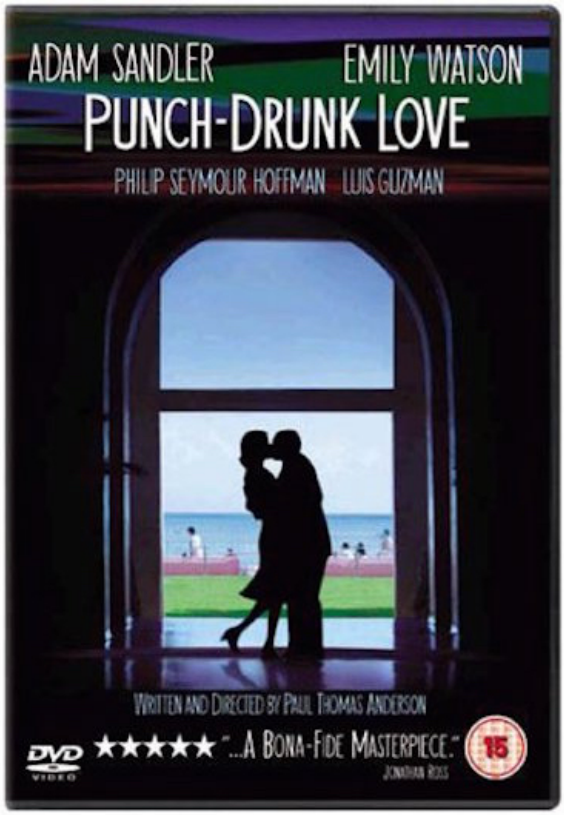

Eh?

Evan Fenwick was panic-stricken.

It had taken him two years to shame himself hard enough to ask Anna Peretti to go out with him. He'd watched her date the office prick, Jonas Felk, for a year, then Brett "Bad-To-the-Bone" Hamblin for another year, before he'd finally made a desperate move. No telling how long her next dalliance would be. He'd seen the district manager circling her every time he came by the Queen Anne office. The dude was married, but he sure didn't act it.

The first date was a win. She had leaned in and brushed his cheek with her lips when he walked her to her door. Now she was sitting in his apartment, reading *People* magazine while he scoured *Netflix* for a movie. He'd been at it for almost twenty minutes.

On the first date they'd watched *Punch-Drunk Love* at the Footlight, just around the corner, where they'd been doing *An Adam Sandler Weekend.*

Litmus test: If you can't get past your Adam Sandler disdain long enough to see how good he can be in a real *movie, with a real director, you fail.* She passed.

I can't believe I didn't plan this better. I should have known we'd run out of things to do after dinner.

"How about *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*?" he asked. "Have you seen that?"

"I saw that with Jonas," she said. "Yuck. Nothing but junior-high potty mouths for two hours."

"Actually, only a hundred-sixteen minutes," he said. "What about *The Wolf of Wall Street*?"

"Really?" she said, "You want to watch a movie about a bunch of sociopaths using naked women as props for sales meetings? I can't believe Martin Scorsese actually directed that movie. I made Brett Hamblin walk out after a half-hour."

"Okay, my bad," he said. "Actually, it's more about how we worship moneymakers. The main character is a real dude and he's still doing business in Hollywood."

"Where's your washroom?" she asked. It was a Canadian thing, *washroom* instead of *bathroom.* Sometimes she still said *eh?* for punctuation, even though she been living in Seattle for eleven years.

When she came back into the kitchen, she didn't sit down. *Uh-oh.*

"I think I might want to head out, Evan," she said. "I know it's only eight, but the big boss is coming in tomorrow, *eh?* Are you ready for that? I don't think I am. He's going to want the numbers for the first quarter. I was going to go in early tomorrow and deal with it, but I should probably do some research tonight. I've got the data on my laptop, I just need to make some sense out of it."

"Look, Anna, if it's about me taking so long to find a movie, just tell me something *you'd* like to see. I don't have to choose," he said. "Hey, if the movie's not too long, I could help you with your report." *If she hangs around long enough, and we have a couple glasses of wine, who knows … eh?*

She sat down. "I'd *love* that, Evan! You write those reports *way* better than I do. How about *Food, Inc.*? See if that's streaming on Netflix."

Oh, my god! Corn syrup? She wants to see a movie about CORN SYRUP? Not on my watch.

It took a few awkward minutes, but he found a suitable review. "I don't know, Anna. Listen to this:"

"The latest of many documentaries from the Your Hamburger Will Kill You subgenre is Food, Inc. Trading on now-familiar gross-out tactics - images of corporate slaughterhouses and chicken sheds - the movie offers very little that food radicals don't already know."

"That's Kyle Smith from the *New York Post*," he said.

She sighed and stood up again. "Look, let's try this again, another time, *eh?* I really should get ready for tomorrow."

"But we could work on that instead of a movie," he said.

"Or not," she said, moving toward the door and her coat, which he had hung on the doorknob.

"Okay, whatever," he said. "Will you be able to find your way back?" She'd had a hard time finding his apartment building,

"Yeah, this time I'll use the map thingy on my phone," she said.

"Okay," he said. "Call me if there's anything you need help with. I've been doing those reports for years. I could even come over if you want."

"No," she said, "not necessary. I've been doing them awhile, too, *eh?"*

A few seconds after the door closed, she opened it again and stood in the doorway looking at him.

"You know, Evan," she said, "I can't believe you think *Food, Inc*. is *gross-out tactics* when you wanted me to watch *The Wolf of Wall Street.* Wow. Anyway, we could have done something besides watch another movie. … *Eh?"* She winked at him.

He could hear her laughing even after he closed the door behind her.