

BLACK MARKET ARTS

By David J. LeMaster

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SYNOPSIS: Do you like art films? Gourmet coffee? High-cholesterol foods? Oh, that's gonna cost you! In this insane, comedy, you've got to buy all those things on the black market. But watch out—agents are everywhere, waiting to set up a black market arts sting. And beware—everything is not as it seems.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 EITHER)

1 (m/f)

2 (m/f)

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AT RISE:

- 1: Excuse me?
2: Yes?
1: Is this where I go to purchase movie tickets?
2: Shhhhh! (*Looks around.*)
1: What?
2: Whisper, please.
1: Okay.
2: Shhh!
1: (*Whisper.*) Okay. (*Pause.*) Why are we whispering?
2: I don't want anyone to hear. There's surveillance cameras, you know. (*Gets closes to 1.*) Which tickets did you want?
1: Well, you know, I like those artsy, independent—
2: (*Frantic.*) Shhhhh! (*Looks around, whispers.*) Are you crazy?
1: Well, I—
2: If people hear you like independent films, they'll think you're game for something else. Literary books, for instance. Gourmet coffee.
1: As a matter of fact, I love gourmet—
2: Would you be quiet? (*Looks around.*) Now, look. I've got tickets here to independent films. But it's gonna cost you.
1: Do you have anything with that guy—
2: Yes, yes, I have tickets to everything. Adaptations of Russian novels. New twists on Shakespeare. There's even a new movie of War and Peace shot on a \$300 budget in someone's back yard.
1: Oh, yes. I'll take one of those—
2: Not so fast. How do I know you're not a secret agent trying to find black market movie dealers like me?
1: Oh, no. Not me—
2: They send people like you. Weasely little guys (*Girls.*) with glasses and bad haircuts.
1: What's wrong with my haircut?
2: It looks like an agent's haircut, that's what.
1: I happened to get this haircut at the black market haircut shop.
2: Is that right?
1: And these clothes at the black market clothing store.
2: Oh, you're just a black market kind of guy.
1: That's right. And now I need black market movie tickets.

- 2: Not so fast. I've gotta test you.
- 1: How?
- 2: What's your favorite movie?
- 1: Pulp Fiction.
- 2: Least favorite movie?
- 1: Anything with Jennifer Lopez.
- 2: What do you think of the Cannes Film Festival?
- 1: I'm going there to market my one-man version of Henry V.
- 2: What do you think of film directors?
- 1: They should have a vision.
- 2: Know what they're trying to say and use the film to say it?
- 1: That's right. They should let the actors be their special tools.
- 2: And Hollywood blockbusters?
- 1: For morons.
- 2: Imbeciles.
- 1: John Q. Public... (*Suddenly changes personalities.*) All right, pal. You're coming with me.
- 2: What?
- 1: That's right. This is a sting.
- 2: Oh, I've been set up!
- 1: Solicitation of art on the black market. Ooh, that's gonna cost ya.
- 2: Please. I've got children at home.
- 1: (*Cuffing.*) You've got a right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you.
- 2: Let's cut a deal.
- 1: You trying to bribe a cop?
- 2: Not bribe, really. Just an explanation. A compromise.
- 1: You don't compromise with the law.
- 2: Really? Not even when you have high fat and cholesterol Granny Johnson's Chocolate Delight Cookies?
- 1: (*Taken aback.*) You mean, *real* Granny Johnson's?
- 2: That's right.
- 1: Not the icky kind they sell in the store that's low fat and low cholesterol, but the kind with real fat grams?
- 2: Rich milk chocolate! And little bits of caramel and nougat?
- 1: You can get me one?
- 2: I can get you a whole case.
- 1: A whole—

- 2: Shhhhh!
- 1: You've got a case?
- 2: And it's all yours.
- 1: I really shouldn't—
- 2: Tasty chocolate.
- 1: But it's so bad for you.
- 2: Nobody has to know.
- 1: Well. . . Okay. I'll let you go this one time.
- 2: Really?
- 1: *(Unfastens cuffs.)* But no funny stuff.
- 2: Of course not.
- 1: And if word of this gets out—
- 2: My lips are sealed.
- 1: Okay. *(2 is free.)* Now.
- 2: Now?
- 1: Where's my case of cookies?
- 2: Right here. *(Reaches into pocket for badge.)* You're under arrest.
- 1: What?
- 2: We've been watching you for a long time.
- 1: But I'm a cop.
- 2: That's right. And I'm a cop.

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