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THE FATE OF THE HIGHEST BIDDER

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

It's a two-car garage, with no cars. Instead, there are stacks of boxes and crates, along with a few tables and chairs. It's quite cluttered.

Next to one wall there is one table with an open laptop on it, along with a notebook and pen, a magnifying glass, a box opener, and a smart phone.

Standing in front of the table is HENRY (50, Caucasian, male). He's wearing a bluetooth headset with a microphone positioned at his lips.

He's using the headset to talk on the smart phone with his friend, DEE (20, female) while he looks over the boxes.

HENRY

Yeah, I'll probably be here a while.

DEE (O.S.)

(filtered)

Where are you? Still at the storage place?

HENRY

No. I'm at Seth and Dana's. I'm keeping the stuff in their garage until I finish going through it.

DEE (O.S.)

(filtered)

Did they say you could do that?

He grabs one of the smaller boxes, putting it on the table. It's not sealed shut.

HENRY

I'm sure they would, if they knew. It'll all be gone before they get back.

DEE (O.S.)

(filtered)

Do you know anything about the guy who rented the space?

Henry takes out what was inside the box. It's a human skull, or a replica of one.

It's wearing a baseball cap and a cheap pair of sunglasses.

HENRY

He was a retired professor or something. He disappeared a couple of years ago. There's a skull.

DEE (O.S.)

(filtered)

A what? A skull?

Henry takes the cap and sunglasses off of the skull, laying them on the table.

HENRY

Yeah. When I went into the storage unit it was sitting on top of a box. I stuck it into the box before the facility owner could see it.

DEE (O.S.)

(filtered)

Why?

HENRY

Because if he saw it he'd probably want to get the cops to look at it and it could take months before I got a chance to go through this stuff!

DEE (O.S.)

(filtered)

Is it real? I bet it's real.

Henry inspects the skull again.

HENRY

Of course it's not real. Jeez.

DEE (O.S.)

(filtered)

How would you know?

Henry sighs. She's got a point.

HENRY

Okay, I'll take it by the University and get somebody to look at it later.

Henry carries the skull around while he looks over the other crates and boxes.

DEE (O.S.)  
 (filtered)  
 What are you hoping to find,  
 anyway?

HENRY  
 Something I can sell.

He absently puts the skull on top of a short stack of boxes, placing it directly across the way from the table with the laptop, then resumes looking at the other boxes.

DEE (O.S.)  
 (filtered)  
 How about a nice big bag of weed?

HENRY  
 That would qualify as something I could sell. Look, let me call you back. I want to get started.

DEE (O.S.)  
 (filtered)  
 Can't it wait until tomorrow? It's getting late.

HENRY  
 No. I'd rather get on this tonight. It's ... kinda urgent.

DEE (O.S.)  
 (filtered)  
 Why?

Henry looks back at the skull, notices it's turned so that it's facing him. He gently reaches over and turns it around. He goes back to looking over the boxes.

HENRY  
 It's nothing.

DEE (O.S.)  
 (filtered)  
 What aren't you telling me?

HENRY  
 Well ... I may have overstated my financial stability. A little.

DEE (O.S.)  
 (filtered)  
 How?

Henry sits heavily in a chair, slumped over a bit.

HENRY

It's getting really tight, Dee. I mean, like, people are calling me. It took most of what I had left to outbid the others for this stuff.

DEE (O.S.)

(filtered)

Why didn't you tell me? I can help.

HENRY

No. I need more than that. I need a really big score.

DEE (O.S.)

(filtered)

And you think you can find it in some junk somebody abandoned?

HENRY

You heard about that guy in Newark, who found all those paintings! Fifteen million dollars! (Sighs) I'm due a break. The Universe owes me one.

Dee sighs.

DEE (O.S.)

(filtered)

Okay. I'll let you get back to it. I'll call you in a little while.

HENRY

Okay. Love you.

DEE (O.S.)

(filtered)

Love you!

Dee disconnects the call. Henry takes a deep breath, gets up and then grabs a box and carries it over to the table.

As he opens the box he turns to see the skull is again facing him. He goes over and firmly turns it so that it's facing away before going back to his box.

It's full of old clothes.

HENRY

No. No! Dammit.

He goes through the clothes with growing desperation until the box is empty. There's nothing else.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
(whispering)  
Goddammit!

He drops the box on the floor, looks around for another one when he sees the skull is facing him.

Henry goes over and turns it around, shaking his head. He grabs another box and carries it over to the table.

He opens the box and finds a vintage wall mirror inside. He examines the frame.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
(whispering)  
Please be silver. Please be silver.

Holding it up, he can see in the reflection that the skull is facing him.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
(muttering)  
I'm losing my fucking mind.

He puts the mirror down, goes back over to the skull and turns it back around, then returns to the table and the mirror.

While he examines the mirror's frame with the magnifying glass he pauses, lifting one of the headphones off of his ear.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
Hello? Dee?

Silence. He glances around.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
Is somebody there?

Silence. He snorts, shaking his head again at his own nerves. Looking back into the mirror he can see the skull is again facing him.

He goes over and impatiently turns the skull away, then returns to the mirror to resume his inspection.

In the reflection the skull is watching him again.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
Okay, this isn't funny anymore,  
whoever you are --

He lays the mirror down on the table and turns to face the skull and stops, his expression changing from irritation to horror.

HENRY (CONT'D)

What the -- No. No! Please. No!

Something grabs him and jerks him away quickly and Henry screams, and then groans and moans in pain. There are loud crunching noises, and then Henry grows quiet as the crunching noises continue.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Morning is dawning outside. Henry's cell phone, still on the table, starts buzzing with an incoming call from Dee.

The buzzing is the only noise.

Still on its box across from the mirror is the skull, facing the mirror.

The skull is now wearing Henry's bluetooth headphones, the microphone positioned in front of it's naked grimace.

FADE OUT.