Love in Subtitles

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FADE IN:

EXT. PHIL AND BETSY’S HOUSE - DAY
An old suburban ranch house. No mansion but no dump, either.

PHIL, a semi-attractive man in his late 30s, pulls his beat-up economy car into the driveway, next to a brand new BMW.

As he exits the car, it can be seen that Phil’s home is behind a large office building and next to a freeway. The back yard is separated from the building by a concrete wall.

Phil enters the back gate and sees the family dog, FLICKA, eating trash next to the wall. As he gathers the refuse, a used condom flies over the concrete. Flicka eats it.

INT. PHIL AND BETSY’S HOUSE - DAY

Phil forces a smile as he surveys the garbage heap that is his kitchen.

PHIL
Honey, I’m home.

SUB: HONEY, I HOPE YOU GOT MORE BEER.

Phil scans the fridge. No beer.

BETSY, a tad overweight but pleasant, and looking like she just woke up, drags herself down the hall to greet Phil.

BETSY
Hi Sweetie, how was your day?

SUB: AREN'T YOU HOME EARLY? I WAS ABOUT TO MASTURBATE.

PHIL
It was great!

SUB: WHAT DO YOU THINK? I’M A FUCKING BUS DRIVER.

PHIL (CONT'D) (cont’d)
So, what’d you do today?

SUB: YOUR ASS MUST BE SORE FROM ALL THAT SITTING AROUND.

BETSY
Grocery, Wal-Mart, bank, laundry, cleaned bathrooms, scrubbed floors. The usual.

SUB: I’VE BEEN ON THE PHONE SINCE YOU LEFT.
BETSY (CONT'D) (cont’d)
I even mowed the grass.

SUB: I PAID THE NEIGHBOR BOY TO MOW WITHOUT HIS SHIRT ON.

PHIL
Wow, that’s great!

SUB: WOW, THAT’S GREAT!

PHIL (CONT'D) (cont’d)
Where are the kids?

SUB: GOD, I HOPE WE’RE NOT ALONE!

BETSY
In their rooms. Homework.

SUB: LIKE YOU CARE.

Phil closes the fridge, empty-handed. Gives her a sly grin.

PHIL
I love you, Betsy.

SUB: LET’S FUCK.

BETSY
Love you, too, Phil.

SUB: YOU’RE NOT GETTING ANY.

Phil leans in for a kiss. Betsy turns her cheek.

PHIL
Is that new perfume?

SUB: HOW LONG SINCE YOUR LAST SHOWER?

BETSY
Don’t forget, you’re painting Sabrina’s bookshelf tonight.

SUB: I FOUND A WAY TO KEEP YOU IN THE GARAGE ALL NIGHT.

PHIL
Oh, I know. I’ve got everything I need.

SUB: SHIT, MY NIGHT IS RUINED!

BETSY
And the dog poop needs to be picked up.
SUB: YOUR NIGHT IS RUINED!

PHIL
I have that on my list.

SUB: AGAIN? WHAT ARE YOU FEEDING THAT BEAST?

The back door opens without a knock and in pops CHUCK, the neighbor, in a tank top with a power drill in his hand.

CHUCK
Hey, Phil, I thought I saw you come home.

SUB: DAMN, I WAS HOPING YOU’D STILL BE AT WORK.

Chuck eyes Betsy, who scurries down the hall, uninterested.

CHUCK (CONT'D) (cont’d)
Here’s the drill I borrowed from you.

SUB: HERE’S THE PIECE-OF-SHIT DRILL I BORROWED FROM YOU.

PHIL
Sure you don’t need it another week?

SUB: IT’S ABOUT TIME, YOU HAD IT FOR SIX MONTHS!

CHUCK
No, I’m fine. Finished my project.

SUB: I GAVE UP.

PHIL
Want something to drink?

SUB: WE’RE OUT OF BEER.

CHUCK
No, thanks. You know, your wife always looks great. You’re a lucky man, Phil.

