

Fade Up by Stephen Keyworth

A production office. Film posters on the walls. MATT, a writer, pitching, to a pair of film execs, MORGAN and FREEMAN, sat behind a desk.

MATT                      Shall I start?

FREEMAN                Absolutely.

MORGAN                We won't interrupt unless we have to.

MATT                    Great. Okay. Here we go. Fade up -

FREEMAN leans forward.

FREEMAN                Can I stop you?

MATT                    Sure.

FREEMAN                Before we go too far. I want to say one thing.

MATT                    Okay.

FREEMAN                Writers always say fade up. But we don't actually want to 'fade' up do we?

MATT                    Er...

FREEMAN                Fading suggests slow. I think we want to get right in there. Bam! Into the action. We're in a zoo. Or whatever.

FREEMAN looks at MORGAN. MORGAN nods.

MATT                    It can be a fast fade.

FREEMAN                I think no fade at all. Bam! We're in a zoo. Or whatever.

MATT                    Okay. Start again. Bam!

FREEMAN                Don't say bam.

MATT                    Sorry. We're in a zoo.

FREEMAN                Sorry - zoo was an example, you don't have to actually say zoo.

MATT                    But this film does start in a zoo.

FREEMAN                You're kidding. What are the chances? Wow.

MATT                    Didn't you read the treatment?

FREEMAN I never read treatments.

A beat.

MATT Okay. So we're in a zoo.

FREEMAN Great minds think alike.

MATT Thank you. We're in a zoo.

FREEMAN I thought this was set in an underwater city.

MATT It's a zoo in an underwater city.

FREEMAN Is that sanitary?

MATT It's not ideal.

FREEMAN No, I should say not.

MATT But the planet is poisoned, most of the animals are dead. The last remaining humans, and the last animals are trapped -

FREEMAN (INTERUPTS) Er, that's sort of a downer. Everyone being dead?

MATT You wanted me to pitch you a film in an underwater city. This is what I came up with.

FREEMAN Yes, but I imagined a city you could visit, maybe at weekends, and then you go back to your real city on the mainland.

MORGAN Just let him do the pitch.

MATT Thank you. We're in a zoo.

FREEMAN In an underwater city.

MATT It's a Noah's Ark type thing. But there's a leak -

FREEMAN Do they have penguins?

MATT What?

FREEMAN Penguins. In the zoo.

MATT I don't know. If you want.

FREEMAN I like penguins.

MATT waits to see if there's more to this. There isn't.