

THE UNSALABLE THING

by

Mark D. Tjarks

Mark D. Tjarks
95-797 Wikao Street
Mililani, Hawaii 96789
808-429-7732
mtjarks@hpu.edu

THE UNSALABLE THING

SYNOPSIS

Contestants in a storage wars bidding competition work each other to score the prize as they try to unravel the mystery of the deceased renter of a storage locker. When they come upon the unsalable thing, they must ask themselves if there truly are some things that cannot be bought.

SETTING

Outside a storage locker, present day

CAST OF CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)

Barney (1st storage locker bidder)

Honey (2nd storage locker bidder)

Alvin (3rd storage locker bidder)

Owner (The Storage Locker Site Owner)

Makana Davis

THE UNSALABLE THING

Honey, Barney, and Alvin stand in front of a closed storage locker. They juggle smart phones and cups of coffee, suggesting it's early morning.

BARNEY

My most incredible find? Tough choice. I've had some good ones. I once bought a painting just for the frame. I tried to restore the finish, totally ruined it only to discover--

HONEY

The painting was a priceless Picasso.

BARNEY

Sorry, I'm Barney. You are?

HONEY

Honey. Don't bother.

BARNEY

Bother to what?

HONEY

To say out loud the joke you're thinking up. I've heard them all. And none of them is funnier than the one my mom made: making me listen to every Tom, Dick and Barney call me "Honey."

BARNEY

The important thing is you're not defensive about it. The painting **was**: a piece of crap! But folded up in the back of the frame, the Declaration of Independence. Not the original, but one of 24 copies made in 1776 to promote the Revolution across the colonies. It sold for over \$200,000.

ALVIN

I read that story, but it sold for two million dollars. Are you from Pennsylvania? That's where it was found.

BARNEY

It sold for \$2.42 million actually, but if I admit that, then everyone knows it's not my story. What would I be doing here?

HONEY

Why lie about it?

BARNEY

Not a lie, just a story that works better if I'm the one who finds it. Everyone loves that version.

HONEY

I once bid on a locker with what I thought was an 18th Century roll top desk - it turned out to be a 1950s reproduction. **But** in one of the drawers - from the 18th century - a diamond ring worth \$16,000. Of course, that's nothing compared to \$200,000, but then again my story has the added benefit of being true. And you, Darlin'?

ALVIN

Hmm. Oh, Alvin.

HONEY

And you, Alvin, what was your most valuable locker?

ALVIN

Nothing like jewelry or a rare document. I won one of those large storage units. It had a wall of boxes, 8 across, and 6 high. I figured from the outside that it could have up to 10 rows of these boxes.

BARNEY

480 boxes. \$480 for every \$1 of value in the boxes. Or \$48 if there's only one row.

ALVIN

Exactly.

HONEY

So what were they?

ALVIN

Depends.

HONEY

On what?

ALVIN

No, **Depends**....Adult diapers.

Honey and Barney laugh.

ALVIN

Each case worth \$49.95.

Honey and Alvin look at Barney.

BARNEY

\$23,976.

HONEY

So your diapers were worth like \$8,000 more than my antique diamond ring. It's always the unexpected that ends up winning the day, that's what I like about bidding on storage lockers.

BARNEY

\$49.95, retail. You didn't get people to buy your 5-10 year old cases of extra large diapers for full retail. So how much did you actually make? After expenses.

ALVIN

After expenses? Umm. Maybe, almost...\$12,000.

BARNEY

(to Honey)

So the diamond ring was more valuable like you'd expect.

(to Alvin)

It's the Unsalable thing you have to watch out for, the anathema of the storage locker bidder's existence.

ALVIN

The unsalable thing?

BARNEY

The thing that you believe is going to make you a fortune and it would given its value except you can't sell it.

HONEY

Once my ex bid on the locker of one of these survivalists who had stockpiled like 51 semi-automatic rifles. This couple are whispering "I got \$500 On Google!" "I'm telling you, \$700!! MINIMUM!!!" "You can't trust Bing!!" And my ex's shaking his head, not just because these two are dumb and dumber, but because the guns were actually AR-15 tactical rifles. You know the kind? Made to look like M-16s. And they're going for like \$2,000. So he wins the locker with a \$25,000 bid. But they ain't AR-15s; they're actual M-16s, worth half a million on the black market. Only **Dumb** - or was it **Dumber** - gets tired of my ex's bragging and calls the police, who cart the M-16s away because they're fucking machine guns and illegal as the day's long, and just like that, half a million in profit becomes \$25,000 in the hole.