SUB: I WANT TO SLEEP WITH YOUR WIFE.

PHIL
Yeah, she takes great care of herself

SUB: STAY THE HELL AWAY FROM MY WIFE, ASSHOLE.

CHUCK
So, you wanna go bowling with us tonight?

SUB: WANNA GO TO STRIP CLUBS TONIGHT?
PHIL
Sure, if the old lady will let me out of
the house.

SUB: SURE, IF I CAN THINK UP A GOOD LIE.

CHUCK
See what you can do.

SUB: PUSSY-WHIPPED!

PHIL
But I can’t go to any strip clubs.

SUB: BUT ONLY IF WE GO TO STRIP CLUBS.

CHUCK
I hear ya. I’ll come by before I go.

SUB: DAMN, WHO AM I GONNA BORROW MONEY FROM?

EXT. PHIL AND BETSY’S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY   LATER

Phil and Betsy eat dinner with their two kids, 13-year-old
SABRINA and 10-year-old DUSTIN. Sabrina, wearing enough make-
up for three whores, hardly touches her food. Dustin and
Phil eat like it’s a race. Betsy refills her own wine glass.

DUSTIN
News said all the buses were late today.

SUB: I CAN’T BELIEVE MY DAD IS A BUS DRIVER!

PHIL
It was change day. We’re always behind
when we change the routes.

SUB: I CAN’T BELIEVE I’M A GOD DAMNED BUS DRIVER!

PHIL (CONT’D) (cont’d)
(to Sabrina)
How was your day, Sweetie? Learn
anything new?

SUB: YOU’D BETTER NOT BE PREGNANT!

SABRINA
No.

SUB: I FINALLY FOUND OUT WHAT “CUNNILINGUS” MEANS.
BETSY
Sabrina, you need to change the cat box, water the flowers and clean your room tonight.

SUB: I NEVER HAD ANY FUN AS A CHILD.

BETSY (CONT'D) (cont’d)
Your father’s gonna paint your bookshelf.

SUB: I’M THE BOSS AROUND HERE AND DON’T YOU FORGET IT.

Phil gets up, BURPS, excuses himself.

PHIL
Right. Better get started.

SUB: SHIT, WHAT AM I GONNA DO?

BETSY
What’s the hurry?

SUB: DO THE DISHES FIRST!

PHIL
Want it to dry so I can move it in tomorrow morning before work.

SUB: THERE’S A NEW STRIPPER. HER FIRST SHOW’S AT NINE.

BETSY
(to Sabrina)
Your father is so thoughtful.

SUB: I HAVE YOUR FATHER WRAPPED AROUND MY FINGER.

PHIL
Oh, and Honey, Chuck invited me to go bowling, after I do my chores, okay?

SUB: I’M GOING OUT TO LOOK AT TITS AND YOU CAN’T STOP ME.

BETSY
Sure, Sweetie. But I’ll miss you.

SUB: THIS IS WORKING OUT BETTER THAN I THOUGHT.

BETSY (CONT'D) (cont’d)
Paint the bookshelf tomorrow if you want.

SUB: HELL, LEAVE RIGHT NOW IF YOU WANT.
PHIL
Oh no, I can paint the bookshelf first.

SUB: I WANT TO HAVE SEX WHEN I COME HOME.

BETSY
I’m gonna pay the bills, dust the blinds
and write letters to Congress.

SUB: I’M GOING TO GET DRUNK, TAKE A BATH AND WATCH A MOVIE.

EXT. PHIL AND BETSY’S BACK YARD – DAY

Phil opens the door to his work shed and closes it without going in, keeping an eye on the back door. He tiptoes out the gate, opening it slowly so it doesn’t squeak.

EXT. PHIL AND BETSY’S FRONT YARD – DAY

Phil speeds down the road. Dustin, tossing the ball to himself in the front yard, watches with disappointment.

SUB (DUSTIN): MUST BE OUT OF BEER.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE – DAY

Phil loads six one-gallon cans of paint into his trunk, along with enough brushes and supplies to paint Buckingham Palace.

