

"The Focus Group" by: Aaron Hertzog for Terrorbird Goes to the Movies

IN A ROOM

A few people are sitting around a conference table. The LEADER stands before them, clipboard in hand.

LEADER

Thank you so much for agreeing to be part of our focus group today for the film "*How Manny Met Lady*". Would anyone like to begin sharing their thoughts about the movie?

GUY WHO LOVED IT

I loved it!

LEADER

Wonderful! Anything specific you really loved?

GUY WHO LOVED IT

All of it!

LEADER

Great, anyone else?

WRITER pulls a large binder or notebook from his/her lap and smacks it down on the desk. They are a smarmy buttface.

WRITER

I have some notes.

LEADER

That is exactly what we're here for. Please, share.

WRITER

Well, where should I even begin. I guess at the beginning...where a story *should* begin, as your movie most certainly does not.

GUY WHO LOVED IT

I loved that! I started in the future, when Manny already knew Lady. Then the movie told us how the future came to be!

WRITER

Hack plot device for lazy film makers.

LEADER

We appreciate the feedback.

WRITER

Don't you want to know where I would begin the story?

LEADER

That's not really what this is for
-

WRITER

(interrupting)

I'd begin it in the mineral mines on the planet Plutora.

LEADER

This movie takes place on planet Earth, not Pluto.

WRITER

The PLUTORIAN mineral miners are overworked and underpaid - wages on Plutora are something called CREDITS.

LEADER

Credits?

WRITER

CREDITS - which represent currency that has long since lost all of its value. What has REAL worth on Plutora is a gem called VALUEGEM - and that's what one of the miners finds at the end of his shift, when nobody else is around to see?

LEADER

Ok, are you're just pitching a different movie to me right now.

GUY WHO LOVED IT

Sounds good!

LEADER

It's not good. It's a waste of our time. Does anyone else have any thoughts on the actual movie we watched?

GUY WHO LOVED IT
I wanna hear more about this movie!

LEADER
This isn't a focus group for
writers to pitch movies. We're here
to see what the general viewing
audience will think of the film.

WRITER
The general viewing audience has
the brain capacity of the DUMIDIOTS
- the intellectually challenged
ruling class on PLUTORA.

LEADER
They're called the dumb idiots?

WRITER
It's pronounced DUMIDIOTS who
overrule the native PLUTORIANS
because of their advanced strength,
and the fact they stole all the
CREDITS in GREAT BIG WAR NUMBER
ONE.

GUY WHO LOVED IT
Ooh! A world with a rich history!

LEADER
This is terrible.

WRITER
Little do they know the Plutorian
hero, named GOODGUY, has found the
VALUEGEM which can be used to
create more advanced weapons than
the DUMBIDIOTS have ever seen...and
also grants wishes!

GUY WHO LOVED IT
I wish this was a real movie!

LEADER
Ok. You can leave now. We've heard
enough from you today.

WRITER
You haven't heard about the leader
of the DUMIDIOTS, the biggest,
stupidest DUMIDIOT of them all.
She's a jerk who has people
silenced and killed any time they

WRITER

Wait!

LEADER

So, you want to make my movie?

She leaves in a huff. I think it's a no.

GUY WHO LOVED IT

Hey, she's wrong about your movie
you know. It's not stupid.

WRITER

Thanks.

A long pause.

GUY WHO LOVED IT

Think she was also wrong about me
being an idiot?

The WRITER packs up his stuff and leaves in silence. The GUY
is sitting there alone.

GUY WHO LOVED IT

Was she? Was she wrong? Am I an
idiot? Is anybody there? Am I
allowed to leave?