

# Brighter Than Others

By Jeff Dunne

SCENE

*(Lights come up on forest glen. There are people in animal skins gathered about, sitting on logs and rocks. It is clearly prehistoric times. Walter wears something that could be a necktie.)*

GRONK

*(Banging a rock on his head.)*

Order. I would like to call the board meeting to order.

*(No one pays attention. He turns to the parliamentarian.)*

Grunk?

*(Grunk makes a loud whistling or grunting sound, and everyone immediately quiets down. Grunk makes a "there you go" gesture to Grunk, who continues.)*

Thank you. Now we have several items on the agenda, and I would like to get through them as quickly as possible. First, we shall review the minutes from—

GRUB

Point of order!

GRONK

*(Heavy sigh. Grub is always interrupting.)*

What is it, Grub?

GRUB

Ruggum's Rules of Order dictate that all meetings shall start with a roll call.

GRONK

We all know each other.

GRUB

It's the rules. We have to ensure there is a quorum in order to carry out business.

GRONK

The whole board has only fist and one finger members. We have fist and one finger members present. That's all of us. Now, let's proceed with a review of—

Point of order! GRUB  
What!? GRONK  
Ruggum's Rules of Order dictate that all meetings shall start— GRUB

Fine! Grunk? GRONK

Present. GRUNK

Present *and accounted for.* GRUB  
*(Correcting...)*

*(Everyone shakes their heads at him.)*

Mongum. *(No one says anything.)* GRONK  
Mongum.

*(Again, silence. Grunk motions to Grunk, who walks over and whispers something to Mongum. Mongum makes a "Me?" gesture. Grunk nods. Then...)*

Here. MONGUM

Uggums? GRONK

Here. UGGUMS

Annnnd Walter. GRONK

Here. WALTER

Okay, I think— GRONK

You didn't call my name. GRUB

GRONK  
*(With great patience...)*

Grub.

GRUB

Present and accounted for.

GRONK

Alright, that's everyone accounted for. Now we can move to the review—

GRUB

That's only fist.

GRONK

What?

GRUB

That's only fist, not fist and finger.

GRONK

That's because I didn't call... *(He realizes they are never going to get past this unless...)* Gronk?  
*(Beat, then he raises his hand and says...)* Here. Satisfied?

*(Grub nods, and Gronk continues.)*

Now, let's move to a review of the minutes from our last meeting.

*(Gronk takes out a big stone bound notebook. With great ceremony, he opens it, and it is empty. He stands up, looks like he is about to say something, then just nods.)*

Any amendments or corrections? *(No one has any.)* Alright then. Do we have a motion to approve?

UGGUMS

So moved.

WALTER

Second.

GRONK

All in favor?

ALL BUT GRUB

Ugh.

GRONK

Opposed?

*(Silence. He and one or two others give a dirty look at Grub, and in a "I can't believe I have to ask" voice...)*

Abstain?

GRUB

Ugh.

UGGEMS

How come you never just vote like a normal person?

GRUB

I vote my conscience.

WALTER

Whatever that means.

GRONK

Alright. First order of new business... *(he turns to look at Grunk.)*

GRUNK

There has been a request to address the board.

MONGUM

What board?

UGGUMS

This board.

MONGUM

*(Looking around...)*

I don't see a board.

GRUB

We're the board, Mongum. *(He still looks confused, so Grub points to the members. The light still does not come on.)* All fist and one finger of us.

*(Over the next lines, Mungum attempts to count up to six on his fingers, but struggles to get to six because that means he can't use the finger on one hand to count on the other. He gets distracted at his next line.)*

GRUNK

Shall I show him in?

GRUB

Not without a motion!

MUNGUM  
*(Suddenly excited, thinking he's caught up with everyone...)*

Happiness!

GRUNK  
What?

UGGUMS  
Where!?!)

Happiness is an emotion!

MONGUM

GRUB  
*(In utter disgust...)*  
Not emotion. *A... motion.* We need to make *a* motion.

*(Mungum starts to wave his arms around.)*

No. No. What idiot voted him onto the board?

Us. We all did.

WALTER

I didn't.

GRUB

We all voted—

WALTER

I abstained.

GRUB

GRONK  
*Anyway...* Do we have a motion to—

GRONK

So moved—

GRUNK

Second—

WALTER

Bring him.

GRONK

*(Grunk goes offstage for a moment, and comes back in with  
Harrump.)*

GRONK  
State your name.

HARRUMP

Harrump.

UGGUMS

No kidding. Any relation to Haroompa?

HARRUMP

*(With the hesitance of one who is talking to your boss's boss's boss, and realizing he is so stupid that your world is doomed...)*

No. *(Then...)* Sir.

GRONK

What brings you before us today?

HARRUMP

Ah, sir, I have made a most amazing discovery, and I wish to register it formally.

UGGUMS

He's a scientist.

ALL

*(In dismay, they all make various sounds of mild revulsion – eww, ugh, and so forth)*

GRONK

And what is this great discovery?

HARRUMP

I call them... stars!

GRONK

I see. And what are these... *(struggling with the word...)* staaarrss.

HARRUMP

They are little dots of light.

GRUB

We know about those. That's fire.

HARRUMP

No, they aren't hot.

WALTER

Like sparkles on the water!

HARRUMP

Sort of, but they appear at night.

GRUB

Impossible! The sun gets pushed into the ground at night.

HARRUMP

Right. It's not the sun.

UGGUMS

Not the sun? (*Harrump nods 'no'*) And not fire?

HARRUMP

Right.

GRUB

This is madness! Madness, I tell you! Throw him off the cliff!