BARNEY

Is that why he's the ex-husband?

HONEY

Well, that was his M.O. as a businessman. I mean, he was so clever he could've made a small fortune...as long as he started with a large fortune. But I got something out of it.

BARNEY

What was that?

HONEY

Like you said. A divorce.

BARNEY

So he lost \$25,000 and his meal ticket wife. He got off easy. My Unsalable thing was worse. This locker had this really tacky oriental carpet covering what was pretty obviously a sports car, but you could only see the bottom of the car under the carpet, and the **wheels are missing!** So I get it for \$200 because who the hell wants to buy a sports car that doesn't even have wheels. And what's the chance the engine works on such a car. So they all congratulate me on the beautiful carpet I just won, which I pull off to reveal, the oddest car you will ever see. You know why it had no wheels, Honey?

HONEY

Why, sweet pumpkin?

BARNEY

Because it had goddamn fins. It was a goddamn submarine car. I kid you not.

ALVIN

From *The Spy who Loved Me*? You bought James Bond's submarine car from *The Spy Who Loved Me*?!

BARNEY

I knew he'd get it right away. You're a bit of a savant aren't you, my little Rain Man.

ALVIN

Alvin. It would be worth a fortune.

BARNEY

Yes!... Maybe!...Well, goddamn it, I'll never know. I've got \$16,000 into restoring it. 3,000 for authenticating it for an auction at Sotheby's I backed out of.

(shaking my head)

I can't bring myself to sell it. I've become too attached. So now I have a working submarine car sitting under my weeping willow tree collecting bird shit, unless I cover it, but I've got James Bond's goddamn submarine car: I'm not going to cover it. So after months and countless hours of research, I find a marina a 100 miles away that has an open slip that will work for it, only it's going to cost me \$14,000 a year. And that's not the worst of it.

HONEY

Which is what?

BARNEY

It's a chick magnet. I can get two different women every weekend, but you know what kind of women want to take a ride on my James Bond submarine car.

HONEY

Yes, I think I do.

BARNEY

No! That's what I thought. Bunnies. No, they hate it. The ones who love it are Diamonds-are-forever women. They're-going-to-put-me-in-the-poor-house-and-I'm-barely-getting-any women.

ALVIN

Bunnies? Playboy Bunnies?

BARNEY

No, a bunny is a, a, how would you put it, an enthusiastic girl.

(paws tight to his chest, mimes
hopping)

Who hops to you when you call her.

The Owner of the storage franchise
shows up with a large ring of keys.

OWNER

Getting to know each other?

HONEY

Barney was just impressing us with his big....

OWNER

Wallet?

HONEY

Ego.

BARNEY

Barney has a big wallet, so he can afford a big ego.

HONEY

He was telling us about his submarine car.

OWNER

Oh, that story.

(nods her head, to Barney)

Did you tell them the Declaration of Independence story?

HONEY

Check.

OWNER

Love that story. Everyone know the rules? To win the competition, you have to make the most profit over your bid. Remember: you bid based only on what you can see from the outside. No touching. No opening anything. Any questions?

ALVIN

What's the prize money if we win the competition?

OWNER

The grand prize is almost \$8,500.

The bidders makes sounds of appreciation.

OWNER (CONT'D)

You have 2 minutes and then the bidding starts. Ready?

BARNEY

30 minutes ago I was ready. Now I'm bored.

She unlocks and opens the locker.

HONEY

Mildewy boxes and...books! Ugghh.

BARNEY

Those are rather old books, no?

ALVIN

1970s.

HONEY

Old. But not antiques. In other words, worthless.

BARNEY

The decade doesn't matter. The question is, are they rare?

ALVIN

Semiotics, aesthetics, performance, Asian theater.

HONEY

Not so much rare as unwanted. He must be an academic.
Or was in the 1970s.

BARNEY

We know what you are trying to do. Get the price down.

ALVIN

Props. Theatre props. Hats, wigs, a samurai sword, a replica
of a Nazi Luger.

BARNEY

Is that a zoot suit?

HONEY

And a fur stole.

