

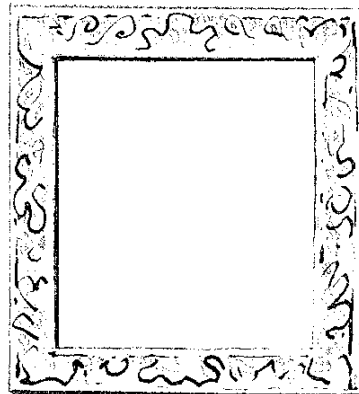
## Chapter 3 *A newspaper, a beach*

While I was waiting for Adriana in the hotel reception area I sat down at a table. There were newspapers on the table. Most of them were in Spanish or Catalan, but there was one from Britain. I began to read it. There was a story about a painting.

### **Thieves Steal Picture from Gallery**



The Gardener



Two nights ago some men got into the Tate Gallery in London. They took a painting called *The Gardener* by the French painter Cézanne.

‘It’s one of our most famous pictures,’ said gallery director Delia Hitchin. ‘Everyone loves it. *The Gardener* is a beautiful picture. It is a good example of Cézanne’s work.’

The thieves got in through a

window at the back of the building. Nobody heard them. Nobody saw them. They cut the painting from its frame.

‘This painting is really important,’ says Ms Hitchin. ‘We want it back. Please, if you know anything at all call us or the police.’

*The Gardener* is 65.4 x 54 centimetres. It is worth about two million pounds.

I looked up. Frank Shepherd was standing next to my chair. He was looking at the newspaper too.

‘That’s an interesting story,’ he said.

‘What story?’

‘About the painting.’

‘The thieves were very good,’ I said. ‘Nobody saw them in the gallery. Nobody heard them.’

‘Yes. That’s good all right,’ Frank said. ‘Oh, by the way, about your double bass.’

‘Yes?’ I said.

‘I talked to the police here. A man called Portillo.’

‘And?’ I asked.

‘He’s going to try and find it,’ Frank said.

‘How?’ I said. I wanted my double bass back.

‘I don’t know. I’m not a policeman. He’s going to talk to the drivers of the truck, I think. And he’s going to talk to the French police.’

At that moment we heard a voice.

‘Frank!’ somebody shouted. ‘Frank Shepherd! I want to talk to you.’

I looked round. Candida Ashley-Morton, the leader of the double basses, was walking towards us.

‘Excuse me!’ said Frank. He walked up to Candida and the two of them went towards the hotel bar. Candida was talking quickly. Was she angry? I couldn’t hear the conversation. They went into the bar.

The lift doors opened and Adriana got out with some of the other orchestra players.

Somebody was shouting in the hotel bar. It was Candida Ashley-Morton. She was shouting at Frank. There was a

short silence. Then he shouted back. Everybody stood and listened.

‘Come on,’ Adriana said to us. ‘It’s their problem, not ours. Let’s go to the beach and have some fun!’

If you haven’t been to Barcelona, you must go. The city feels good and there’s lots to do. One of the most famous areas of the city is a big street called *Les Rambles* – or the Ramblas in English. People walk in the middle of this street. Cars go on the sides. Tourists walk up and down it. It has trees and cafés, street musicians and street actors. People sell newspapers and flowers and birds in cages. They try and sell you things or paint your picture. It’s always full of life, always full of people.

About twenty of us left the hotel that morning. We walked down the Ramblas. We were talking and laughing. At the bottom of the long street we walked past the boats and the restaurants and then we came to the beach.

It was a beautiful day. The sun was already high in the sky. There were a lot of people lying on the sand. Some of the orchestra ran to the sea and swam. Some began to play football on the beach. Adriana and I sat and watched. We put on our sunglasses and smiled at each other.

‘Wow!’ she said. ‘This is fantastic! This is the life!’

She was right. It was a fantastic day. But we didn’t know, then, about the future. The future wasn’t fantastic at all.

