

Broaden your horizons with Blind Date with a Book



By Brock Weir

If you've gone to a bar, you know the standard pickup lines

?Hey, babe! only goes so far, if you're sitting on a bar stool.

And, if you've tried dating in an app, those standard pickup lines might not be printable in a family newspaper.

But, try this one on for size:

?I lay on a psychiatrist's couch, a couch I'd named after Alexander Skarsgard the moment my gaze landed on its buttery curves and wide back, and wondered if I should tell Dr. Mayfield about the dead kid scurrying across her ceiling.?

Okay, if we're being real, you'd probably run for the hills if someone came up to you in a bar and said that. But, let's be really real: you'd have no shortage of follow-up questions after the fact.

You might find the answer to those questions and many others at the Aurora Public Library (APL) in February as they launch their annual Blind Date With A Book program.

The line above is the first line of one of over 100 books of all genres selected by your literary matchmakers at APL.

In previous years, Blind Date books were wrapped up in Valentine's Day pink bearing only a brief dating profile encouraging people to pick up the book on a chance and trying something they might not otherwise be interested.

But this year, they're shaking things up a bit.

Gone are the dating profiles and in their place are their very first lines.

Matchmaker Extraordinaire Reccia Mandelcorn says she herself was inspired to give the program a makeover after finding inspiration of her own in the book ?Strangers with the Same Dream?, a novel by Toronto author Alison Pick that starts with the evocative line, ?This story begins with a lie.?

These tidbits, she says, are no different than a pickup line.

?Everybody has something that entices them to choose a book,? says Ms. Mandelcorn who, when not playing matchmaker, is APL's Manager of Community Collaboration. ?It could be a personal recommendation from a friend or librarian, it could be a CBC review, which is my go-to place, but it could also be the cover of a book or the description. For me, it is often the first line. When I read the first line of ?Strangers with a Strange Dream' I knew it was going to be a great read from that point on and I wanted to take our Blind Date tradition and change it up a bit.

?I thought about pick-up lines and thought that would be fun. Does the first line in this book intrigue you enough to go on. For me, the first line is what catches me. The first 30 pages are what makes me decide if I want to have a commitment or not, that's kind of the equivalent of giving three dates before you decide whether you want date number four or not, so I thought it would be a fun thing to do.

?If you go on a dating site, you can't necessarily say, ?this is going to be a commonality of everybody I go out with,' so your first thing is do I swipe left or do I swipe right, then you have your meetup and see if it works, and you could go on dates two and three. What works for me might not work for you. I think this should be a total adventure for every single person who comes in and wants

to take a shot at it!?

Also different this year is a social media contest that goes along with the blind date. APL wants people to take their dates home, read them, and let other people know whether it worked for them or not. Think of it as Love Connection on the social media platform of your choice. The important part is to make your posts public and tag the Library so you can be in the running for lots of APL swag. ?Hey babe!?! and ?Wanna go for a drink?! are pickup lines Ms. Mandelcorn says she's immune to. There is one pickup line, however, that just might be the key to her heart.

?The best pickup line I truly ever heard is, ?What are you reading now? because at least I know the other person is interested in talking about books and literature and probably me. Anything that shows the person is intelligent and thinking is probably the best. This is a total blind date and every experience is going to be different. You might discover a new author or a new genre. Maybe you don't read thrillers or sci-fi, but this got you into something you may not otherwise have read ? and, if you share that with people in the community it will be fabulous.

?Expand your horizons, have fun, share your thoughts, engage with your library and discover something new. Unless you try it, you won't know what you've been missing.?

Blind Date with a Book begins this Friday, February 1, and blind dates will be on shelves for your choosing throughout the month.