

BUYER\$ MARKET

by L.B. HAMILTON

CHARACTERS

A MAN attractive, available
A WOMAN attractive, available

PLACE

A Farmer's Market

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BUYERS MARKET

(MAN, in running suit, is shopping. In his basket he carries several items. A large price tag hangs from the upper back of his sweatshirt. A WOMAN, dressed for sale, is shopping - she also has a price tag. In her basket she carries a several items. They seem to not see each other. Finally, MAN surreptitiously checks her price tag then checks his wallet. WOMAN then surreptitiously checks his price tag and checks the mirror. They "accidentally" back into each other. We hear the sound of a cash register.)

MAN / WOMAN

Oh, sorry.

MAN / WOMAN

My fault.

(They laugh and study each other.)

MAN

Shopping?

WOMAN

Just looking around. I have an appointment in the neighborhood. You?

MAN

No. No. A friend asked me to check out something.

WOMAN

Shopping is ...boring. Don't you think?

MAN

That's what I told my friend.

WOMAN / MAN

You come here often?

(They laugh)

MAN

Never.

WOMAN

Actually, I'm not even here now.

MAN

I could tell.

WOMAN

Well . . .

(she picks up a banana and strokes it thoughtfully)

MAN

Yes . . . I guess

WOMAN

Yes . . .

MAN

I should be going. I've got pressures. Lots of pressures.

WOMAN

Oh. I understand.

(She sniffs the banana)

MAN

You do? *(beat)*

WOMAN

Oh yes. Yes, I do...

MAN

You do. Wow.

WOMAN

Oh, yes. Places to go? Things to do?

(They remove their outerwear in a strip tease, take turns examining each other like horses, and checking each other's price tags, their speeches overlapping.)

I myself am a busy independent woman, with a whole career in front of me and I certainly don't have time to shop. . .

MAN

Too many pressures, you know? I've had to be careful about my purchases. I've always been honest about this. . .

WOMAN

. . . I've had my problems in the past - overspending, choosing the wrong products.

MAN

But do they listen? Never...

WOMAN

... the abuse I've suffered. Being suckered by false advertising and inferior products. But no more ...

MAN

... I have my work, my priorities. Just because someone looks, doesn't mean they have to buy. Do they understand. . . ?

WOMAN

... I'm growing stronger everyday - I'm getting it together. I don't need to shop anymore. Nope.

MAN

Why can't people be adult about these things?
(They maul each other)

WOMAN

I finally respect myself.

MAN

Exactly.
(Awkward silence. They dress.)

WOMAN

Well

MAN

Well . . . have a good day.
(MAN carefully, eyes her again. She almost catches him. He points to something.)

Nice melons.

(The sound of a cash register. She pokes her breasts out proudly then "busies" herself seductively. He avidly studies her then forces himself to dial his cell phone. We hear a busy; he dials again, we hear a recording; again, we hear a man say "hello". She begins to lose interest and waves at somebody in the distance He notices and hangs up.)

IF . . .

WOMAN

Yes?

MAN

IF I were shopping, I would look for, ... but . . . You need to know that I---

WOMAN

I couldn't agree more.

MAN

Really? Well . . . Say, do I know you?

WOMAN

Oh, I don't think so.

MAN

You look a little like . . . well, maybe not.

WOMAN

...like ...?

MAN

Well . . . like my mother - maybe around the eyes?

WOMAN

Thank you.

MAN

I hate my mother.

WOMAN

Of course you do.

MAN

You understand?

WOMAN

My father was a bastard. A professional shopper. You can't believe the things he brought home.

MAN

Really. Hmm.

WOMAN

And...

MAN

And...?

WOMAN

Well...you have the voice of my last boyfriend.

MAN

What a coincidence. It's like your ears . . . just like my last girlfriend.

WOMAN

You aren't my last boyfriend, are you?

MAN

I've never shopped in my life! Except for --.

WOMAN

Or my last boss. You're not my last boss are you?

MAN

I've been too busy. Busy, busy, busy

WOMAN

Good. Good. They made guarantees, then they oppressed me, then they abandoned me.

(He moves close to her and places his hand on her breast.)

MAN

Like my mother pressured me...and my last girlfriend. And my two fiancées.

WOMAN

No more shopping. Rentals - that's the way nowadays . . . maybe short term leasing?

(The sound of a cash register)

MAN

Buy, buy, buy. All that pressure to buy. *(pause)* I'd make no guarantees - that is IF I were shopping

(She smiles and takes his other hand and places it on her other breast.)

WOMAN

I understand.

(He breaks away, starts to leave, she clings, he drags her along.)

MAN

If I were shopping, which I'm not, I would shop for understanding and, and intelligence.

WOMAN

Don't you just love Kierkegaard?

(He stops. She starts to move away, he clings, she drags him along.)

If I were shopping, which I'm not, I'd look for a man who is sensitive to my needs.

MAN

You look a little tired, can I get you a cup of coffee? A foot massage?