EXT. PHIL AND BETSY’S BACK YARD – DAY

An unfinished bookshelf sits on a drop cloth. Phil applies the first brush stroke. Dustin throws the ball to himself, watches his dad.

PHIL
Why don’t you give me a hand?

SUB: STOP STARING AT ME, FREAK!

DUSTIN
Dad, you promised we’d played ball.

SUB: AN ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIP IS MY ONLY HOPE.

PHIL
Why don’t you pick up the dog shit, that’s kind of like a sport.
SUB: YOU THROW LIKE A GIRL.

EXT. CHUCK AND SANDRA’S BACK YARD – DAY

Chuck uses a telescope to peer into Betsy and Phil’s bedroom. He watches Betsy undress. Then Phil walks into the yard.

PHIL
Hey Chuck, you got a paint sprayer?

SUB: CHUCK, YOU’VE GOT TO SAVE MY ASS!

Chuck points the telescope upward, as if watching the sky.

CHUCK
It’s busted.

SUB: YOU’LL BUST IT.

PHIL
Isn’t it a little bright for star-gazing?

SUB: YOU’RE A STUPID DUMBSHIT!

CHUCK
Oh, there’s one heavenly body I can usually see about this time of night.

SUB: YOU’RE A STUPID DUMBSHIT!

INT. PHIL AND BETSY’S HOUSE – BATHROOM – DAY

Betsy talks on the phone, finishes a glass of wine and eats a bag of chocolates while soaking in a hot bath.

Drunk and absorbed in conversation, she tries to pour another glass of wine but misses the glass. The bottle empties into the tub. Without noticing, she returns the bottle to its hiding place behind the shower curtain.

Phil walks in, unseen by Betsy, grabs some toilet paper. He spots the plume of dark red in the tub and quickly leaves.

INT. PHIL AND BETSY’S HOUSE – HALLWAY – DAY

Phil stands, his back against the door, in horror.

SUB (PHIL): I THOUGHT SHE JUST HAD HER PERIOD!
EXT. PHIL AND BETSY’S HOUSE - DAY

Phil uses the toilet paper to pull a dog turd off the freshly painted corner of the bookshelf. More dog shit flies past his head. Phil turns to see Dustin, shovel in hand, flinging the poop toward a trash can from 10 yards away.

PHIL
Get closer!

SUB: GROW A BRAIN!

Phil paints a few more strokes, checks his watch, stares at the paint can and thinks. He hoists the can, empties it atop the bookshelf. He smiles as the paint drips down every side.

Phil opens another paint can, then another, and splashes paint onto every surface of the bookshelf, coating himself in paint in the process. In no time the bookshelf is ‘painted.’

Dustin flips more dog poop but misses by a mile. The shit lands on the paint-soaked bookshelf and sticks. Phil glares.

PHIL (CONT’D) (cont’d)
Go in the house. Go in the house!

SUB: GET YER GOD DAMNED RETARDED ASS IN THE HOUSE!

DUSTIN
Yes sir.

SUB: FUCK YOU!

As he departs, Dustin secretly wipes his dog shit-covered hands on Phil’s baseball cap, resting on the picnic table.

Phil calms down, looks around for something. Takes off his paint-soaked shirt. Grabs the dog shit with it. But in the process of removing it, he knocks the bookshelf over. It hits on its side, then falls over on its back.

Phil picks up the bookshelf. It’s covered with fresh-cut grass. He angrily kicks the bookshelf. The back flies off and the furniture falls apart. Not one piece is attached.

PHIL
Fuck!

SUB: FUCK! FUCK! FUCK!
INT. CHUCK AND SANDRA’S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Phil and Chuck examine an old bookshelf while Chuck’s gorgeous wife, SANDRA, busily folds clothes in a bikini top. Chuck opens his wallet, counts five twenties.

CHUCK
I dunno, Phil, my great-great-grandmother brought this over on the boat.

