

My Bidding Disorder . . . so it goes

by Jason_Love

I love garage sales. Iâ€™m one of those freaks who maps out the sales on Friday night, then wakes up at 6 a.m. with an uneasy feeling that someone else is buying his stuff. The early worm gets the rubbish.

Recently, I stumbled on a garage sale bigger than Texas. It is called Ebay. (Yes, I have been living in a cave.)

Here, at one convenient location, is all the junk you could ever want, a worldwide block sale open 24 hours a day. My head reeled the way it does when I stand on the roof wondering if the neighbors can hear me singing.

It started with a simple search for headphone music. I typed the words workout tapes and voilÃ â€™342 matches. I felt like a brat beneath the tree on Christmas morning: presents for miles and every one calling my name.

I registered a username, created a password, and proceeded to bid my brains out.

After rounding out my music collection, I decided to do some birthday shopping, a little something for the people who have to put up with my BS full-time.

For my wife, I found a brand new Scooby Doo watch for five dollars! Man, it was a good day. I cranked the volume on Walkman and bid \$7.75 just to be safe.

The auction would end in 26 minutes, so I broke for lunch.

When I returned 25 minutes later, my bid stood strong. Scooby was all mine. As I daydreamed about the hero I would be in presenting this gift, I HAD MAIL. I checked the inbox and found a message from Ebayâ€”someone had outbid me for the watch.

Youâ€™re kidding! What kind of person would do that to a girl on her birthday?

I stormed back to raise my bid, where I found the following message: This auction is closed. Winning bidder is ahole@hotmail.com.

My jaw dropped. My knuckles whitened. My eyes puffed out the way they do when the Kings lose in overtime. Could he do that, just wait until the last second and outbid me?? If I were sick, I would have sent him a virus.

I contacted Ebay, and they said that bidders were permitted to do that. Any ahole could do it!

At which point I lost my mind. I scoured Ebay for new and better presents. I tracked down Scooby blankets, Scooby calendars, Scooby snacks. I bid on everything with a beat this and a take that. I bid on items I didnâ€™t even want just so other people couldnâ€™t have them.

Recovering from my fugue, I felt compensated, as if my ego had finished a seventeen-course meal. I had

outbid the whole wide world.

Then something curious happened: YOU'VE GOT MAIL, YOU'VE GOT MAIL, YOU'VE GOT-YOU'VE-GOT-YOU'VE GOT MAIL...

I was winning bids left and right. I won lunch pails and back scratchers, a shot glass signed by Elvis, a pair of used panties. The calculator said that I owed more money than I would earn this year, plus shipping. So it goes.

Invoices poured in telling me where to send my checks. Some offered PayPal. Others demanded money orders. I was comatose, a man lying naked in the zoo after consuming all the other animals beneath a full moon. There was only one thing to do: I pretended it was all a bad dream the way my dad did the night I was conceived. I logged off and didn't look back.

A month later ... 162 messages waited for me. They began as introductions and friendly reminders, then worked themselves into threats about my reputation and ultimately to attacks on my lineage.

Then came the notice from Ebay. It was flagged not with an exclamation point but with a skull-and-crossbones.

The following people have reported that you won their auction but failed to pay. Because you have not responded to our repeated e-mails, we have labeled you a Non-Paying Bidder (NPB) and cancelled your membership to Ebay.

That was that. I was an NPB. Banned from Ebay. They posted my face on the register with a sign reading,

• Do not take bids from this man.

I didn't mean it. It's just that there were so many other bidders. And no matter how early I woke up, the sun was already rising elsewhere in the world.

I'd tell you about the threat I received and the curse placed on my firstborn child, but I'm busy right now—in 3 minutes, I'll be the proud new owner of a camcorder at Ubid.

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