

Constant soft giggles accompanied the scent of the coffee-filled air as Mariel pondered over her homework one Sunday afternoon. Sitting on the couch in the middle of her sorority house's formal sitting room, there was a bustle of girls coming and going. With the door to this house always open to a welcoming and joyous atmosphere, sisters, alumni, friends and study groups were in constant traffic. But who knows who might walk through the door.

Stranger: "You look frustrated, everything ok?"

Mariel: "I'm doing this project for a class and I have to write about an artists' opinion on borrowing someone else's art."

Stranger: "well, how do you feel about it, about borrowing?"

Mariel: "I'm not sure if I'm being honest. Like I would be upset if I had worked really hard on something and then someone had clearly taken the idea and copied it. But at the same time when I write in calligraphy for a canvas painting I find that I am often copying the font or phrase from a Pinterest post or when I bake I always use a recipe that someone else created."

Stranger: "Sounds to me like you have an opinion but just don't know the right words. I'm James by the way"

Mariel: "Nice to meet you, I'm Mariel"

The two sat in silence as Mariel stared at her name on the document

Mariel: "What would your advice be?"

James: "My advice would be that brains are funny things. I am sure the words will come to you, I think maybe you just need to start from a less forced perspective."

Mariel: "Well this is due in a couple days so giving myself time to think is not really an option. But do you have an opinion? Where do you think crossing the line is?"

James: "It seems to me that you are looking for an easy answer and a way out. But not every river has a bridge, and the same goes for life. I have had people copy my work before and I can say that I made me very upset. Sometimes when people copy an idea they might do it better. But then there are instances where people don't, and in my case, their copy was more of a flop than a success. So, I would have to say that stealing peoples work is not okay but art is all about inspiration and putting your own spin on it. And in the context of "Good artists copy, great artists steel" Sturtevant wrote that "To be a great artist is the least interesting thing I can think of," (Farago). This means stealing is not always okay."

Mariel: Have you ever talked about this before? You seem to have a pretty well-developed opinion on the matter.

James: Well, sometimes it comes up. Have you ever wonder about what people talk about while in their professional attire of suits and dresses? The conversation can fall upon the subject of money, sometimes legal battles even. On other occasions, the topic of conversation could be completely unrelated to the typical cut and dry business talk. Sometimes things are brought up and things are said. I think the best way to know your own opinion is to listen to others and notice when you smile and when your skin crawls. Take everything with a grain of salt if you will. An example of this is when Wilson Mizner stated, " If you steal from one author it is plagiarism. But if you steal from many it is research," (Bailey).

Mariel: So you are saying it is okay?

James: You seemed very quirky at first and that I liked. I hope you take no offense but the more we talk the more you seem like everyone else. Young adults always take words and twist them, trying to find a deeper meaning.

Mariel: I am so sorry you feel that way. I think my generation has grown up rhetorically analyzing everything. Have you never done so? In English I would always state why the curtains were red or yellow or why the artist used a specific background.

James: yes yes of course. There is a reason for everything.

Mariel's face started to become red and her eyes watery. She grew frustrated at the lack of information James was giving her and threw herself off the couch onto the floor, rolling onto her stomach.

Abby: "Mariel! Mariel?! Mariel, are you okay?"

Upon hearing these shouts Mariel looked up to see Abby, one of the girls in the house, looking at her with concern.

Mariel: Oscar Wild had once said that "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery" (Spafford).

Abby: Mariel you are speaking rubbish. You have been over here for two hours now and people are concerned.

Mariel: I have been talking to James,

Mariel nodded her head to the right, towards the couch where she had seen James before, her eyes soon after followed.

Mariel: Where, where did he go?! I need help with this. I don't know what to do!

Tears began to roll down Mariel's face.

Abby: Hey how about you come to the coffee shop with me today, there is suppose to be a musical guest performing and then we can come home and finish this?

Mariel: Ooo..okay

The girls grabbed their fall jackets and began their walk towards the coffee shop. When they arrived they grabbed a small table by the window and a chai latte for each of them. When the speaker walked on stage, Mariel looked over at Abby. Abby still showing concern. But it was him!

James: Today, I have an unusual topic, when I was a little boy my mother always told me an Oscar Wild quote, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery" (Spafford).

As James continued to talk, Mariel tuned every word out. She knew her opinion and she knew his opinion and that was all she needed. Minutes later, the whole coffee shop stood clapping, Mariel and Abby both joined in. As the girls walked out, their chai teas now empty, Mariel looked over at her friend.

Mariel: Hey Abby, I think it is totally okay to use others' work as inspiration, but earning money off of it and not giving the original person any credit is where I draw the line. Like how James Charles had his makeup pallet design stolen by Wet N Wild was a step too far.

Abby just smiled, having no clue what Mariel was talking about, and just thinking about how good of a singer that man was in the coffee shop.

Mariel grew pale as she realized who James was, he had seemed older in his demeanor when Mariel had talked with him in her house than he did when she saw him in the coffee shop moments ago. Almost like a ghost of him in his forties had come to visit. The way he spoke and carried himself was more composed and mature, almost like a business man rather than a beauty guru from Youtube.

A few nights later Mariel logged onto her phone and saw a new story about James' makeup pallet being stolen from the brand Wet N Wild. Looking at the time stamp, 17 minutes ago, Mariel realized the whole day she had been in the future. Who knows if she would really attend his speech, but sometime, someday it would happen. For now though she fell asleep forgetting about the whole thing never remembering when the day came. For the generation is surrounded by technology making them forget about morals that were valued in their childhood.

Work Cited:

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