BARNEY

Okay, so maybe the books are a concern by themselves. But the
theater props suggest an extraordinary human being. Who was
he? An academic? No! An autodidact. And a performer. Famous?
Or just a dilettante. The latter obviously. But the former?

HONEY

Alvin, have you seen Barney in action before?

ALVIN

No, but I understand what he's doing.

HONEY

Trying to raise the price.

BARNEY

Everyone's so cynical these days. I'm genuinely interested in
the human being behind the stuff. Bidding's like being on an
archeological dig. We're anthropologists trying to understand
a man by his possessions. As Martin Luther King said, it's
not the contents of his locker, it's his character I'm
interested in.

HONEY

Have you seen the collection of gowns? That's a lot of
sequins on our extraordinary man's gowns. And did you notice
the burlesque poster on the back wall? The one with the woman
in the sequin gown? If you want to be an anthropologist, you
might start by speculating that the owner wasn't a man.

Alvin laughs, satisfied with her
besting of Barney.

HONEY (CONT'D)

But of course a scholar has to be a man.

OWNER

Okay, do I have an opening bid?

ALVIN

\$100.

HONEY

\$200.

ALVIN

(deep sigh, reluctantly)

\$300

HONEY

\$350.

BARNEY

\$1,000.

(beat, off the others' stares)

Come on. We've got other lockers to bid on. Let's skip all the drama and cut to the chase already.

HONEY

Cut to this: take it, you want it so bad.

OWNER

Any other bids?

(a couple beats)

Last call?

ALVIN

\$1050.

BARNEY

Really? Now, I'm really bored...\$1200.

(beat)

Alvin? \$1201?

ALVIN

(beat, deep sigh)

\$1250.

BARNEY

At the risk of another deep sigh from Rain Man, \$1300.

Beat.

ALVIN

\$1350.

BARNEY

(deep sigh)

\$1300 was actually my set limit. Damn, I wanted that desk, but - Good job, Alvin.

HONEY

\$1350 for a bunch of academic books from the 1970s worth \$25 at a yard sale and some theatre props you might be able to donate to a local theatre company for a tax deduction. Yeah, good job, Alvin.

BARNEY

He saw the desk and said this man - or woman - had a keen eye. What else might there be?

ALVIN

Yes, that's true. It was the desk.

HONEY

Maybe, it'll have a diamond ring inside.

BARNEY

That was good! That made us all want to bid higher. Hoping to find a diamond in the rough. Oh but you wanted us to bid lower. That's rather inconsistent, huh, Alvin?

OWNER

Next locker?

ALVIN

I'm going to stay here and go through the contents.

OWNER

You want a hand with the desk?

ALVIN

Sure.

They go into the locker and pull out the desk. Something suddenly slaps at the tarp behind the desk, which they drop, as they trip backwards.

HONEY

What was that? A rat?

BARNEY

Sounded more like a pig.

(stepping into the locker)

Smells more like a pig.

The tarp is ripped back, revealing Makana Davis, an elderly man, unshaven, with disheveled hair, and clothes that reek homelessness.

MAKANA

What the hell are you doing in my locker?!

Barney laughs with abandon.

HONEY

Well, you said you wanted to know the man. There he is.

BARNEY

And clearly we were **both** off base.

OWNER

You're Makana Davis?

MAKANA

Yeah.

OWNER

Your daughter said you were dead.

MAKANA

That sounds like AnneMarie.

BARNEY

She was apparently a bit premature in her assessment.

MAKANA

Whatever. The fact is I'm alive, so get the fuck out of my locker!

BARNEY

Sounds like he's an academic after all.

OWNER

I see that, but this is a storage locker, not an apartment.

MAKANA

If it was an apartment, I'd expect a toilet.

OWNER

That would triple the price. Not that it would matter since you don't pay the rent, which is why it's this gentleman's locker, not yours.

MAKANA

You can't sell my stuff without notifying me.

OWNER

If you don't pay the rent, I sure can. Did you read the - You want notification? Fine, I'm notifying you, can you pay the \$1600 back rent?

MAKANA

Do I look like I have \$1600?

OWNER

Then I need you to step out of Alvin's locker, so he can assess the contents' value. Or should I call the police and have them escort you from the premises?

A couple beats. The Owner pulls out her phone. Before she can dial...

MAKANA

What do you want to know, Alvin? I can tell you about everything that's in here.

