

# The Storage Warrior

Written By Dewdrop



A few years back, an extraordinary turn of events catapulted me into the world of storage auctions. A locker I purchased on my very first day yielded a significant sum of money from the sale of rare items, setting a record-breaking return for a newcomer. However, as time passed and my extravagant lifestyle took its toll, I gradually depleted most of my earnings.

In this industry, success hinges on acquiring more storage units. Unfortunately, I found myself constantly outbid by a dollar on the units I desired, courtesy of my arch-nemesis, Gerard. Ever since that initial auction, where I shattered his previous record, he developed an animosity towards me. Although I cherished this line of work, my disdain for Gerard began to taint my passion.

Gerard was relentless in his determination to outbid me, even if it meant spending his entire fortune. Yet, I devised a strategy to turn the tables on him. I would intentionally bid on seemingly worthless lockers, tricking him into spending exorbitant amounts on mere junk. Still, Gerard's ultimate goal was to prevent me from obtaining a locker as lucrative as the one I described earlier. At the time, I was just another face in the crowd, easily slipping under the radar. But now, my notoriety preceded me, and everyone knew who I was.

Gerard had invested tens of thousands attempting to outsmart me, so in a way, hadn't I already emerged victorious? I believed so. On the day of the Williamson Auction, I woke up with a resolve to not only upset Gerard but also secure another unit that would forever alter my life. It was a gamble—either I would strike it big or exhaust my remaining funds, leaving Gerard with a final triumph before my financial demise. Little did we know that events would not unfold according to plan, not at all.

As I arrived at the auction yard, I greeted the familiar faces, though a foreboding sensation gnawed at me. When the auctioneer bellowed the rules and presented the units up for grabs, Gerard was conspicuously absent. I wondered if he would even show up. However, his grumbling voice soon pierced the air, blaming traffic for his delay. With a mischievous grin, he taunted that I was about to face his secret weapon, patting his chest pocket—the very pocket where he kept his money.

Though my funds were still substantial, they were the last of what I had. The thought of Gerard squashing my stack of cash and my legacy in the storage warrior competition drove me to apprehension. He taunted me, instigating a boiling rage inside. In a fit of anger, I lunged at him, and we grappled until the crowd intervened, preventing us from being ejected from the auction. To bid on the last unit, we had to agree to stay apart.

When the door to the unit swung open, I glimpsed a treasure trove of desirable items—collectible signs, valuable gadgets, and more. A surge of determination coursed through me, but Gerard was relentless in his bidding. I went all-in, matching him bid for bid, until nearly all my money was invested. Then, he abruptly ceased and erupted into laughter, reveling in what he believed was his victory. I turned around, witnessing his gloating victory dance, and vowed never to lay eyes on his face again—I was through with auctions.

As I approached my own unit, the explosion erupted. Chaos ensued as smoke billowed and screams filled the air. I was hurled forward, landing on my stomach. Amid the pandemonium, I saw the aftermath—the injured, the motionless bodies. It was then that I knew something horrific had transpired.

The auctioneer, Jack, informed me that a security system had triggered the explosion as Gerard had uncovered the first tarp. The sight of Gerard lying on the ground, unresponsive, struck me with a mixture of emotions. I couldn't determine whether he was alive or dead. Despite our animosity, I tried to assist him, but to no avail. A profound sorrow washed over me for a man I despised mere minutes earlier—I felt devastated.

As the chaos subsided and the injured were transported to the hospital, I felt compelled to check the unit Gerard had outbid me on—the one I coveted. However, it had been reduced to a heap of rubble. I pondered what might have occurred had I won that unit. It was an unsettling thought, one that consumed my mind.

At the hospital, I discovered that Gerard had succumbed to his injuries soon after the explosion. Though I harbored deep resentment for him, I never wished such a fate upon him. In a strange twist, his actions, inadvertently, may have saved my life by outbidding me.

During subsequent auctions, my desire to bid waned. The absence of someone telling me I would lose dampened my competitive spirit, rendering the auctions mundane. It was then that I realized the significance Gerard held in my life—competing against him was more meaningful than the units themselves.

I refrained from bidding on further units, only attending sporadically. As I approached the exit during one auction, Jack called out to me. We exchanged farewells, and he understood my reasons for departing early. However, he reminded me of the unit I had purchased—a unit that remained untouched due to the explosion's aftermath. With relaxed regulations, I was legally obliged to clean it out, especially considering the substantial amount I had invested.

Reluctantly, I decided to inspect the unit. With every discarded piece of junk, Gerard's haunting taunts echoed in my mind. Surprisingly, this time, it brought solace. If not for this wretched unit or Gerard's relentless bid, I might not have been alive today.

Within the unit, I uncovered a few pairs of shoes and an old book, un-sellable and unremarkable. I barely recouped five percent of my investment. However, the monetary loss seemed inconsequential. For inside the unit, tucked away beneath a small blanket, I found something extraordinary.

Today, it graces the walls of my home, nestled beside my lucky hat and a picture of Gerry—Gerard. It's a painting that has become the most important object in my life. Each day, I gaze upon it, reminded of the preciousness of life. The artwork depicts four squares, each housing two indistinct figures standing side by side. Their gender is unrecognizable—mere shadows. Together, they face a towering wall, appearing as if trapped in a hole. The second square reveals one shadow supporting the other, helping them climb. In the third, the same shadow extends a hand, lifting the other upward. Finally, in the last square, the two shadows stand atop the wall, accompanied by the caption, "When a mutual hardship is presented, it can force friends to emerge from enemies."

Those words struck me deeply, for a few days prior, I was willing to rid myself of my enemy through any means necessary. Yet, now that it had occurred, I felt as though I had lost a dear friend. I had paid a steep price—six thousand dollars—for the painting alone. Yet, to me, it was worth every penny, as it serves as a daily reminder of my gratitude for being alive. I express a silent thank you to Gerard for the sacrifice he unknowingly made. I never realized how much he meant to me until his untimely demise, and I shall never forget Gerard... The Storage Warrior.