/MACS/HOMEWORK 11

NAME (FIRST AND LAST): _____ GRADE: ____ CLASS:____

SELECTION 1/4

Little Lola looked at Sebastian Fresh with a **flummoxed** look on her face. "What do you mean?"

"A painting is not just a painting, my dear. Before the painting was a painting it was an idea that the artist had **prior** to he or she painting it. The artist's idea behind a painting is just as, if not more important than, the actual piece of art."

"Why?" Little Lola asked, still a bit confused.

"Because, my dear, no one else other than the artist has ever had the idea before – it is purely unique."

"So owning a piece of art is like owning an idea?"

"Precisely. And in many cases, these ideas are worth a lot of money."

"But why are some paintings so pretty and some of them so strange looking? Like that one over there looks so **serene** and peaceful with the trees and the lily pads, but the other one over there with the man holding the head that's been chopped off is so full of **gore**? Shouldn't all of these paintings or ideas be nice ones? Shouldn't they all be beautiful?"

"It isn't necessarily always about beauty, my dear. It is about the idea. After all, beauty comes in **infinite** forms. Where a tree reflected in a stream is beautiful to one artist, a chopped-off head is beautiful to another," Sebastian Fresh answered **astutely**. "Does that make sense?"

"I guess so, but there's something I don't understand," Lola said as she and Sebastian French approached a woman holding a **toxic** spray paint can in each hand.

"Yes?"

"Why are you copying all these paintings and sculptures and stuff? I mean, isn't that like copying or cheating? Doesn't copying it devalue the real piece of art?"

"I have to **commend** you, Lola, on your understanding of what we do here. It isn't often that someone comes to that conclusion so quickly," Sebastian Fresh said trying to avoid answering Little Lola's question.

"But—" Lola said **insistently**.

"I like to think of it more as paying **homage** to the great artists of this world."

1. Refer to a good dictionary and write down the definitions of the words below.

- i. Flummoxed: _____
- ii. Prior: _____
- iii. Serene: _____
- iv. Gore: _____
- v. Infinite: _____
- vi. Astutely: _____
- vii. Toxic: _____
- viii. Commend: _____
- ix. Insistently: _____
- x. Homage: _____

2. What is Little Lola's view of art? Choose the best answer.

- a) Art is peaceful and serene.
- b) Art does not contain gore.
- c) Art is beautiful.
- d) Art is pretentious.

3. What is Sebastian Fresh's view of art? Choose the best answer.

- a) Beauty is subjective.
- b) The artist's idea in conceiving the artwork gives art value.
- c) The physical work of art itself is more valuable than the idea that inspired its creation.
- d) Copying devalues art.

SELECTION 2/4

"So you're stealing their work and selling fakes to people for the amount of money that they'd pay for the real one."

"Yes, but they're completely **oblivious** about it. If they think it's the real painting, to them it's the real painting and there's no harm done. They are happy because they think they own a priceless sculpture or painting and I am happy because I get their money. Now you must excuse me, my dear. I believe the collection of Matisse paintings has arrived," Sebastian Fresh said as he gallantly showed Little Lola to a comfortable chair near a man who was working on a piece of marble with a **chisel**.

Lola sat down. She needed a little time to consider what all this meant. After all, she didn't really know anything about art and her discussion with Sebastian Fresh was more like a college course than an introduction. Ideas kept swirling through her head. Normally, she wouldn't care if someone was stealing anything. In fact, Little Lola typically thought stealing things was fun, but there was something that didn't sit right with her about stealing someone else's ideas. It was one thing to steal an orange soda or even an emerald, but it was another thing entirely to take someone's hard work and claim it as your own. She remained **sedentary** for quite some time before she finally stood up and walked back over to Dr. Science and Asha Bloom who were in the middle of a rather heated conversation.

"Don't be stupid, Dr. Science, that's like the ugliest painting I've ever seen. I mean, who wants to look at a bunch of dumb cubes and shapes?"

"Asha, you don't understand."

"Um, yes I do. I understand it's not any good."

"You can be so **exasperating** sometimes!"

"Well, at least I'm interested in stuff. You're totally full of **apathy**. I'm surprised you even care about those paintings at all."

"How can you possibly say that when I've devoted my life to paintings like these?"

"Dr. Science, forging paintings and selling to idiots doesn't mean you've devoted your life to art, it means you've devoted your life to crime," Asha said while trying to see her reflection in a glass frame. "My hair looks so **luminous** in here."

