

The Plunder of the Feast of Cana: Napoleon's Theft of Veronese's Masterpiece

The theft of Veronese's 'Feast of Cana' by Napoleon Bonaparte was one of the most infamous acts of art looting in history. The painting, a massive canvas depicting the wedding feast of Jesus, was one of the most celebrated works of the Venetian Renaissance. Napoleon's theft of the painting from its home in the Church of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice sparked outrage and condemnation across Europe. The painting was eventually returned to Venice in 1815, but the damage had been done. The theft of the 'Feast of Cana' remains a symbol of the arrogance and brutality of Napoleon's regime, and a reminder of the fragility of our cultural heritage.



Plunder: Napoleon's Theft of Veronese's Feast

by Cynthia Saltzman

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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X-Ray : Enabled
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The 'Feast of Cana'

The 'Feast of Cana' was painted by Paolo Veronese in 1562-3. It is a large oil painting, measuring 6.66 meters by 9.90 meters. The painting depicts the wedding feast of Jesus, in the town of Cana in Galilee. Jesus is seated at the center of the table, with his mother Mary and the disciples. The guests at the feast are a mix of biblical figures and contemporary Venetians, including Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese himself. The painting is full of rich detail and symbolism, and is considered one of the masterpieces of the Venetian Renaissance.

Napoleon's Theft

Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Italy in 1796 and quickly conquered most of the peninsula. In 1797, he entered Venice and began to loot the city's art treasures. One of his first targets was the Church of San Giorgio Maggiore, where the 'Feast of Cana' was hung. Napoleon ordered the painting to be removed from the church and sent to Paris, where it was displayed in the Louvre Museum.

The theft of the 'Feast of Cana' sparked outrage across Europe. Veronese's painting was one of the most famous works of art in the world, and its removal from Venice was seen as a great loss. The Venetian people were particularly upset by the theft and they pleaded with Napoleon to return the painting. However, Napoleon refused and the 'Feast of Cana' remained in the Louvre until 1815.

The Return of the 'Feast of Cana'

After Napoleon's defeat at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, the 'Feast of Cana' was returned to Venice. The painting was greeted with great joy by the Venetian people and it was installed in its original location in the Church of San Giorgio Maggiore. The return of the 'Feast of Cana' was a symbol of the restoration of Venetian independence and a reminder of the fragility of our cultural heritage.

The Legacy of the Theft

The theft of the 'Feast of Cana' remains one of the most notorious acts of art looting in history. The painting's removal from Venice was a great loss to the city and its people. However, the return of the painting in 1815 was a symbol of hope and renewal. The 'Feast of Cana' is now one of the most popular tourist attractions in Venice and it continues to inspire awe and wonder in visitors from all over the world.

The theft of the 'Feast of Cana' by Napoleon Bonaparte was a dark chapter in the history of art. However, the painting's return to Venice in 1815 was a symbol of hope and renewal. The 'Feast of Cana' is now one of the most popular tourist attractions in Venice and it continues to inspire awe and wonder in visitors from all over the world.

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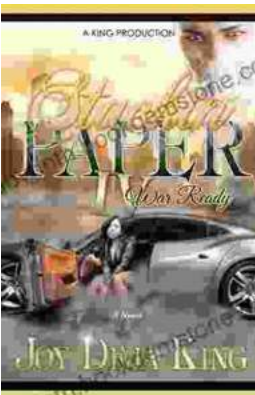


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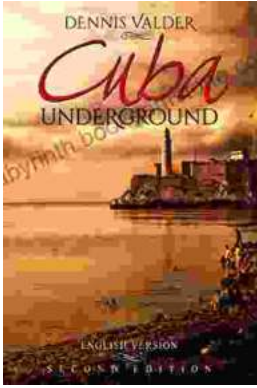
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