



(Picture by Lynda Hammond) Photo circa: Christmas 2008. Location: the Garage Sale Gal's house. Could this be what Sadie (right) was running from? Her wrestling matches with her much-bigger sister, Golden doodle, Millie? Nah, they love their "play time"---as you can see!

It might have happened when I turned my back for a split second to take a sip of piping hot coffee. Perhaps it occurred when one of our friendly neighbors came to chat. Or maybe, just maybe it was when my "daughter" created a diversion by escaping from the house. When I opened the door during my recent garage sale, my mutt darted through the garage and down the street. Sadie may be small but when she gets "free" she runs like the wind--like a Greyhound chasing the bunny around the track. What is she escaping? Maybe it's my ever-growing, layers upon layers of garage sale treasures that has her looking for greener pastures?

Thankfully, Sadie's freedom was short-lived and she's back home.

But I digress.

What's at issue here is when, who and how someone was able to rip me off at my last garage sale. I don't know how they do it. You think you're paying close attention and the next thing you know something that was on the table one minute is gone the next. The item swiped was no big deal—just an odd shaped, albeit, very heavy ceramic bowl that read "Dad's Ice Cream" on the front. No one even asked me about it and if they had I would've only charged a few bucks for it. But noooo, someone just had to steal it.

Typically, the more people we have working our sale— the safer we'll be. I had four folks at mine but someone was still able to weasel their way in and out very quickly. Somehow, someway and quite discreetly they're able to walk away with a bauble. Is it for the thrill of it or do they just really need a new bowl?

Whatever the case, this happens at just about everyone's garage sale at least once so it bears repeating; if you see the criminal in action—it's just not worth it. Let it go. Don't approach or accuse someone—it might lead to an even bigger problem. After all, if they're mean-spirited enough to take something from a garage sale where things are already dirt cheap—who knows what they'd do if you tried to stop them.

By the way, if a dad out there gets a unique ice cream bowl for Christmas, please be advised; you *cannot* eat out of it. It's for decoration only.

Maybe that'll scare the Grinch who stopped by my sale!

Safety tips

***Money-**Always keep the bank with you. Have the cash in a fanny pack or in a box with someone watching it at ALL times. Once you get more than \$30 in the kitty take it inside. That way if someone does get a hold of your cash drawer you won't lose everything. One lady emailed me and said during her recent garage sale someone took all of her cash and she never even saw it happen. The thief got away with the entire days earnings--\$400. Ouch!

***No open house**-Always keep your doors lock—even the door leading from the garage inside. Keep a key in your pocket.

***Say no to strangers**-No matter how kind the buyer looks don't let a stranger inside your house. If you're selling something too large to bring out, post a picture of it *outside* at your sale.