"It's not your hair, Asha, it's the reflection from all the glass," Dr. Science said coldly as Little Lola smirked.

"Dr. Science, Sebastian said that you were his mentor," Little Lola **intervened** before Asha could come up with a **witty** comeback. "Is that true?"

"Wait a minute, how do you two know each other?" Asha asked. "You'd better tell us exactly what's going on here before Lola and I take The Green Dragon for ourselves."

Sebastian Fresh overheard Asha's threat and joined the group. "Perhaps we should all sit down for some tea and discuss things. It appears as if Dr. Science hasn't been honest with either of us," he said and then snapped his fingers. The tunnel in which we'd all ventured disappeared as the wall moved back into place. We were all trapped. The man with the blow torch looked at all of us with a dangerous gleam in his eye as the woman who had been painting with the two spray paint cans brought us each a cup of tea and some little brown lumps that were supposed to be cookies. They were completely **inedible**.

4. Refer to a good dictionary and write down the definitions of the words below.

i. Oblivious: _____

- ii. Chisel: _____
- iii. Sedentary: _____
- iv. Exasperating: _____
- v. Apathy: _____
- vi. Intervened: _____
- vii. Witty: _____
- viii. Inedible: _____

5. What are Lola's reservations about appropriating an artist's original works and selling fakes to people for the amount of money that they would pay for the real one?

- a) She has no reservations. She just finds the issue confusing and it doesn't really affect her.
- b) Stealing can be fun.
- c) It is like stealing an orange soda or an emerald.
- d) Stealing ideas is not really like stealing an orange soda or an emerald.

6. Dr. Science and Sebastian Fresh share similar views about art because

- a. they are both men.
- b. they are both intelligent and sophisticated people, unlike Lola.
- c. they both do not think that there is anything necessarily criminal about selling a duplicate without revealing its fake status.
- d. they both find it exciting to deceive people.

SELECTION 3/4

"So, Dr. Science, it looks as though you have something to share with the rest of us," Sebastian said, glaring at him.

"Well, I, uh..." Dr. Science started to stutter.

"You'd best start from the very beginning. How do you two know each other?" Asha asked in a demanding voice while Little Lola pulled me onto her lap and tried to feed me one of the disgusting cookies.

As a spy I've been put in plenty **compromising** situations much like the one Dr. Science found himself in with Sebastian Fresh, Asha Bloom, and Little Lola. Obviously he was telling one thing to Sebastian and another thing to Asha and Lola, but who could know which one was the truth? Dr. Science's manner became suddenly **introverted**. You could tell just by looking at him that he was trying to think of a lie to **assuage** everyone. "It seems as if my memory has suffered from some kind of sudden **lapse**."

"Now, now, Dr. Science, don't think that you can get out of the **predicament** you've put yourself in with such a lame excuse," Sebastian said, snapping his fingers. Within seconds the man with the blow torch was standing near the chair Dr. Science was sitting in looking as if he might set Dr. Science's lab coat **aflame**. It was clear from that moment that Dr. Science would not be telling the truth out of his own **volition**, but rather under the threat of four angry peoples' tempers, one of whom was holding a blow torch.

Dr. Science began his anecdote from when he and Sebastian Fresh first met. It was a few years earlier in autumn. Sebastian was a **docent** at one of the largest museums in New York City. Day in and day out he would walk the galleries and look at famous paintings and warn tourists that they shouldn't get too close to the masterpieces. For Sebastian, it wasn't exactly the greatest job. He saw himself as someone who should be creating art, not guarding it. Every day he grew more and more bitter, that is until he met Dr. Science.

It was a rainy day. Leaves were falling at the same rate as raindrops and Dr. Science had work to do. He sneaked into the museum without paying admission. Somehow he'd lied about having some sort of student identification card that had been stolen, and although the girl selling tickets looked at him with some **scrutiny**, she allowed him into the galleries without **yielding** to her first impression of him, which was that he was most likely there to **transpose** a fake painting for one of the real paintings hanging on the museum walls. Little did she know she was right?

Dr. Science took the escalator to the top floor where the museum displayed its vast collection of paintings, which were **predominantly** from the early 20th century. When he reached the top he took a quick look around to see if there were any guards nearby. Luckily for Dr. Science, the only other person on the floor was Sebastian Fresh, so he calmly started to stroll past the 20th century masters: Pollock, Rothko, Warhol, and others. As Sebastian's footsteps echoed through the **adjacent** gallery, Dr. Science unbuttoned his white lab coat and from within it he pulled out a canvas that looked identical to the one that was hanging in front of him. With no one there to **witness** him, he swapped the fake painting for the real one which he hid quickly inside his lab coat. Just as he'd buttoned the top button and turned to exit the gallery he heard a sigh. It was Sebastian.