(She stops. They frantically embrace.)

Christ! You are not like any other woman I know - you're so free!

WOMAN

Yes, yes! And you are not like any other man I know - you're so secure!

(She notes "someone" again and waves brightly.)

MAN

Who the hell is that?

(She shrugs. He grabs her to himself.)

WOMAN

So....This was great.

(She starts to leave and he holds on)

MAN

Yes. No complications. Just two adults. Friends. Buddies. Thanks. Have a nice life. --- Where do you think you're going?

WOMAN

I thought I saw some nuts over there.

(He drags her roughly to him.)

MAN

I thought you said you weren't shopping.

(He rubs against her, she returns the favor.)

WOMAN

I'm not.

MAN

God, I love your honesty...I love your beauty.

(The sound of a cash register.)

WOMAN

God, I love you --

(He abruptly releases her.)

I mean I love you --uhm -- the way you accept me just as I am.

(Beat. They frantically embrace again. He pushes her away.)

MAN

Don't do that.

WOMAN

What?

MAN

Wear that color. My first fiancé wore that color.

(She slips off her dress again.)

WOMAN

I never wear that color.

MAN

I hate women who wear too much make-up.

(She uses the dress to wipe off her make-up, tosses it aside)

WOMAN

You're so good to me.

MAN

Exactly. No pressure. No ties.

(She nods, pulls out a bow tie, and fastens it onto him.)

WOMAN

My father wore ties. And my bosses wore glasses.

(She puts a pair of glasses on him.)

But you're not the type.

MAN

(Preening and adjusting tie and pulls out a calculator)

I'm not. I'm not. And you are . . . you are so secure with yourself. And . . .and, you know... soft.

WOMAN

Soft...*(beat)* You think I'm too fat, don't you?

MAN

(beat) Uh, no. Well No!

(She stands up straight and sucks in her cheeks and stomach to look thinner, as he focus on calculating.)

WOMAN

I respect your ambition.

(As he works diligently, she crowds him.)

I respect your priorities.

(She strokes him, he calculates)

We never talk anymore.

MAN

(snapping) I've got pressures!

WOMAN

No problem. Space. See? Lot's of space.

(She strokes him meaningfully and backs away. He grabs her and holds her close)

MAN

I could spend a lifetime with a woman like you.

(He drops her and walks away from her. She sits on the floor stunned. He checks his black book again. She watches him, then angrily picks up her own cellular phone. We hear a man answer "Hello." She starts to speak and MAN rushes up to her.)

You made me do it. I fucking warned you. I never lied!

WOMAN

Temporary insanity. I'm sorry.

MAN

I was straight with you. Here's the key to my apartment

WOMAN

Just in case.

MAN

Just for the cooking and cleaning.

(She pulls out a feather duster. He grabs her in a threatening manner.)

My mother used a rag.

(She considers, switches to a rag and begins to "clean" him.)

WOMAN

Can I wash that sweatshirt for you?

MAN

I don't need to be taken care of. *(beat)* You missed a spot.

(She smiles, cleans the spot. He takes the shirt and everything in her basket, places it in his, then gently kisses her.)

You're so special to me. Really. I mean that. I've never said that to anyone before. You are -- you are extraordinary.

(He abruptly exits, dialing his phone. She waits. Nothing. She looks in her basket, finds nothing. Finds a small knife in her bra and waits. He returns disheveled, she stares at him, takes the knife and begins to slit her wrists, he drops the basket and runs to stop her. They struggle.)

Jesus! What are you doing?! Are you crazy? What are you thinking?

(She turns the knife on him .)

Listen...I What do you want? Help me out here. I don't understand.

WOMAN

Yes you do.

MAN

I do?

WOMAN

Oh, yes you do.

(She out holds her finger for a ring. He stares.)

MAN

Ummmm.

WOMAN

I give up.

(She throws down the knife and waves to someone. Sound of a cash register bell.)

MAN

Ah! I understand now. I do. I really really do!

WOMAN

You do?

MAN

Oh. I do.

(He puts ring on her finger. Sound of a cash register bell. They kiss. Beam at each other. He picks her up and moves across the stage. She tosses the bouquet. They "make love." repeating the next two lines several times overlapping and building to a climax.)

WOMAN

I'm so happy. You're not like any man I ever knew! You make me happy. Are you happy? Happy...Happy....Oh God I'm soooooo ...So, soooooo Happy!

MAN

You make me so happy. Are you happy? You're not like any girl I ever knew! I'm so happy! Yes, Happy, I'm Happy, Yes Yes Yes, soooo happy.....!!!!
(Finally they are both spent. They stop and stare hopelessly ahead. Silence. Finally he carefully and quietly pulls out a circular which announces "INDEPENDENCE DAY SALE" and studies it, as she carefully and quietly pulls out a circular announcing "MOTHER'S DAY SALE." After a moment they look at each.)

MAN / WOMAN

What are you doing? *(pause)* Nothing.

(They stare at each other with suspicion as the lights fade.)

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