Everyone looks at Alvin. Long pause.

ALVIN

Do you have any rare book editions? Signed copies?

Barney laughs and starts to walk away.

MAKANA

The Bible's signed, but I don't think by the original author.

OWNER

We're going to the next locker. If he gives you a hard time, so much as curses or raises his voice, holler and I'll have the police here in a couple of minutes.

Honey and the Owner exit.

MAKANA

They're expensive books, but not collectibles. I'm a scholar, not an asshole. Sorry, I mean . . . capitalist.

(beat)

You really want this stuff?

ALVIN

Only what I can sell. You have a place to put the rest? I don't want to throw away your stuff that I'm not selling, but we're responsible for getting rid of what we've won.

MAKANA

Um, in the back I have a couple of Safeway carts. Or do you want to sell those too?

ALVIN

You can't sell shopping carts. It's stolen property. You can go to jail for that kind of thing.

MAKANA

Far as I'm concerned, Alvin, it's all stolen property. Just because you bid on it, doesn't make it yours.

ALVIN

The law says otherwise.

They look at each other.

ALVIN (CONT'D)

This is very awkward.

MAKANA

For me, too, boss. You just won my whole goddamn life.

ALVIN

I thought you were willing to help.

MAKANA

Sure, sure, what do you want to know?

ALVIN

What's the most valuable stuff in here?

MAKANA

Hmm.

(looks around)

Me. I'm my most valuable stuff. Too bad, they got laws against slavery.

He laughs, which causes him to go into a terrible coughing fit.

MAKANA (CONT'D)

I gotta stop laughing. It's just not **worth it** anymore. What was I saying?

ALVIN

You are your most valuable stuff.

MAKANA

I am, I am! I'm an absolute expert in semiotics and language development!

ALVIN

Were you a teacher or a professor or something?

MAKANA

No, a scholar. Teaching takes too much time from the work.

ALVIN

An autodidact?

MAKANA

Exactly. You're more of an intellectual than I gave you credit for, Alvin.

ALVIN

Thanks. What were you working on?

MAKANA

I am developing a universal language based on the language development rules of pidgin dialects from around the world. Have you heard of Esperanto?

ALVIN

The man-made language?

MAKANA

Man-made bullshit. Bunch of academic jerkoffs. Language can't be made in an Ivory tower. It evolves in the streets, in the marketplaces. If you study that evolution, you can create a language that is naturalistic, simplistic, and so damn efficient that it can be universal. Can you imagine the entire world - not just a bunch of drunken academics at an international conference but **real people** around the whole world - speaking one language? Think how many wars could be avoided. How trade could be developed on an equal footing instead of the majority of the world trapped in poverty unless they can speak the oppressor's English. Pidgins, these are the only languages that have ever traversed cultural differences, each side equal to the other.

ALVIN

That's amazing. Does anyone speak your language?

MAKANA

(beat)

I do.

ALVIN

Who do you speak it to?

MAKANA

Look, it's not out there yet. You have to get it out there.

(beat)

I wrote a ground-breaking book. I know what you're thinking. I'm not delusional. That's what the publishers called it.

He searches in a book and pulls out a letter. Shoves it at Alvin.

MAKANA (CONT'D)

Of course, I thought it was a compliment. I thought that's how you change the world: you write a ground-breaking book. No, it's an excuse. No one, apparently, will publish anything ground-breaking - unless you're from Stanford or Harvard. And then people only want to buy something ground-breaking if it shrinks your waist or grows your penis!

ALVIN

They won't publish it because it's ground breaking?

MAKANA

They said I need to get people interested in the language first. It's a catch 22. A chicken or egg thing. I've been working on a short article for *New Yorker*. They still want ground breaking - if you can do it in 10,000 words or less.

ALVIN

How do you do all that without electricity?

MAKANA

This is my bedroom. Not my office. You've heard of the public library?

ALVIN

I never go anymore.

MAKANA

Sure, too many damn homeless people there. Free internet. Public bathrooms. It's homeless Mecca ... but only from 9-5.

ALVIN

Sorry, I've gotta ... I mean, so after you, what are the most valuable things in the locker?

MAKANA

The books were worth about \$2,000 new. I probably had the foremost collection of the history of language and semiotics in the state.

ALVIN

From the 1970s, you mean?

