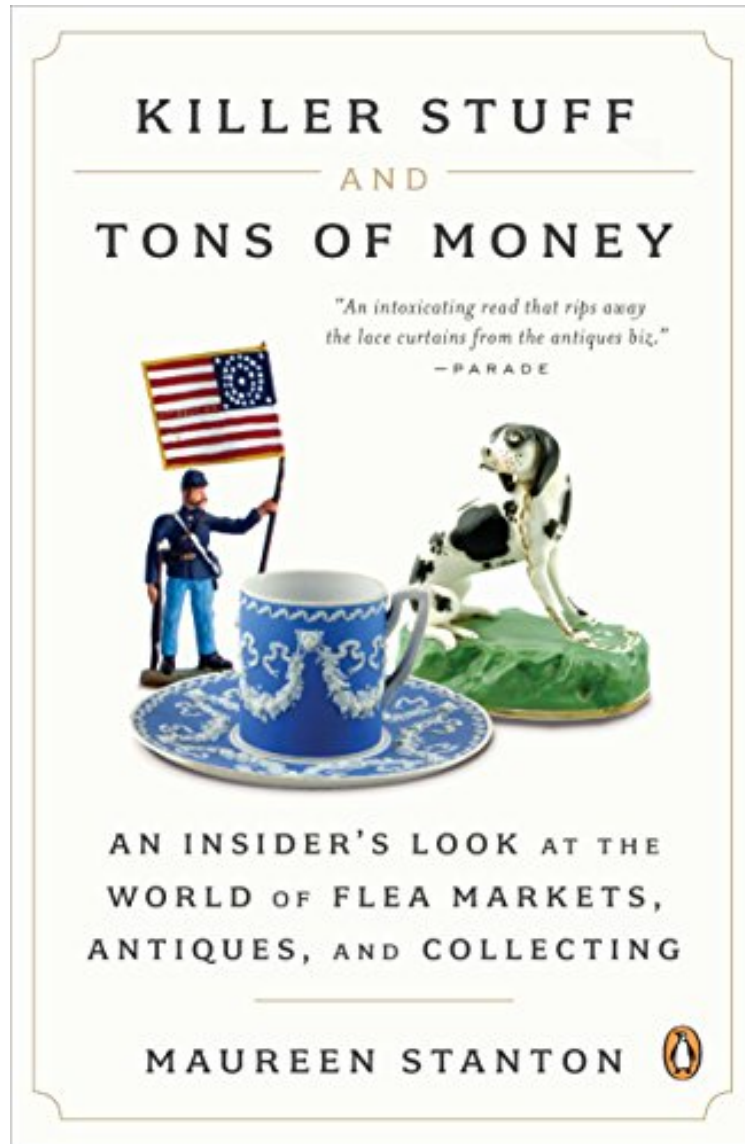


Killer Stuff and Tons of Money: Seeking History and Hidden Gems in Flea-Market America

Maureen Stanton

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Maureen Stanton : Killer Stuff and Tons of Money: Seeking History and Hidden Gems in Flea-Market America before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Killer Stuff and Tons of Money: Seeking History and Hidden Gems in Flea-Market America:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Great book that stands the test of time By Shannon Quinn I bought this book years ago when I first started getting into becoming an antique dealer. Since then, I have learned a TON just from going out there and experiencing everything first-hand, and I still think about this book often, specifically a line

