

## **BLACK BOOKS**

[BERNARD IS SEATED AT HIS COUNTER  
READING A COMIC AND SUCKING A LOLLY]

### **CUSTOMER:**

Hi, I'm looking for something on the paranormal, seances, that sort of thing

### **BERNARD:**

What do you want to be reading that sort of stuff for? We've a whole shop full of classic literature and you want weejeeboo!

### **CUSTOMER:**

Well I'm interested in the dark arts

### **BERNARD:**

Why didn't you say so in the first place? Sport is over there, next to romance.

[ENTER FRAN AND MANNY]

### **FRAN:**

I thought we could both give it a go, y'know. Hello Bernard

### **MANNY:**

Yeah, that way we could keep a look out for each other. Morning

### **FRAN:**

Exactly! So if Mr Creepy...

### **MANNY:**

Or Miss Bizarre ...

### **FRAN:**

... Creepy or indeed, Miss Pseudo-Personality hits on either of us we can pretend we're already an item.

### **MANNY:**

Which we're not haha.

### **BERNARD:**

Cease with the prattle, I'm not to be disturbed.

### **FRAN:**

Comics?

**BERNARD:**

Don't scoff at my innocent inner child

**MANNY:**

You? An innocent child? I bet you spent your time snaring robins and torturing butterflies.

**FRAN:**

Don't manny

**MANNY:**

Or burning down the sheds of old men who told you off for stealing their stawberries.

**FRAN:**

Manny, enough!

**BERNARD:**

I'm not to be blamed if an eighty year old can't make it back and forth to a water butt without keeling over occasionally. Anyway, it was a long time ago ... and you know I can never eat strawberries.

**FRAN:**

You can't eat anything healthy ... look at you, you eat far too many sweets.

**BERNARD:**

A man needs sugar, it helps compensate for the misery and stress of work.

**MANNY:**

Running a bookshop's not difficult

**BERNARD:**

It is when you're forced to employ fog-witted wannabe goblins.

**MANNY:**

Aha but you don't do you.

[THEY STARE AT HIM]

**FRAN:**

Actually Bernard, Manny has come up with an interesting idea. He thinks we should get fit. And ... I agree.

**MANNY:**

Yeah I ...

[CUT TO BERNARD BLINFOLDED,  
EARMUFFED AND EATING AN ENORMOUS  
CAKE WITH OVERSIZED SPOON]

**FRAN:**

(LIFTING AWAY BLINDFOLD AND MUFFS) Come on Bernard

**BERNARD:**

This is nice, but a little more of that raspberry sauce if you please  
Manny, it's under my duvet next to the chip pan

**MANNY:**

No Bernard, we can't just keep abusing our bodies the way we do.  
This is a new millennium, we have to adapt if we want to survive

**BERNARD:**

Exactly ... if.

**MANNY:**

Obesity is rife Bernard, we're enslaved to our sedantary lives. It's the  
children I feel sorry for, poor little ... poor mites, forced to spend all  
hours of the day simply trying to scratch an itch.

**BERNARD:**

Have you been on the Dickens again? He's a tyrant. Stop reading that  
stuff and leave people to their affliction. It's bad enough a man can't  
even light up in a pub any more so why do you have suddenly go over  
to the other side? (LIGHTS UP TWO CIGARETTES AS  
CUSTOMER LOOKS UP INTERESTED) Not you you moribund  
shambles. Get out of my shop before I call down Zenith's Boxing  
Gloves

**CUSTOMER:**

(LEAVING) All right ... but you haven't heard the last of this, mark  
my words.

**BERNARD:**

Begone, thou pied ninny, thou scurvy patch!

[EXIT CUSTOMER]

**FRAN:**

What was all that about?

**BERNARD:**

If he wants to find out about conversing with spooks he can do all that  
on the world wide web of deceit. This is a cultural centre celebrating  
art and life and all things uplifting. (OFFERS CIGARETTE) Ciggy?

**FRAN:**

Thanks ... oh no ... NO! I mustn't.

**MANNY:**

No (SNATCHES CIGGY AND CEREMONIOUSLY STUBS IN CAKE) She mustn't.

**BERNARD:**

What?

**MANNY:**

I'm her guardian buddy now

**FRAN:**

That's right, and I'm Manny's. We have a pact; we're mentors looking out for each other aren't we.

**BERNARD:**

Really

**MANNY:**

Yup

**BERNARD:**

Manny could you just go into the kitchen and get me a glass of water, I'm feeling a bit dizzy. Maybe you're right, maybe I need to take more care over how I live my life

[MANNY AND FRAN EXCHANGE KNOWING GLANCES]

**MANNY:**

Sure thing.

[MANNY TO KITCHEN]

Er ...would you like still or sparkling?

**BERNARD :**

Oh there's some sparkling in the fridge

[ELECTRICAL BUZZ AS MANNY SCREAMS]

**BERNARD:**

I mean there's a problem with the electrics on the fridge. Tap water will be fine. (TO FRAN) Go and look out for him then Angel-eyes.

CONT/D

