

Movie Draft: *Man From Nowhere*

by Brandon Kruse

(*Man From Nowhere* is one of five made-up films generated during PoopReading.com's recent [Movie Draft](#).)

The roadside of Hollywood history is littered with projects that, while built upon a promising story base, fell apart in the execution stage. *Man From Nowhere* is one such project.

Man From Nowhere tells the tale of Reginald MacCruiskeen (Christopher Plummer) and Max Hammersmith (Stanley Tucci), a pair of eccentric and wealthy 19th century railroad barons who, after a contentious first meeting where Hammersmith outbids MacCruiskeen for the second-largest railroad in America, become bitter rivals. The two men turn their vast financial resources against one another in no-holds-barred battle over turf, one-upsmanship, and winning the hand of the lovely Mexican ex-nun Conchita (Penélope Cruz).

And while the exploits of MacCruiskeen and Hammersmith make for raucous entertainment at times (highlighted by an inventive tit-for-tat revenge set piece involving fatally redirected trains and a mansion dragged into a lake), the picture as a whole is undercut by the casting of Plummer. While his brogue is perfectly Scottish, his monocle sufficiently startle-able, and his mutton chops plenty muttoney, he is simply not up to the task of being the ostensible co-lead in this film, not when matched up against the delightfully whimsical charm of Tucci and the irrepressible beauty and verve of Cruz, whose voluptuous breasts seem to be offered up as proof of why Conchita believes in the existence of God.

As a result, you find yourself rooting for Tucci's Hammersmith, turning what should be a war of equals into a wish that MacCruiskeen will be bested, a wish that starts to feel like it may become a reality when Hammersmith hires a young girl (Carey Mulligan) to play the part of MacCruiskeen's long-lost granddaughter in his latest revenge ploy.

Unfortunately, Mulligan's bizarre choice to play the part as a Cockney lass straight out of *Mary Poppins*, complete with phrases such as "At's me Grandpappy you talkin' to, guvnah!" and "It's a 'ard life 'ere in the States, innit?", quickly makes you lose interest in this plot development (which is a crushing blow to the film, considering how much of the story hinges on her part).

Other seemingly unnecessary elements of the film include a lengthy and surprisingly racist tangent about Chinese railroad workers (played by Chinese actors, but Chinese actors who are made to squint and speak in sing-song voices), a subplot where Conchita seduces an elderly Samuel Morse, and a running gag about cabooses.

With its period detail and almost literary feel, *Man From Nowhere* clearly aspires to be Best Picture fare, but it appears destined to fall well short of that mark. Instead, it has all the appeal of a deflated soufflé; the recipe may have looked wonderful on paper, but a lack of attention to detail in the baking process has rendered it inedible.

Man From Nowhere is rated R for unintelligible Scottish mumblings that sound like they might be swearing, graphic violence against trains, and excessive shots of naked ankle not in keeping with the morals of the era.
