

From: My Self  
Fashionista Road  
London

To: Mr Asshole Landlord  
Avenue to Hell  
London

London, 26 March 2007

Following the phone conversation we had this evening, I'm writing to ask you to return the deposit of 350£ that I paid on taking up my tenancy at 666 Lye Close, London, on 26 June 2006.

Please make a bank transfer using my bank account details below, or send a cheque or postal orders to my address above. If you are not prepared to do so, please confirm your reasons in writing, itemising any financial losses you believe you have suffered.

I believe you clearly understand that you are not entitled to keep any part of the deposit exceeding possible claims for financial losses, and therefore I expect to receive **anyway** at least the amount on which there is no disagreement.

**Therefore, I look forward to receiving the full amount of 350£, or alternatively the amount on which there is not disagreement \*and\* your reply detailing your financial losses within seven working days. I understand that the disagreement is on 150£, therefore I expect a prompt payment of at least 200£ within seven working days.**

I understood from our conversation in person on 23 March 2007 that you want to keep the full amount as an incentive to me to solve any outstanding issues quickly. I am overwhelmed and humbled by your care for my personal motivation but I fear that your allegation that my only motivation is in money has a subtle whiff (or aura, if we can dare using a term that, having a latin origin and being deeply rooted in Continental philosophy, might be less effective in an Anglo-saxon context) of moral judgement, and I am not completely sure that your role as a debtor includes tasks of pastoral care for the creditor.

Besides, as I'm sure you realise and as you can anyway be reminded by my notes below, I have reasons to believe that my obligations towards you were cleared with my prompt payment of all the outstanding bills, and therefore your allegation that I have not taken care promptly of my obligations when leaving the property is - to my understanding - leaning more on the side of a lively and vivid imagination than on the side of reality.

I understand that you allege that you are the owner of a chest of drawers that has been taken away from the room that I was occupying, and that your only claim (unless you changed your mind again<sup>1</sup>, and in this case I would appreciate having timely and well substantiated updates on changes to your arbitrary whims every time they occur) is that I either bring that chest of drawers back or I leave you 150£ as compensation for the losses.

May I remind you that I had any reason, from our conversations before starting the tenancy agreement and from the tenancy agreement itself<sup>2</sup>, to believe that the house was let unfurnished and that therefore any item of furniture in my room had been left there, unclaimed, by previous occupiers for future occupiers use or disposal, hopefully according to environmental regulations for waste management.

I have never been given an inventory of items of furniture in the house (although an inventory for

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1 After having arbitrarily increased your valuation of the item from 80£ to 150£ in less than three months, unless we can assume an annual interest rate of about 1110,97%. I've only calculated this in a couple of seconds so I might be wrong on the actual rate, which however would be considered anyway an usurer's rate in many jurisdictions, and I have also left out of the calculation the effects of inflation on real prices, but this will suffice for the purposes of this text, and I'm leaving the detailed and exact calculation to the reader as an exercise.

2 It seems to read "Agreement for letting an **unfurnished** dwellinghouse etc.", emphasis mine.

an unfurnished house would probably sound as rich in texture as the phenomenal work "4'33" by John Cage<sup>3</sup>, that I find absolutely delightful in its performative power, by the way, but objectively empty of substantial content) and I would have had no reasons to believe that objects not claimed, upon signing the tenancy agreement, by the landlord in an house rented as unfurnished could realistically lead to a real financial loss for the landlord in the event of their removal from the unfurnished property, unless, obviously, we want to consider events, substances and phenomena *sub specie aeternitatis*, in which case we would probably have to consult some *a-temporal* or *extra-temporal*<sup>4</sup> being, but I don't think I have the privilege of being in direct or even indirect contact with any at the moment, although things might change in the future.

