

STAGE 1 Australian Studies : ICONS & HEROES

FILM TEXT : THE NUGGET

- "The Nugget" is an Australian Comedy that can also be seen as a fable. It was written, directed and produced by Bill Bennett, (Kiss or Kill), and based on the John Steinbeck novella, "The Pearl."
- "I'd always wanted to make a film about "The Pearl", the John Steinbeck novella about a poor Mexican fisherman who finds a beautiful pearl and comes into instant wealth. It sets off a series of changes in his life - and in that case, quite tragic ones. I then found that the film rights weren't available and I started thinking about an Australian equivalent, but in a comedic form."
- The movie centres on the discovery by three friends of a gold nugget that promises wealth and riches but strains their friendship. The Black Tar Gang (who work for the council on the roads) comprises Lotto, (Eric Bana) who is so called because he buys a lotto ticket every week, but is actually very unlucky. There is also Wookie, (Stephen Curry), who is always coming up with conspiracy theories and reads the supermarket tabloids, and is convinced he saw a Star War's Wookie behind his garden shed. Last, but by no means least, is Sue, who successfully sued a pie company after finding a finger in his steak and bacon pie.
- The story gets underway with the Black Tar Gang heading to the hills of their small town to do some prospecting with their new, jointly-acquired, metal detector. When Sue, in a typically Australian Larrikin gesture, comes across some specs of gold by accident after taking a leak in the bush, it leads them to the Nugget.
- While the discovery of the Nugget promises wealth and riches, it also brings with it greed and evil, in the form of local car-yard foe, Ratner (played by Peter Moon) and brothel-owner, fish-shop, and deli-owner, Dimitri (played by Vince Colosimo).
- The three tight-knit mates' friendship is also tested with the proclamation of Wookie's wife Darlene, (SallyAnne Ryan), that the Nugget is solely theirs, as Wookie's name is on the mining lease of their property in the hills where the nugget was discovered.
- The main theme that runs through the movie is that of friendship and mateship. It looks at how circumstances coincide to present stumbling blocks in the path of friendship, in the guise of wealth and riches.
- The movie has a distinctly Australian flavour, and is very much-so in the vein of recent-classics "The Castle" and "The Dish". The movie has many "Ocker" aspects to it, from the idiosyncratic behaviour of the Black Tar Gang, to that of the over-the-top and wacky characters that also inhabit the movie, such as Ratner and Dimitri, and Lotto's and Cheryl's nosy neighbours, Joyce and Doug.

SUMMATIVE RESPONSE:

Having viewed the film text, "The Nugget", complete the following question:

"The Nugget" is a film about Australia, about Australians – outline the images and aspects of Australia, Australians and Australian culture presented in the film.

Criteria: 250-350 words at least, due date: _____



Name: _____

H.G.: _____

Mark: _____

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