SUB: I GOT THIS FOR TWO BUCKS AT A YARD SALE.

Phil buries the cash in Chuck’s hand. Chuck conceals a grin.

INT. CHUCK AND SANDRA’S GARAGE - DAY

Phil peers into Chuck’s paint sprayer as if assessing damage. He depresses the lever and covers his face with white paint.

CHUCK
Way to go, Phil, you fixed it!

SUB: WAY TO GO, BONEHEAD.

INT. PHIL AND BETSY’S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Betsy, face covered with a cold-cream mask, watches an old movie depicting a mummy on the loose. Phil, face and hair masked in white paint, pokes his head in. The TV mummy surprises a woman and she SCREAMS. Betsy turns, sees her husband, and SCREAMS.

PHIL
Bookshelf’s done. I’m going out.

SUB: FREEDOM AT LAST!

BETSY
Thank-you, Honey. I’ll wait up for you.

SUB: I’LL BE ASLEEP WHEN YOU GET HOME.

EXT. PHIL AND BETSY’S HOUSE - DAY

Phil finishes wiping paint from his face but doesn’t get it all. Chuck’s bookshelf sits in the yard, painted nicely. Phil gives his handiwork a satisfying smile as he walks toward the gate. Half of the garage’s outside wall also has been spray-painted white but Phil doesn’t notice.
The gate is open. Phil spots Flicka, wagging his tail in the driveway. Phil motions to him but the dog won’t come.

PHIL
Come on, boy. I’ll give you a treat.

SUB: GET OVER HERE OR I’M THROWING A ROCK!

Flicka BARKS twice.

SUB: TAG, YOU’RE IT!

Phil slowly creeps toward the dog, lunges and misses. Flicka takes off. Phil chases him. Flicka BARKS with delight.

SUB: LATER, FAT ASS!

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Flicka sprints down the sidewalk, stops, waits for Phil to catch up and taunts him with more BARKS.

SUB (FLICKA): THIS IS FUN. WE SHOULD DO THIS MORE OFTEN.

PHIL
There’s a car coming, get back here!

SUB: QUICK, RUN IN FRONT OF THIS CAR!

EXT. PHIL AND BETSY’S HOUSE - DAY

Chuck, wearing an old bowling shirt and carrying a ball bag, leers at Betsy as she hides behind a towel and the back door.

BETSY
I don’t know where he is.

SUB: I DON’T CARE WHERE HE IS.

CHUCK
Well, I’ll be over at the house a few more minutes.

SUB: I’M GOING TO JACK OFF BEFORE I LEAVE.

Betsy HICCUPS.

SUB (BETSY): DON’T GO. I’M DRUNK. I THINK YOU’RE CUTE.

CHUCK (CONT’D) (cont’d)
Can I come in for a minute?
SUB: YOUR TOWEL IS ABOUT TO FALL OFF.

BETSY
Not now, I’m expecting a phone call.

SUB: GUESS I’M NOT THAT DRUNK!

Betsy closes the door on Chuck.

EXT. PHIL AND BETSY’S HOUSE - DAY

Flicka sprints through the front yard, down the driveway and into Chuck’s back yard. Phil, covered in dirt, grass and blood stains, drags his body down the sidewalk in time to see Chuck drive down the street.

Phil waves and runs after Chuck, but it’s too late. Dejected, Phil staggers down the driveway and heads for the back gate, then sees Flicka BARK from next door.

SUB (FLICKA): HEY, LET’S RUN AROUND THIS YARD NOW!

EXT. CHUCK AND SANDRA’S BACK YARD - DAY

Sandra invites Flicka into the house. Phil smiles, follows.

INT. CHUCK AND SANDRA’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Phil sips a beer on the couch. Flicka chews on a dog bone. Sandra folds her underwear in an obvious, flirtatious way.

SANDRA
Chuck has really gotten into bowling.

SUB: I THINK CHUCK IS GAY.

PHIL
Yeah, it’s a lot of fun.

SUB: GOOD EXCUSE TO DRINK BEER.

