

## Oral Reading Test

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- ▶ It may seem strange, but the event that my family refers to as the “Garage Sale Nightmare of ‘08” helped me have a little more sympathy for celebrities. There is something scary about a crowd that is veering out of control.

Part of the problem was my mother’s unwavering belief in the power of advertising. We attacked all of the usual channels: an ad in the local paper, signs on telephone poles, a posting on a local website; we even borrowed some sandwich boards from our real-estate agent neighbor. There must have been something spectacular in the descriptions, but we didn’t think it merited the amounts of attention that followed.

The night before, we said goodbye to old memories as we carefully priced our unwanted toys, antiques, and bric-a-brac, then arranged tables. We enlisted the help of my brother’s burly friend to help us carry some of the larger pieces of furniture into the garage. We thought we had everything covered, but nothing short of a stint with the Marines could have prepared us for what happened next.

Cars lined up at five in the morning, drivers anxiously huddling with thermoses of coffee. At seven, there was a crowd of one hundred at the end of our driveway. The road was so clogged that police officers were directing traffic. We opened up the doors in amazement, and all the early birds rushed the driveway. People were in our faces with bills, and a couple of kids threw coins at our feet as they ran off with toy cars. We ran out of change, until one of the customers provided all the small bills we needed when she bought Aunt Mathilda’s sofa.

When the tempest calmed, it was ten o’clock; the garage was cleared out, tables were dislodged, and we were exhausted. That will be the final yard sale we will ever have.