MAKANA

And early 80s. I tried to donate it to the library. I figured - I could study them there - but they were going to put them in the book sale: \$1 for hardbacks, \$.25 for paperbacks. I should have fucking wrung her neck.

ALVIN

What about the props, the Samurai sword, the gun?

MAKANA

The Luger? Couple hundred dollars. The sword is an obvious fake. Maybe 30, 40 dollars. I can still make money performing.

ALVIN

Acting?

MAKANA

Yeah. Musicals are my specialty. I'm a singer by training. I was a dancer when I was younger, but no one wanted to see my legs after 60. Well, after 40 really. Maybe 45.

ALVIN

Oh. Are those gowns yours?

MAKANA

Yes, and now you know why my religious nut of a daughter was hoping I was dead and in hell already.

ALVIN

Sorry. Is there anything of value at all in the locker?

MAKANA

I have a fantastic collection of Broadway show tunes on vinyl and a phonograph but it doesn't usually work. They may be worth a couple hundred dollars. I'd be very sad to lose them, but.

ALVIN

Sorry about that. Thing is, I bid \$1350.

MAKANA

\$1350?! Ouch. If there was something in here worth \$1350, I wouldn't be living in a locker. I'm a sentimental lady, but not **that** sentimental.

(beat)

Take the albums. I haven't heard them for about 5 years, except in my head. I can sing every line from every album. Can you believe that? And what use is it? You spend all these years gathering tunes, gathering lyrics, ideas, book references. And stuff, and more stuff. And when you finally have a respectable amount, and you feel proud and a little safe, it turns out that it's of no value to anyone. Worse! They want you to pay to store it all. You even have to pay for storing your money so you can pay for storing your stuff. And if you don't have enough money stored to pay for storing your stuff, they kick you out on the street. But you know what the real joke is?

ALVIN

Um...Not really.

MAKANA

That's the big dread: What if I have to live on the streets?! But you needn't worry. You can't live on the streets! They own them too! And the sidewalks. And they own the parks. And if you find a patch of grass that isn't a park, well somebody owns that. You gotta find a place they don't own, except someone owns everything, so you have to hide so no one can bill you or kick you out when you can't pay.

ALVIN

So you're against property ownership.

MAKANA

Truth is I was hoping they'd arrest me for being poor, But they won't, because they own the prisons too, and it costs too much to store you there. So they just kick you and tell you to move on. You're legal as long as you're moving, walking. But if you stop to rest, to sleep, you're breaking the law. But what's the point of breaking the law if they won't arrest you.

ALVIN

You can go to a shelter.

MAKANA

You have to keep moving there, too. They're not shelters. They're **temporary** shelters. Or **emergency** shelters. When the emergency is over, they kick you out. My emergency is I can't afford to live in this **fucking** town!

ALVIN

They got, you know, programs and stuff.

MAKANA

You know what the trick is?

(beat)

Make them scared of you. You gotta talk to the sprinklers. Carry a gun. Rant about the 2nd Amendment. Then they'll put you in prison or a mental ward. Or some crazies will elect you to Congress.

(beat, with an edge)

But you, Alvin, you've got this storage thing all figured out. You wait till we can't afford to store our stuff, then you swoop in and get it all for pennies on the dollar, discarding the unsalable trash we're too scared to let go. I did plan to burn it all once. Ritualistically. Put myself on top of it, like they put the wives on top of the funeral pyres in India. *Sati*. Do you know where the term *sati* comes from? It's the feminine form of *true*.

(beat)

But I didn't have the guts.

ALVIN

The stuff we bid on is abandoned. Usually. And, yeah, sometimes the stuff you win is valuable, but usually it's just a bunch of junk. And I'm sorry about this. I don't want to take your stuff. If I could get out of it, I would. The problem is it's a competition. Winning the competition is where the real money is, and today is the end of months of competing. To win, you have to have the most profit on your locker.

Makana pulls aside the tarp and Alvin looks around. His expression says it all. The best stuff was up front.

ALVIN (CONT'D)

Is that you in the poster?

MAKANA

Yes. You could get \$25, I'd estimate. It's a nice frame. The good news: I'm rethinking my whole anti-slavery position. Seriously, I'm not joking. You need \$1350, more if you want to win the competition thing, and I need a place to stay. All right you own me, I'll be your slave. Don't worry, I'm not talking sex slave.

