

***Dear Reader,***

We all hail from different stages of this short, dreadful time on earth, but if you consider yourself to be in your prime, you may wish to spend those peak years of your life doing something other than pouring over a bookish budget burden at a boorishly bizarre bazaar.

It is indeed strange enough that you would not believe it if I detailed to you the half of it. If you decide to continue, you'll need to factor in details that are conspicuously consumptive, including overpriced produce, oppressive cultural icons, birds no longer of paradise, and a scream that will haunt your soon to be burgeoning career in art curation.

I am duty bound to my obligation of bringing you the accounting of the figures which make up the terrible tragedy of this Get A Clue adventure. You, however, have no such duty. I suggest you spend the rest of your best days observing rather happier purchases like ice cream on the beach or times table flashcards for your newly numbercrunching nephew.

***With all due respect,***

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lemony Snicket". The script is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

***Lemony Snicket***

You have obtained an excerpt from the Auction Catalog with notes scribbled hastily on the margins. The auction is tomorrow at Veblen Hall. You suspect there is a hidden correspondence in one of the lots. You're hoping to unravel the mystery of the secret called V.F.D., and this is the best lead you've had yet.

### "Strange" Auction Rules

1. Each piece you buy multiplies your total cost
2. The very fine discerners are not shy to spend big
3. Artists are allowed only a single price for all of their pieces

One page notes a gentleman who bought a set of eight vintage vegetable dolls for a total of \$7980. In the margin is scribbled CABBAGES.

Another page in the catalog tells of a fine jewelry purveyor who anxiously spent \$8645 on a set of four rings for mortal men. In the same handwriting, next to the four rings, is the word GEMS.

You flip the page and see a display of five exotic specimens of rare bird taxidermy for a grand total of \$897. In a familiar script towards the bottom: the word MACAW.

Curiously, the last page is missing some usual information about the pieces, but your correspondent has left a note with instructions nonetheless: Spend \$821275 on seven pieces.

				
Artist: _____ Price: \$13	Artist: _____ Price: \$2	Artist: _____ Price: \$7	Artist: _____ Price: \$11	Artist: _____ Price: \$5
				
Artist: Lela Brunet Price: _____	Artist: Angela Faustina Price: _____	Artist: Angie Jerez Price: _____	Artist: _____ Price: \$1	Artist: GESEK Price: _____
				
Artist: _____ Price: \$19	Artist: _____ Price: \$23	Artist: NMEKKGA Price: _____	Artist: _____ Price: \$29	Artist: _____ Price: \$3