

My Bully Thought I Only Spoke Spanish Until I Saved a \$40 Million Deal Chapter 16

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Berlin.

The third stop of the documentary.

I had lived here for a year when I was twelve.

As the plane touched down, I stared at the gray-green city outside the window, my heart racing a little.

The summer my father took me to the Brandenburg Gate for ice cream, Berlin's sky had been bright blue.

The team was filming a segment on the history of Central European trade, which required German translation.

The interviewee was a history professor at Humboldt University of Berlin, specializing in the European end of the Silk Road.

His name was Schmidt, in his sixties, with white hair, speaking slowly and in standard German.

During the interview, he mentioned something—a private collector in Berlin owned a collection of European antiques brought to Europe via the Silk Road.

“The collector was a senior American diplomat. He passed away five years ago. His daughter inherited the collection but has never appeared in public.”

My hand froze.

“What was the diplomat's name?”

Schmidt flipped through his materials.

“Elias... Elias Voss.”

My heart seemed to stop for a beat.

Elias Voss.

My father's name.

"Where is the collection now?"

"From what I know, it's in a private warehouse in Berlin. Storage fees have been paid by a Swiss law firm for five years."

Ms. Bennett.

So besides money and real estate, my father had left this.

I had never known.

He had never told me.

After the interview, I sat alone on the streets of Berlin.

Early winter in Berlin, gray sky, cold wind.

The ice cream I'd had at twelve was pistachio flavor.

My phone rang.

Kael Rainer.

"You're in Berlin?"

"Yeah."

"What's wrong? Your voice sounds off."

"Nothing."

"I'm in Berlin. Flew over this afternoon. If you're free—"

"Why do you always show up where I am?"

"Because your schedule is with Elena. She runs a project I invested in. I have the right to see it."

"That's called stalking."

"It's called care. There's a difference."

I fell silent for a few seconds.

“I found something my father left. Antiques. In a Berlin warehouse. I never knew about it.”

“Do you want me to go with you to see it?”

“...Yeah.”

The next afternoon, Kael went with me to a private warehouse on the outskirts of Berlin.

It was not large, with precise temperature and humidity control, designed specifically for preserving cultural relics.

After the manager opened the door, I saw three full shelves.

All antiques—European silver, oil paintings, glazed pottery, more than forty pieces in total.

Each piece had a handwritten tag, in my father’s handwriting.

He had written the name, age, and origin of each antique in English and German.

I picked up one tag.

“19th-century Austrian silver tray. Purchased at Istanbul Grand Bazaar, 2008. With Elara.”

With Elara.

2008.

I was eight years old, in Istanbul with my father.

He took me to the Grand Bazaar. I begged for Turkish ice cream, and he said we’d look at this small stall first.

That stall sold these very antiques.

I had no memory of this at all.

But my father remembered.

Not only did he remember—he bought them, piece by piece, brought them back from every corner of the Silk Road, labeled them, and stored them in this warehouse.

Kept them for me.

Waiting for me to come and take them.

I knelt in front of the crates, and tears fell.

Three years.

I had hidden everything they left behind—languages, inheritance, memories.

I thought that as long as I didn't touch these things, I could pretend they hadn't left.

But they had always been there.

In every language, on every tag, in the stories behind every piece.