(beat, intimate aside)

You're not into that sort of thing, are you?

(beat, nods his head)

Didn't think so.

When I was younger, I worked on a cruise ship as a gourmet cook and a butler for high end passengers. Take me home, buy me a servant's outfit and I'll cook and serve you. Pay you in service. \$1350. That's like a month. We could do like 4 months. That's over \$5,000.

ALVIN

I have a wife and two kids. I can't just bring home a homeless person I won in an auction. What would I tell them?

MAKANA

Tell them you've had a spiritual epiphany. You asked yourself "What would Jesus do if he won a storage locker with an elderly, destitute, ex-transvestite, ex-burlesque dancing, language scholar in it?" It's a great story. You'll be very popular at church.

ALVIN

You don't know my church.

(beat)

You're a - a - an **EX**-transvestite. I mean, so you don't...

MAKANA

Time is not kind to a woman. I had to give it up at 50.

(beat)

Tutor! I can tutor your children: philosophy, theater, music. Languages of course. I know languages. Chinese, Japanese, Hindi, Ilocano, Hawaiian.

(with disgust)

E - s - per - an - to. And the imperialistic ones of course: French, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, Greek, Latin, Italian.

ALVIN

My kids are 3 and 4.

MAKANA

You have to start them young, while the brain isn't yet prejudiced against the strange, the Other. I recommend a smorgasbord of pidgins. I have pidgins out the proverbial wazoo.

ALVIN

Do you have AIDS?

MAKANA

What an odd non-sequitur, Alvin. HIV. I've been on AZT for 15 years. So you're a homophobe?

ALVIN

No, no, it's not that. It's - uh...

MAKANA

Oh! A germaphobe? That's more politically correct, but doesn't necessarily make you more likeable to a gay man with HIV. The HIV's undetectable, which means it untransferable. You're safe.

ALVIN

I'm just - I have two kids.

MAKANA

And I have one, who thinks I'm the sign of the coming apocalypse. Which leads me to this unprecedented moment. I'm offering you my services for a guest room, a couch, a garage, even an attic. But you only have 5 minutes to decide. Then my offer is null and void.

ALVIN

Look. You seem like a good person, but I don't know you.

MAKANA

I don't know you either, but I'm game.

(beat)

I'm Makana, which means gift in Hawaiian. You know what they say? Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.

ALVIN

Right. Well, I don't really know what that means.

MAKANA

No one does. But they say it anyway.

ALVIN

My wife, she - she wouldn't agree to have my father stay with us. He's difficult, so it was best for all concerned. But can you even imagine?

MAKANA

Like I said I can make good money performing. When I had clean clothes and could shower, I made tons just performing on the street. That's how I paid for this place.

He launches into Gershwin's "The Man That Got Away." For his age, it is surprisingly steady and evocative.

MAKANA

The night is bitter,
The stars have lost their glitter,
The winds grow colder
And suddenly you're older,
And all because of the man that got away.

No more his eager call,
 The writing's on the wall,
 The dreams you dreamed have all gone astray.
 The man that won you
 Has gone off and undone you.
 That great beginning
 Has seen the final inning.
 Don't know what happened.

The song works. Alvin looks at Makana
 in a whole new light.

ALVIN

Is - is - is that what happened to you?

MAKANA

What? Did a man undo me? Many did!

(beat, sincerely conceding)

But one undid me. He wanted kids. He didn't love her. He
wanted me to know that. He **never loved her**. He just wanted
 kids. And he got them. Two. So you can understand, Alvin.

ALVIN

I'm sorry. Truly.

MAKANA

It's life. We lose something. We grieve. We move on. But what
 was I supposed to do with the information that he never loved
 her? What kind of man gives up love, so he can have two kids?
 Like they're assets he can store up for his old age? What
 kind of man did I love so deeply that I could never love
 another, yet thought like that? He didn't want to **experience**
 my love. He wanted to **own** it. And he did, by leaving me, and
 then by telling me he never loved her; he just wanted kids.

ALVIN

And that's why you...? Why things got...?

He looks around the locker.

MAKANA

Why I became homeless? Well, sort of. That and my dream of
 devising the most perfect universal language.

(beat, more matter-of-factly)

And there was the drugs, of course. Dreams and drugs. Drugs
 and dreams. They kind of roll together into a big ball. Know
 what I mean?