that Curt Avery says about how you aren't really in the business until you are confident enough to drop \$100 on inventory. If you are a fan of American Pickers, Storage Wars, or any of those shows, and you are even considering becoming a Picker, you should probably read this book first. The story of Curt Avery is pretty accurate to reality. In some ways, he is a symbol of the old school dealers, because a lot of things are changing in the industry. It has been a while since I read this, but I would love to re-read it again. I purge my book collection often, and this has stayed on my shelf through many purges. I have also given it to my brother to read when he considered getting into Picking. It's great. I highly recommend it.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Ever wonder how antique dealers find the good stuff? By Denise R. For the past 11 years I've been a part-time dealer of vintage goods and antiques. My love of vintage antique stuff started early, as I visited garage sales and antiques shops, especially with my Mom Nana. I'm a lifelong collector, always on the lookout for wonderful old things, both for my home, and to resell. And, I'm always interested in learning more about antiques, and about the business. So, I was delighted to come across Killer Stuff and Tons of Money. Maureen Stanton follows her friend, "Curt Avery," an antiques dealer, as he goes to antiques shows and flea markets, both buying and selling his goods. She takes us to various flea markets in which he participates, and shows us how he gets the "good stuff" that most of us never even see - or that most of us would never recognize if we saw it. (The more you study antiques, the more you recognize value - sometimes very great value - in what others would pass by.) We're shown how dealers sell to each other, and go to the world-famous Brimfield flea market, and several antiques shows. We're taken behind the scenes at Antiques Roadshow (ever wonder how it really works?), and learn how antiques auctions work, and a little bit about selling at group shops. There's a chapter how dealers buy online (eBay, etc). And, there are tips on how to avoid costly mistakes by learning how to spot reproductions and fakes - and Stanton also spends a fascinating chapter's worth with a master furniture forger. Stanton also gets a little bit - not too heavily - into the psychology of collecting, and what makes people value - and love - antiques. What is it about "stuff" that drives us to spend our time, money - and invest our emotions - in it? Stanton's writing is easy to read, and you feel as if you're there as you follow her travels with Avery, and hear his explanations of the things they look at. He explains why he buys certain things, and passes on others. And yep, sometimes he's unsure about a piece - even the most experienced dealers have things they don't know about, and moments of doubt. There are lots of little tidbits to pick up - as one reviewer previously noted, it might be a good idea to take notes so you can remember the small details next time you go out hunting! You'll learn something about bottles (Curt Avery is an expert on them), furniture, and all sorts of miscellany - from \$20 items up to things that go for many thousands. One reviewer thought the book mostly dealt with furniture - but I didn't have that experience at all. Avery mostly sells "small" and the book talks about everything from butter churns to redware to game boards to fraktur, chests and Windsor chairs. We're introduced to a very great scope of antique items. This isn't a book on any one category of antiques, and it's not a price guide - it's about the antiques business, and the various ways people buy, sell, and learn about antiques. If you want a behind-the-scenes look at how it all works, you'll find this a very engaging read. Even if you're an antiques dealer of long experience, there should be plenty here to think about, and to learn from. Though there are many books out there, about buying and selling antiques, seldom do collectors really get a chance to glimpse behind the curtain and see firsthand how dealers do what they do and how the antiques business really works; Killer Stuff Tons of Money gives us that opportunity.

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. A fun and informative read! By Linda Myers This book is about collecting and the world of antiques, but even if you think you aren't particularly interested in these topics, you will find yourself immersed in the world of the antique dealer and engaged with the fascinating characters in this book. They could be characters in a work of fiction, but are indeed real people. Bits of history are woven into the story in an interesting way along with the author's personal experience as she travels the antique show circuit with Curt Avery, an antiques dealer. You will learn about the history of collecting, of some of the antiques themselves, what's involved in becoming a top dealer of antiques, the trials and tribulations of making a living doing this, all written in a humorous, entertaining way. It reads more like a story than a work of nonfiction. I found myself wanting to find out what happens next. The author has a knack for describing the detail of a situation so one can clearly picture it and put oneself in the scene. The lengthy notes at the end give evidence of the extensive research the author did for a wide variety of topics. This book will appeal to a wide variety of readers.

One dealer's journey from the populist mayhem of flea markets to the rarefied realm of auctions reveals the rich, often outrageous subculture of antiques and collectibles. Millions of Americans are drawn to antiques and flea-market culture, whether as participants or as viewers of the perennially popular Antiques Roadshow or the recent hit American Pickers. This world has the air of a lottery: a \$20 purchase might net you four, five, or six figures. Master dealer Curt Avery, the unlikely star of Killer Stuff and Tons of Money, plays that lottery every day, and he wins it more than most. Occasionally he gets lucky, but more often, he draws on a deep knowledge of America's past and the odd, fascinating, and beautiful objects that have survived it. Week in, week out, Avery trawls the flea and antiques circuit - buying, selling, and advising other dealers in his many areas of expertise, from furniture to glass to stoneware, and more. On the surface, he's an improbable candidate for an antiques dealer. He wrestled in high school and still retains the pugilistic build; he is gruff, funny, and profane; he favors shorts and sneakers, even in November; and he is