7. Refer to a good dictionary and write down the definitions of the words below.

- i. Compromising: _____
- ii. Introverted: _____
- iii. Assuage: _____
- iv. Lapse: _____
- v. Predicament: _____
- vi. Aflame: _____
- vii. Volition: _____
- viii. Docent: _____

- ix. Scrutiny:_____
- x. Yielding:_____
- xi. Transpose:_____
- xii. Predominantly:_____
- xiii. Adjacent:_____
- xiv. Witness:_____

8. What wasn't Sebastian happy with his life as a docent?

- a) He felt that he had more important things to do.
- b) He felt overworked in one of the largest museums in New York City.
- c) Too many viewers were standing too close to the paintings.
- d) None of the above.

9. Assuming that the museum organizes its art works chronologically, what would you expect to find on the first floor or the basement?

- a) Andy Warhol's Campbell soup cans.
- b) Jackson Pollock's drip paintings.
- c) A massive bronze spider created by a 93-year-old artist, whose work is featured in institutions such as the British Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and Florence's Uffizi Gallery.
- d) A triptych from the medieval period.

SELECTION 4/4

"I supposed I should report you to the authorities," Sebastian said quietly.

Not wanting to appear completely guilty Dr. Science tried to make up a believable story. "I'm from downstairs, they told me to replace this painting so we could work on cleaning the real one." His demeanor was **temperate** so as not to cause any unnecessary suspicion.

"Look, I don't really care what you're up to. The fact of the matter is I hate this place. I hate all the faces in the paintings staring at me smugly all day. I hate all abstractions and the theories behind each and every one of these works of so-called art. I don't care if you steal any of them. Take your pick," Sebastian said **virulently** as Dr. Science looked at him a bit surprised.

"But isn't your job to make sure people like me don't come in here and steal paintings?"

"I suppose so, but I really don't care."

From then on Dr. Science and Sebastian had an arrangement: Dr. Science would sneak into the museum with fake paintings in his lab coat and replace the fakes for the real ones, and

Sebastian would pretend not to notice. It made Sebastian feel as if he were doing something more exciting than just standing around and telling people not to get too close to the artwork, not to mention it made Dr. Science's job ridiculously easy. Eventually, the two became friends and Dr. Science finally decided to take Sebastian under his wing. Within a week Sebastian had quit his job at the museum and began to learn everything he could about making reproductions of great masterpieces. Dr. Science was a fantastic teacher. He explained the **discipline** to Sebastian with patience and passion, so much that it **rekindled** Sebastian's love of art. Unfortunately, his **newfound** passion hadn't been directed in the proper direction and, instead of creating something new and exciting, Sebastian found himself copying a **medley** of masterpieces for Dr. Science. One week he would find himself working on some impressionistic paintings and the next week he'd be working on Grecian marble sculptures. Each and every time he copied a masterpiece, Sebastian got a sense of revenge which eventually took over his good nature. In the meantime, Dr. Science was stealing pieces of art from all over the world and although no one was aware of what was going on it was causing **irreparable** damage to museums and art collectors **alike**.

But as all criminals do, Dr. Science got bored with just making reproductions of masterpieces and stealing them. He wanted something to offer him a greater challenge, so he left the counterfeiting to his greatest apprentice, Sebastian Fresh, and went out in search of a greater challenge. This is how he met Asha Bloom.

Asha, as we know, was a notorious jewel thief and through various contacts and connections Dr. Science met her one day on a ferry boat in the Greek Islands. Dr. Science managed to **extract** all the knowledge she had about The Green Dragon from her and promised her that he would help her steal it. He, however, hadn't been completely **upfront** with Asha when they first discussed stealing the mysterious jewel. Asha had paid him to help her. Although Dr. Science took her money and told her he'd do as she wished, he had other plans – plans that involved Sebastian Fresh and his collection of stolen paintings.

10. Refer to a good dictionary and write down the definitions of the words below.

- i. Temperate: _____
- ii. Virulently: _____
- iii. Discipline: _____
- iv. Rekindled: _____
- v. Newfound: _____
- vi. Medley: _____
- vii. Irreparable: _____
- viii. Alike: _____
- ix. Extract: _____