The Owner and Honey return. Honey
 claps, the Owner joins but with less
 enthusiasm.

HONEY

That was lovely singing.

MAKANA

Thank you! A fan! It never gets old.

(winks)

I was offering Alvin my services.

OWNER

What kind of services?

ALVIN

He's a - he's a street performer.

(to the Owner)

That's the thing. We - well he - he was - He thinks because he was in the locker I bid on, that I kind of, that he comes with the locker, that he can contribute to the value of the bid by working as a street performer.

MAKANA

I'm also a language tutor, butler. I've even worked as a motivational speaker: "How to find a successful career." That sort of thing.

HONEY

Let him do it. I'm out of the competition. I got crap all in my locker. Porcelain, I'm a sucker for it. I should never bid on anything with porcelain in it. Come on. The rules say, **everything** in the locker. He was in it.

OWNER

Look, I'd like to see Barney lose as much as you two, but I think you're missing the point. Mr. Davis's value is not in his skill set. It's his age. What are you, 80?

MAKANA

68.

OWNER

Really? Well, you're over 65 anyway. You don't owe society anything anymore. Now it owes you. Social security, **that's** your value.

MAKANA

Bah! Bunch of assholes.

ALVIN

He has AIDS as well. I mean, HIV.

OWNER

Value added. He can get rental assistance from Gregory House.
 (Counts on her fingers)
 Not to mention help from Catholic Charities for being elderly
 and homeless.

MAKANA

I don't want their charity. I couldn't afford all the
 gratitude. I just need a job.

OWNER

And work where? You're 68 and don't have a mailing address. I
 can see why you can't afford an apartment in this town on
 Social Security, but why couldn't you afford your locker
 payments?

MAKANA

My apartment got broken into. They took my wallet, cleared
 out my account, took all my documents, IDs, birth
 certificate. I went to Social Security, but they won't give
 you your checks without ID. Next thing I know I'm on the
 street.

OWNER

Of course they won't. When's the last time you got a check?

MAKANA

What year is it?

OWNER

2015. August.

MAKANA

August 2015? Hmm. Nearly, two, two and a half years.

OWNER

That's got to be 15, \$20,000. Help him to get his birth
 certificate, ID, get Social Security to list the value of his
 back checks, split the back pay, and I'll count your portion
 towards the value of the locker.

HONEY

And you help a homeless person get back on his feet, and kick
 Barney's ass. Now that's a noble cause.

Barney enters and overhears the owner.

BARNEY

What's a noble cause?

HONEY

Makana gets his life back **and** you lose the competition. It's a win-win.

BARNEY

How do I lose?

OWNER

Alvin's locker may be worth \$10,000 or more.

BARNEY

Bullshit.

MAKANA

It's got hidden value.

Makana performs a surprisingly agile dance maneuver.

BARNEY

You can't count the old man. If there was ever an unsalable thing, it's him.

MAKANA

They're kind of renting me. I'm a rent boy.

BARNEY

Human trafficking is serious shit. Don't think I won't call the police.

OWNER

Call.

BARNEY

You can't change the rules of the competition in the middle. I'll call the Better Business Bureau. I'll call the Rotary Club.

OWNER

Call my lawyers.

BARNEY

I'm going to call **my** lawyers. Don't think this will stand.

Barney exits.

HONEY

That was fun!

(to Makana)

Thanks.

MAKANA

(with an ironic edge)

A good deed is its own reward.

ALVIN

(getting it, to the Owner)

What if you just let him keep his stuff. You know he's getting the Social Security. Couldn't you just give him a month to pay up or something?

MAKANA

That's very thoughtful of you, Alvin. But let's be clear:

(gestures at his stuff)

I ain't paying \$1600 for this shit.

ALVIN

You really don't want your stuff?

MAKANA

It's like that monkey trap. They put a walnut in a box with a hole in it just big enough for the monkey to get his paw in, but once he grabs the walnut he can't get his hand back out. But he won't let the nut go, so he gets caught and has his brains eaten. I'm not ready for that.

HONEY

I like that story, brains and all.

ALVIN

(to the Owner)

Can we dump the stuff then?

OWNER

Sure. \$50 per dumper used. And it comes out of your profit, along with the \$1350.

ALVIN

\$50 per dumpster? Those small dumpsters?

