



FEEL GOOD MOVIE

By Mark Nutter

I'm telling you, it's the feel-good movie of the summer, a feel-good movie that says, come on, it feels good to feel good, especially in the summer. Or any other season really, I'm not married to the summer.

It feels better than every other feel-good movie, with more feels and better goodness. It's about hopes and dreams, dreams of love and laughter and tonguing the rotted mouth of a loved one--why exclude those who find that more dream than nightmare?

Can a small town boy in the big city climb the corporate ladder without sacrificing his small town values like cutthroat ambition and contempt for his fellow man?

Can a big city girl find happiness in a small town, provided she learns to control her gag reflex at the county fair?

Overcoming impossible odds. David versus Goliath. The Little Man takes on City Hall and wins, then the Big Man takes on the Little Man and we root for the Big Man, knowing he'll win because he's bigger. The Big Man feels good and so do we.

Hold on, I'm just getting started.

Duke is a handsome mutt, a scruffy scoundrel, with a gosh darn lovable face that makes you want to scratch his belly and say, "Hey, Fella,"—you know what? Forget Duke, let's call him Fella. He travels three thousand miles to be reunited with his family. Along the way he saves

five-year-old Janey from drowning by dragging her out of a rushing stream by her ponytail.

Janey falls in love, but Fella has to leave to find his family, so Janey locks herself in her room and can't stop sobbing—forget that part, Fella just travels three thousand miles and nothing happens. He doesn't save her. There, that feels better.

An unassuming foreigner comes to America and teaches us valuable lessons about tolerance, then asks, “Who is really the foreigner here?” And the answer is “You are because of what you eat and the way you talk.” It feels good saying that.

The worst high school basketball team in the country decides to take on the NBA, so they train hard and resolve personal conflicts, and during their first game they are not only soundly defeated but suffer debilitating knee and hip fractures, and it feels good to those of us who think the deluded should be punished.

This movie is not for the cynical, the naysayers, the luddy duddies, the I've-got-better-things-to-do-than-not-think types. Check your spleen at the door. Leave your bile in the plastic bin provided.

Old people. What makes you feel better than old people in love? He played trumpet in the high school band. She thought he was the handsomest thing she'd ever seen until he lowered his trumpet and she saw his face. Still he was an improvement over her current boyfriend, who never

lowered his trumpet. She was a cheerleader. He watched from below as she was tossed high in the air. He thought this was her best angle and never stopped saying it for sixty-seven years.

I know, I know, they're not old yet, I'm getting to that... They eloped and got married in Vegas, where they put an act together. She'd do the splits and throw his trumpet in the air.

He'd jump on a trampoline, catch the horn, and play "Carnival of Venice" before he crashed onto the stage. They were a sensation.

They get old very soon, I promise...Over the years, the repeated crash landings took a toll on his health. They were forced to modify the act. She'd raise her arms over her head. He'd play four bars of "Frere Jacques," then fall to his knees. Audiences felt cheated. They got old, I told you they would. Eventually they found themselves sharing the same hospital bed, suffering from the same disease, but nothing that made their skin look more unpleasant than the normal unpleasant skin of an old person. One night his life passed before his eyes. It tried to pass before her eyes too, but she was sleeping on her stomach. Then he died. Then she died, practically at the same time. Or not. Maybe one buys the farm but not the other. What makes you feel better?

That's what we'll do.

There's a big party at the end. Everybody is there, building a barn or something. We see Fella and little almost-drowned Janey, the sadder but wiser high school basketball

players, the old couple if we decide they're still living. While they build the barn, they're dancing to a high-powered feel-good hit song like "Walking on Sunshine" or "I Wanna Sex You Up," probably just the instrumental version of that one.

So how good did the movie make you feel? Can't feel any better, I bet. But just in case: baby ducks, winning the lottery, Christmas morning, hot fudge—ow, brain aneurysm, no biggie—fireworks, bubble baths, unicorns...



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



MARK NUTTER grew up in a motel near Joliet, Illinois, which is not as glamorous as it sounds. He acquired a taste for absurd comedy in the womb. Mark is the author of *Giant Banana Over Texas: Darkly Humorous Tales*, and *Sunset Cruise on the River Styx: Dark, Absurd Tales*. He's been published in *Jokes Review*, *HAVOK Magazine*, *Mystery Weekly*, *Dear Leader Tales*, and *The Daily Drunk*.

He's the winner of both the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award and the LA Weekly Theater Award for the music & lyrics for *ReAnimator: The Musical*. Mark wrote the music & lyrics and cowrote the book for *The Bicycle Men*, named Outstanding Overall Production at the New York International Fringe Festival. With Cynthia Carle he created *Christmas Smackdown*. Mark has also written for television (*SNL*, *3rd Rock from the Sun*) and film (*Almost Heroes* starring the late Chris Farley).

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