ON SCREEN UNIT 5 Batx.1

Reading

Read the text carefully and do the exercises below

The Greatest Art Theft in History

The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum is a museum in the Fenway-Kenmare neighbourhood of Boston, USA, that houses a private art collection of paintings, sculptures, tapestries and decorative art from Europe, Asia and America. In the early morning hours of 18th March 1990, while the city of Boston was still celebrating one of its most important annual events, Saint Patrick's Day, two thieves entered the museum and stole 13 priceless works of art estimated at $500 million. It was to be the largest single art theft of all time.

Just after midnight, two men disguised as Boston police officers approached the entrance to the museum and told the security guards through the intercom that they had been called out to investigate a disturbance. The security guards buzzed the two fake cops in and were immediately immobilised. The thieves wrapped strips of duct tape around the guards' hands, feet, and heads and brought them to the basement where they handcuffed one to a pipe and one to a workbench. They then looted the galleries for over an hour, stealing paintings including Rembrandt's *The Storm on the Sea of Galilee* and *Chez Tortoni* by Manet and five drawings by Degas. Some of the paintings were even cut out of their frames. The next morning, the guard arriving to relieve the two night guards discovered that the museum had been robbed and notified the police and the museum director.

Over two decades after the theft no one has been arrested for the crime and the paintings have not been returned despite thousands of leads and a $5 million reward. The museum's founder Isabella Stewart Gardner stated in her will that nothing in the galleries should ever be changed, and so today the empty frames still hang on the walls from the night of the theft. The story has also inspired obsession among some art hunters who would like to get their hands on one of the largest ever rewards offered by a private institution. Poems, books, films and paintings have also all been dedicated to the heist. In a recent book, *The Gardner Heist,* Ulrich Boser points an accusatory finger at a known Boston gangster who is currently serving a 32-year sentence for attempted robbery in a different case. Although the criminal denies involvement in the crime, the author says that when he contacted him in jail, the felon suggested that his face should be on the cover of the book and was, in a way, boasting.

The investigation remains an open case and a top priority of the Boston FBI, which says it is not giving up. The current museum's director of security is also hopeful that the artworks will be returned. Such optimism may not be justified though as stolen art is rarely recovered. Some estimates of recovery rates are as low as five percent and rates drop with the value of the paintings. Still, the museum director quotes Emily Dickinson when she says "I live in hope. I dwell in possibility".

A.- Read the text and choose the best answer, A, B, C or D.

1 At the time of the theft, the museum

- **A** was holding an exhibition.
- **B** was celebrating an event.
- **C** was just opening.
- **D** was closed.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

2 The theft was discovered by

A a passer-by.
B a security guard.
C the police.
D the museum director.

3 The empty frames of the paintings still hang on the museum walls because

A it is what its founder would want.
B its founder decided to leave them.
C the museum has no others to replace the stolen ones.
D the founder wants to remind people of the crime.

4 The criminal suspected of being behind the robbery

A was convicted of the crime.
B appears to be ashamed of the crime.
C refuses to talk about the crime.
D appears to be proud of the crime.

5 The writer appears to

A think there is a good chance of the paintings being returned.
B think there is little chance of the paintings being returned.
C think there is no chance of the paintings being returned.
D have no idea of the chance of the paintings being returned.

B.- **Find in the text words, phrases or expressions which mean the same as the ones below.**

1.- expensive .....

2.- riot, disorder .....

3.- robbed, stole .....

4.- last wish .....

5.- connection, relationship .....

6.- showing off, exaggerating .....

LIVEWORKSHEETS