VOKLA / TEEN READERS

The Name Below the Photograph

ENGLISH STORYBOOK / B1



VOKLA Press

Free student edition

A face at the edge



The old Star Cinema was opening for one last screening before its seats were removed. The school paper wanted a photograph for the front page. Eli found one in a box behind the ticket desk. It showed a painted city skyline and a young woman at the edge of the stage, holding a brush. On the back someone had written “M. Vale, 1978.” Eli loved the photograph. His editor, June, loved a clear headline. By lunch they had one: “The Woman Who Painted Our City.”

The wrong question



Eli called Mr. Vale, who still lived above the old bakery. “Did your sister paint the skyline?” he asked. There was a long pause. “My sister took photographs,” the man said. “People usually asked her to stand behind the camera.” Eli looked at the name again. He had assumed it belonged to the person in the picture. June crossed out the headline. They still had a woman with a brush and now they had a possible photographer. Neither fact told them who had painted the city.

The woman with the brush



An usher recognized the woman and sent them to Rosa, a retired stage painter. She brought out a photograph of the same skyline, half finished. On its back were six names. “We each painted a section,” she said. “Mine was the bakery roof. I was touching it up when Miriam Vale came in.” She pointed to a narrow white line on the old photograph. “That was my last stroke.” Rosa offered them her second photograph for the screening. For the first time, Eli noticed that every window in the skyline was slightly different.

Room for two pictures



That evening June pinned both photographs beside the cinema door. The first caption named Miriam as the photographer and Rosa as the painter in the picture. The second named the six painters from Rosa’s list. Mr. Vale stopped to read his sister’s credit. Rosa stood beside him and argued cheerfully with an old friend about whose windows looked the straightest. Eli watched people move from one picture to the other. His original headline had fitted neatly on a single line. He folded the draft into his pocket. He liked the wall better.

AFTER THE STORY

Back to the story

1 **Which assumption makes the first headline misleading?**

2 **Why does the second photograph matter?**

YOUR TURN

Write two short captions for the display. Make the photographer's role clear.

THREE WORDS FROM THE STORY

caption • words printed beside a picture

credit • a line naming someone for their work

backdrop • a painted background on a stage