OWNER

Trash pick up ain't cheap.

ALVIN

All right. \$50.

(to Makana)

I got to sell what I can to pay for the dumpsters. What about the books? Don't you need them to complete your book?

MAKANA

Dump 'em! That's one nut I'm gonna be happy to let go.

HONEY

How long have you been working on your book?

MAKANA

The book?! I've been working on my *New Yorker* article for 10 years. That book took up my whole life! Good riddance! Truth is I can't remember half this shit, my memory's shot. I can't even read my notes when I can find them. Lost my glasses. Screw it. I don't need that **fucking book**. I'm old! I've got a disease!! And I'm homeless!!! Triple crown winner. Lap of luxury, here I come.

Pause. Should they laugh at the joke or feel guilty? They tilt to the latter.

HONEY

You have somewhere to stay tonight?

MAKANA

I appreciate the concern.

OWNER

What about AnneMarie?

MAKANA

Well, you could tell her you're dropping off my ashes. Then, I show up. Tada!

Honey looks at Alvin, who looks away.

HONEY

(to Makana)

Here. I got, oh, well, 20, 24 dollars.

OWNER

I can chip in \$20. That'll get you a room for the night.

MAKANA

(the sarcasm is getting darker)

Yay, a night in a hotel!

ALVIN

Maybe, once you're in a hotel - How much can you make singing on the street if you get cleaned up?

MAKANA

I don't know. \$100 a night.

HONEY

At your age? Come on, Sweetie.

MAKANA

I have. On my best nights. All right, now, maybe, on average, a \$100 a week.

Everyone looks skeptical.

OWNER

Look, drop him at the homeless shelter down the street.

MAKANA

No, thanks. I stayed there once. Buncha crazy, homeless people. I'll just walk over to the bus stop.

ALVIN

Look, I can take you to get some new clothes. Maybe rent you a place for a night, so you can clean up. And then, who knows.

MAKANA

Thanks, but I see a bus stop bench in my future. Might as well be tonight.

ALVIN

I mean, I don't know, but - once you're cleaned up, maybe you can come home with me for dinner, and - and I don't know...

Alvin shrugs.

MAKANA

(suddenly encouraged)

Alvin, let me cook your wife something. Trust me, once she tastes my cooking....

ALVIN

Look: my wife, she - she's a good woman, she - she works with the homeless at our church! But she's never going to let you touch her stove.

MAKANA

Why are you so scared of this woman?

ALVIN

I'm not scared of her. The thing is she - she - she makes me happy.

MAKANA

She makes you stutter is what she does, Alvin.

HONEY

(trying to break the tension)

Maybe being happy makes him stutter.

MAKANA

He's stutteringly happy, huh? Let me write that down.

ALVIN

Let's pack up. Just find any evidence you have that you're who you say you are.

MAKANA

(defiantly)

Makana Davis.

ALVIN

Makana Davis. Exactly.

MAKANA

All right I'll get my ID's.

Makana grabs the gowns and his burlesque poster and throws everyone an impish grin so they realize that these objects are his ID's. Honey laughs. Makana looks around, grabs the Nazi Luger, the sword, the wigs, and other props, and slips behind the bookshelf.

HONEY

He's wrong about his stuff. It's who you are. If you let it all go, what's left?

ALVIN

Family?

OWNER

AnneMarie. Not much down that road.

HONEY

No book, no article, no nothing. Will your wife really let you bring him home?

ALVIN

I don't know . . . I - I - I don't know.

Several beats. Everyone looks uncomfortably at the others. Waiting.

ALVIN

(suddenly)

It's not a fake.

HONEY

What's not a fake?

ALVIN

The Luger. The gun. It's worth too much. It's real.

OWNER

Why would he take the gun?

HONEY

Shit! No one can just let go of everything like that - at 68 - unless they've already decided . . . to . . . **you know.**

OWNER

What?! No, he's got \$20,000 coming. And some cash and a hotel room. He's been starving in a locker, why would he now...?

HONEY

(to Alvin, whispering loudly)

You have to go back there!

Alvin takes a couple steps toward the back of the locker. Then stops. Turns around.

ALVIN

I - I - I can't . . . I have 2 kids. He thinks . . . I took his life.

They look at each other. No one moves. They wait, each expecting a different outcome.

Lights out.

THE END