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Love and sex in the city

Romantic comedy surprises with funny, tender moments from great cast



Marlyne Afflack, left, and Hill Harper co-star in the enjoyable comedy *Love, Sex and Eating the Bones*

By JIM SLOTEK
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Love, Sex And Eating The Bones is just another funny and tender love story about a young man who can only get off by masturbating to hardcore porn.

Which is to say there really is nothing in Canadian filmdom with which to compare Sudz Sutherland's surehanded feature debut. It is a "first" as an all-black Canadian comedy (though it's not self-consciously urban or "shizzle"). And to describe it simply by its plot is to fail to do justice to its sass and its smart, goodhearted take on sexuality and relationships.

That said, only you know whether you're capable of getting past the premise. If you do, there's a lot to enjoy. In many ways, it's actually a pretty good "date movie."

In *Love, Sex And Eating The Bones* (the title refers to an analogy about sucking the marrow from life's experience as you might from a chicken bone) sometime Spike Lee rep player Hill Harper plays Michael, an out-of-work photographer who's reduced to security guard work with his cronies Sweets and Kennedy (Mark Taylor and *Barenaked Ladies*' Ed Robertson).

It's a typical workplace, plastered with choice SUNshine Girls (it's this paper's most conspicuous movie placement in years). And it hints at Michael's deeper problem -- his best-customer ranking at Pornucopia, his neighbourhood porn shop.

Enter ad exec Jasmine (ex *MusiquePlus* VJ Marlyne Afflack), the girl of his dreams, but one in a state of self-declared chastity after disappointing relationships with men. Complicating matters, when she finally decides to break the drought, Michael discovers his little "problem." Complicating matters even further, Michael wins a contest at Pornucopia for a role in a porn film with adult-film star Lisette (Marieka Weathered).

Sutherland's film actually has a solid moral core and a cautionary message about the dehumanizing qualities of porn. More importantly, it has life and an eccentric cast that helps him get the most out of his limited means as a filmmaker (among the standouts, rapper Kardinal Offishall, who plays a sleazy record company exec trying to jump Jasmine, and ex-FLOW DJ Kenny Robinson as the pornshop proprietor). There are some laugh-out-loud moments, including a double date in a borrowed handicapped bus with Michael and Sweets and Jasmine and a girlfriend.

In his rookie year, Sutherland manages to sidestep most of what's wrong with the romantic comedy genre these days and produce something enjoyable and funny. With actual production values and more experience, I can only imagine bigger and better films to come -- maybe even, knock wood, a box office hit.

(This film is rated 18-A)