Sandra leans over and fishes around in a laundry basket. Her boobs, barely contained by a bikini, jiggle as she searches.

SANDRA
I don’t know why we don’t get together with you guys more often.

SUB: TOO BAD YOUR KIDS ARE SUCH BRANTS.
The doorbell rings. Sandra goes to the front door.

SANDRA (CONT'D) (cont’d)
Excuse me a minute, Phil.

SUB: HERE’S YOUR CHANCE TO LOOK AT MY ASS.

Phil eyes Sandra’s clean underwear, then gives in to the temptation, picks up a pair and plays with them.

Out of the corner of his eye, he notices Betsy standing at the back door, watching. Startled, he tosses the underwear across the room and grins sheepishly.

Sandra walks past Phil, opens the back door to let Betsy in.

SANDRA (CONT'D) (cont’d)
Hi Betsy. Your dog wandered over here.

SUB: I WAS JUST SHOWING YOUR HUSBAND MY BREASTS.

BETSY
I wondered where he went. Tell him he forgot to scoop up all the poop.

SUB: I’M OUT OF WINE, DO YOU HAVE ANY?

SANDRA
Wanna come in for a drink?

SUB: HOW ABOUT A THREESOME?

EXT. PHIL’S BACK YARD - NIGHT

There’s dog poop everywhere. Phil tries to shovel some while holding a flashlight. He drops the light into some shit.

INT. PHIL AND BETSY’S HOUSE - SABRINA’S ROOM - NIGHT

Phil, dressed to go out but with paint on his face and hair, says good night to his daughter, who reads COSMOPOLITAN.

SABRINA
Thanks for painting my bookshelf, Dad.

SUB: YOU’RE GOOD FOR SOMETHING AFTER ALL.

SABRINA (CONT'D) (cont’d)
I’ve wanted a pink bookshelf for years.

SUB: IT’S ABOUT TIME!
Phil suddenly looks horrified.

SUB (PHIL): PINK? HOLY MOTHER OF JESUS!

INT. PHIL AND BETSY’S HOUSE - DUSTIN’S ROOM - NIGHT

Dustin tosses the ball to himself in bed. Phil tucks him in.

DUSTIN
Glad we’re going to a game together, Dad.

SUB: CAN I GO TO THE GAME BY MYSELF?

PHIL
Oh, yeah. ... Good night, son.

SUB: SHIT, MY WEEKEND’S RUINED.

INT./EXT. PHIL’S CAR - NIGHT

Phil, stuck in slow traffic, views a flashing sign that reads: CONSTRUCTION ZONE, EXPECT DELAYS.

SUB: YOU’RE SCREWED! HA HA HA HA HA!!

EXT. STRIP JOINT - NIGHT

Phil pulls up. An OLD LADY wearing a CHRISTIANS AGAINST SMUT T-shirt writes down his license plate and takes his picture.

OLD LADY
Heathen!

SUB: I’M STILL A VIRGIN AND I’M FUCKING PISSED ABOUT IT.

INT. STRIP JOINT - NIGHT

A SKANKY STRIPPER performs a dance for Phil. He glances at her breasts but instead sees two images of his wife’s face.

The music ends. Phil opens his empty wallet. He glances at the stripper in fear, shows her the billfold. She slaps him.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

Phil walks in to find Chuck, a middle-aged biker dude, ROY, and a skinny younger man, LOU, in the middle of a game.
CHUCK
Hey, there he is. Where you been all night, Phil?

SUB: IF YOU’RE HAVING AN AFFAIR, I’M TAKING YOUR WIFE.

LATER
Phil rolls a gutter ball.

ROY
Nice try, Phil.

SUB: WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT? YOU SUCK!

LATER
The guys sit around and sip beer between games.

LOU
So, I figure about two years after I get my degree, I should be making good money.

SUB: I’M GOING TO ROB A BANK.

ROY
I could make more money but what’s the point? My wife would just spend it.

SUB: I’M A LOSER AND I ACCEPT IT.