remarkably generous toward both competitors and customers who want a break. But as he struggles for a spot in a high-end Boston show, he must step up his game and, perhaps more challenging, fit in with a white-shoe crowd. Through his ascent, we see the flea-osphere for what it truly is--less a lottery than a contact sport with few rules and many pitfalls. This rich and sometimes hilarious subculture rewards peculiar interests and outright obsessions--one dealer specializes in shrunken heads; another wants all the postal memorabilia he can get. So Avery must be a guerrilla historian and use his hard-earned knowledge of America's past to live by and off his wits. Only the smartest survive in one of America's most ruthless meritocracies. *Killer Stuff and Tons of Money* is many things: an insider's look at a subculture replete with arcane traditions and high drama, an inspiring account of a self-made man making his way in a cutthroat field, a treasure trove of tips for those who seek out old things themselves, and a thoroughly fresh, vibrant view of history as blood sport.

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While flea market foraging is half the fun--mingling with people, seeing and handling unusual and interesting objects--on a rainy day or any day when there's no flea market nearby, you can "pick" the cyber-flea market and literally search 133 million-plus items at warp speed. Master cyber-picker, Jimmy Desjardins, who tripled his income from antiques dealing through internet buying, says in *Killer Stuff and Tons of Money: Seeking History and Hidden Gems in Flea-Market America*, "I'm in a nice comfortable chair, I've got my music playing, and I'm searching eBay." Like the old slogan for the telephone book, Jimmy lets his fingers do the walking--over the keyboard and across the internet. A treasure-seekers most powerful tool is knowledge; the more you know about any category of antiques, the more success you'll have finding hidden treasures. But once you know what you are looking for, programs like AuctionZip, which claims to be "the world's largest online bidding network," allow you to "Find Auctions Anywhere!" and place absentee bids online. Now you really can be in two places--or more--at once. Finding the best vintage, antiques, and collectibles is all about understanding which objects are the most valuable because of age, rarity, condition, authenticity, and other factors like desirability. Cyber-pickers combine old-fashioned know-it-all with new-fangled technology. John Dobson, a collector from Kansas, looks for misspelled or mis-listed sports cards. If the card is properly identified, it would be easily found by collectors. The truly "hidden" gems online are inadvertently disguised because they are misspelled, miscategorized, or given vague terms by sellers who haven't researched the objects. Daye Salander, who runs Junkbox Treasures in Marysville, Washington, says, "Many people on eBay just want to make a buck and do not do their homework." Jeff Browning, a collector and dealer, who owns JDog's Treasures in Boca Raton, Florida, finds 90% of his inventory through online auctions. For Browning, cyber-picking is thrilling. "Nothing like the old ticker pumping 100 miles per hour as the auction gets close to the end and you're wondering if someone else found that misspelled word or that lonely Ma-and-Pa, no-one-knows-about auction." There are several programs that ferret out mislistings for free. AuctionBloopers, TypoBuddy, and TypoHound, which promises to "sniff out the best bargains on eBay!" Missing-Auctions.com locates "fat finger typos." The daddy of them all is FetchBid.com, which searches multiple auction sites, not just eBay. Once you find that misspelled inkwell that you know is rare, or the coveted sports card, or vintage signed brooch, you still have to win the auction. This is where computers handily trump human ability by "stealing" auctions just as they close.

After you place your highest bid secretly for your targeted treasure, you can use a "snipe" program to one-up your competitor's bid by a small increment just seconds before the auction ends. The tagline for PowerSnipe, which costs \$45.99 per year, boldly promises to "Win Every Auction." EZSniper claims to snipe "more auction sites than any other service," but AuctionStealer gives you the skinny: as of March 2011, they have placed over 31,467,800 bids. Through this stealth digital technology, you can win auctions at the last crucial, hair-raising seconds--while you snooze. But while computers can do some of the leg-work of finding treasures in the digital flea market, you still have to do your own homework. --Maureen Stanton