Additionally, I understand that you might have failed to state, before I left the property, that that chest of drawers had to be considered part of your belongings even if not explicitly mentioned in an inventory, although you didn't fail in December 2006 to clearly state that, as you were still planning to sell the house at that point, you would have had to "[get] rid as soon as possible of this horrible furniture", pointing at the dilapidated but still usable and enjoyable<sup>5</sup> couches in the living room, which would obviously have led any reasonable person to believe that, *a fortiori* and *ceteris paribus*, the same would apply to the chest of drawers subject of the dispute: I didn't complain, at the beginning of my tenancy, for the fact that I had found a pile of worm-eaten and cracked wood instead of a chest of drawers only because of my understanding that the house was let unfurnished and that the item did not belong to you but was left by a previous occupier and as such I gladly accepted that as better-than-nothing, although it was clearly an annoyance when it came to clear up sawdust from clothes, especially just before a romantic date when time always seems to be less than one would need in order to arrive perfectly on time, suitably dressed and possibly not covered in sawdust that might well give to the date the impression that one is living a pastoral and romantic life in the woods, although giving this impression is not right at the top of my priorities.

Therefore, and knowing that an old pile of wood like that can be had for no more than 50£ in scrap furniture shops managed by honest sellers, I am sincerely appalled by the request you put forward. I hope I won't need to clarify in this context the sharp distinction between *old furniture* and *antiques*, although I can acknowledge that a person grown up in one of the countries most rich in real antiquities as is Italy can have a slightly elitist view of what is antique rather than old; and on the other hand I am clearly not an expert on this matter (I actually find antique furniture rather depressing, to tell the truth, and I would probably have committed suicide very early in my life if I had had the misfortune of ending up being a furniture antiquarian for some whimsical turn of destiny), so I might be mistaken here, although I would find it rather alarming that someone would leave such an invaluable item of furniture in a rented accommodation without even making sure that the tenants knew the importance of the item and who the owner is.

Anyway, I hope you are also aware that if this chest of drawers, that by now we should probably promote to a full character of this story (I would happily leave the choice of a name to somebody else; although I could suggest something like "Woody", that would cutely make it the eight dwarf in a surrealist sequel of the famous *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* story), had had to be considered yours (and I'm not conceding here that it is, as I have carefully explained through the factual evidence given above, but I'm using what technically is a third conditional sentence), the so-called "like-for-like basis" would apply for the assessment of any financial losses ensuing from the removal of that item, and you would be entitled to no more than the fair value of a bunch of rotten wood vaguely serving the purpose of a chest of drawers in replacement of the "missing" one.

I can however understand that you might be particularly interested in having that item for personal

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3 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4%2733%22>.

4 I apologise for the slightly less than rigorous lumping of these two distinct classes together, but my understanding of philosophical argumentation leads me to believe with satisfactory certainty that there is no strict need for such rigorous differentiation in the context of this brief *écrit*.

5 Even for serious sexual performances, which are commonly considered the most hard (may I be forgiven for the involuntary pun here) stress-test that house furniture can endure.

reasons if it is linked to special memories, and I would even understand that you might want to have it for other reasons, as I wholeheartedly agree that fetish and perversions of any kind, when they don't imply any harm for live beings, should be absolutely fulfilled whenever possible as they are part of what makes us humans. I for one cannot stop myself from picking my nose with golden tweezers between 1:03 and 1:05 in the middle of the night of 29 February each year (luckily it's only every fourth year, plus some exceptions due to minor adjustments every few centuries or so: I'm glad I don't feel the urge to do this every day as this would mean having to remember to do it twice in autumn on the day Daylight Saving Time ends), and although I know very well that many people consider this revolting, I will defend my right to pursue this innocent and harmless perversion as I wish. Therefore, and *a fortiori* for a passion seemingly free from any hints of nose-picking grossness as that for old furniture could be, if you really cannot live without that chest of drawers (or should we call it Woody by now?), I will be happy to negotiate its return or a suitable arrangement between you and the current keeper of the item, after full repayment of my 350£ deposit, although I clearly cannot guarantee anything here, seeing that the current keeper seems to be having an equally strong selective furniture fetish. I wish to make clear however that this is only a purely hypothetical assessment of the reason why anybody, either you or the current keeper of Woody, or anybody else in this world and possibly in any others still to be discovered, would feel an urge to have that object, and I am not seriously thinking that this would necessarily nor likely imply any trace of fetish or perversion, as I am obviously steering clear, *more majorum*, of any moral judgement even though I wouldn't see anything inherently wrong in the aforementioned hypothetical motivations.

Therefore, I look forward to receiving your repayment within seven working days.

Yours faithfully,

Andrea Rota

Bank account details:

[bank account details follow]