CHUCK
I know, all my wife does is shop.

SUB: I DON’T HAVE A CLUE WHAT MY WIFE DOES.

LOU
How’s things at the bus garage, Phil?

SUB: WANNA HELP ME ROB A BANK?

PHIL

SUB: MY JOB IS SOOOO EASY!

ROY
At least you’ve got Betsy to come home to.

SUB: WE ALL WANT TO DO YOUR WIFE.
PHIL
Yeah, thank God for her.

SUB: I MISS BETSY. WONDER WHAT SHE’S DOING?

Phil excuses himself, walks a few feet away and dials his cell phone. The line is busy.

SUB (PHIL): OF COURSE!

INT. PHIL AND BETSY’S HOUSE – NIGHT

Sabrina yacks on the phone.

SABRINA
So then I yanked on it really hard a couple times and it started spurting out everywhere, all over my blouse.

SUB: I’M TALKING ABOUT THE GARDEN HOSE, PEOPLE. GET YOUR MIND OUT OF THE GUTTER!

INT. CHUCK AND SANDRA’S HOUSE – NIGHT

Sandra fills Betsy’s wine glass.

SANDRA
Remind me, why do we women get married?

SUB: I WAS A LESBIAN IN COLLEGE.

BETSY
I know, sometimes I wonder why Phil and I have lasted so long.

SUB: ACTUALLY, I KIND OF LIKE BEING MARRIED.

SANDRA
I love that dress, by the way.

SUB: YOU’RE WEARING THE SAME DRESS I HAVE, BITCH!

BETSY
Thank you. Phil bought it for me.

SUB: I BOUGHT IT FOR MYSELF.

SANDRA
Chuck never buys me anything.

SUB: I DON’T LET CHUCK HAVE ANY MONEY.
BETSY
He bought you that boob job, didn’t he?

SUB: HE SPENDS IT ALL ON HOOKERS.

SANDRA
Oh, these are real, Honey.

SUB: DAMN, SHE CAN TELL THEY’RE FAKE!

BETSY
Phil likes mine just the way they are.

SUB: I NEVER LET PHIL SEE OR TOUCH MINE.

Betsy finishes her glass of wine.

SANDRA
That husband of yours sounds pretty special. Better hang onto him.

SUB: THEN HOW COME HE WAS DROOLING OVER MINE?

BETSY
Yeah, he is. ... I’d better get home.

SUB: YOU’RE OUT OF WINE. I’M OUTA HERE.

INT. PHIL AND BETSY’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Betsy peers out the window, looking for Phil’s car. Sees headlights pull into the driveway. She runs down the hall.

BEDROOM

Betsy hops in bed, acts like she’s fallen asleep reading.

Phil walks in, smiles at the site of his wife, fast asleep. He sits on the bed, holds her hand. Her eyes open.

BETSY (CONT’D)
Hey, did you have fun?

SUB: I WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU.

PHIL
Oh yeah, it was great.

SUB: NO, I MISSED YOU TOO MUCH.
Phil shows Betsy the bag of chocolates he brought for her and places it on the night stand. He strokes his wife’s cheek. She smiles. He scrapes a patch of pink off her forehead.

BETSY
I repainted the bookshelf. Forgot to tell you she wanted it pink.

SUB: I FUCKED UP, SORRY.

PHIL
I’m taking Dustin to the game Saturday. Maybe we could hit a movie afterward?

SUB: I NEED SOME TIME ALONE WITH YOU.

BETSY
I’d like that.

SUB: OKAY, BUT NO STUPID COMEDIES!

PHIL
I love you, Honey.

SUB: I LOVE YOU, HONEY.

BETSY
I love you, too.

SUB: I LOVE YOU, TOO.

PHIL
I really, really love you.

SUB: LET’S FUCK.

BETSY
I really, really love you, too.

SUB: BUT YOU’RE NOT GETTING ANY.

Phil and Betsy kiss, then cuddle up together, happily.

FADE OUT.