HARRUMP

No! Wait! Wait! I can prove it! (*They all stare at him suspiciously.*) Really.

MONGUM

Prooovweee...

GRUNK

What?

MONGUM

Proooovveee. That is an emotion.

WALTER

N- No it's not.

MONGUM

Then it is *like* an emotion.

WALTER

No. It's not.

MONGUM

Then it's a palindrome.

WALTER

No. It's n— What's a palindrome?

UGGUMS

It's a big fish.

*(Gronk bangs the rock on his head once again to restore order.  
Once everyone is silent...)*

Alright, Hurroop— GRONK

Harrump— HARRUMP

GRONK  
*(Continuing, unphased...)*  
Show us these stars.

HARRUMP  
Of course. Everyone... look... up.

*(No one does. They just stare at Harrump. After a moment, they start staring at each other. After a few moments...)*

Up. That way (*pointing up*).

*(They all look up, and it is the first time they have seen the night sky. There is a lot of oows and ahhs.)*

UGGUMS  
Hey! Hey, everyone! I think I've made a discovery! (*They all stare at him, until...*) I see little points of light!

HARRUMP  
Yes, that's what I'm talking about!

UGGUMS  
No. These are different. They twinkle!

HARRUMP  
Those are the same ones that I'm—

GRUNK  
Order! Order!

GRONK  
The chair recognizes Harrumba—

HARRUMP  
Harrump.

GRONK  
Whatever.

HARRUMP  
Those points of light. The ones that twinkle. Those are my discovery, and I have named them 'stars'.

Very pretty.

GRONK

Yes. Very nice. That one looks like a little point of light.

WALTER

They *all* look like little points of light!

GRUB

Well, what do you know? So they do.

WALTER

*(Suddenly made aware of that fact...)*

I want that one.

UGGUMS

Okay, Uggums. You can have that one.

GRONK

What do they taste like?

WALTER

I don't know. I can't reach them.

HARRUMP

Then what's the point?

GRUB

Well, they're v—

HARRUMP

I mean, honestly, Harroomp. If you can't eat them, then what's the point?!

GRUB

You can make things from them.

HARRUMP

Emotion!!

MONGUM

What?

HARRUMP

I want to make emotion from the stars.

MONGUM

You want to make... a motion?

HARRUMP

Emotion. Make emotion. MONGUM

I don't know what that means. HARRUMP

Don't mind Mongum. He thinks outside the cave. GRONK

Ookay. HARRUMP

So, what can you make? GRONK

HARRUMP  
*(Very proudly...)*  
Pictures!

GRUB  
This is madness, I tell you! Madness! Throw him from the cliff!

GRONK  
What kind of pictures? Like unrequited love?

HARRUMP  
*(Not sure how to answer that, he tries to figure out if there is a way that doesn't make Gronk look like an idiot. Eventually he concludes that there isn't such a way, and decides to ignore the statement altogether.)*  
I call them constellations.

Constipations? UGGUMS

HARRUMP  
Constellations. They are like pictures in the sky. Patterns, if you will. And they can tell stories.

UGGUMS  
Patterns?

WALTER  
Stories?

MONGUM  
Goats?

GRONK  
Show me an example.

HARRUMP

Sure. Okay. Do you see that really bright star? It looks kind of yellowish? Now look to the left and a little do—

UGGUMS

I see one! I see a consternation!

WALTER

Where?!

UGGUMS

Right there! There! (*Grabs Walter's head and points it.*) There!

WALTER

Wow! You should give it a name.

UGGUMS

Good idea. What should I call it?

WALTER

How about... dot?

UGGUMS

Yeah. That's a great name. I'll call it dot!

GRUB

I see one. There! Look! Do you see it?!

WALTER

I see it!

GRUB

I'm going to call it 'speck'! (*To Harrump*) Do you see it?

HARRUMP

(*Wondering how these buffoons came to be in charge...*)

Yes. Very nice. But the patterns that I was talking about are bigger. They involve lots of—

WALTER

I see one! I see a new constellation! Right there! I'm going to call it... 'period'!

HARRUMP

Umm... Again, very nice, but—

UGGUMS

I see another one. I think I'm going to call it 'mote'!

HARRUMP

Great, but—

GRONK

Alright! Alright. Everyone just stop for a moment. (*Everyone stops to look at him, then he points, and...*) Is that one right there?

GRUNK

Very nice. What are you going to call it?

GRONK

(*Considers, then...*)

Spot. I think I'll call it 'spot'.

HARRUMP

Please! Please!

GRUB

You're out of order!

HARRUMP

What?

GRUB

You're out of order. You can only speak when recognized by the chair.

HARRUMP

What chair?

GRONK

I'm the chair.

HARRUMP

You're... a chair?

GRUNK

*The chair.*

HARRUMP

Oh. That's better. So can I speak now?

GRONK

The chair recognizes Hurroof—

HARRUMP

Harrump.

GRONK

Is that all you had to say?

HARRUMP

No. No. Alright, now, listen. You're all (*He desperately wants to say 'idiots', but then realizes that that could get him thrown off the cliff, and so he goes with...*) doing a great job spotting constellations, but constellations are supposed to be pictures in the stars. Not just individual dots.

WALTER

I named min—

HARRUMP

Or mote or speck or spot or whatever. You need to think bigger. Patterns. Look at lots of stars together, and see if you can—

UGGUMS

Oh, oh, oh!! I see one!

HARRUMP

*(Muttering to himself...)*

Oh no...

UGGUMS

Right there. See the star that looks like a little twinkly light? (*Everyone but Harrump makes 'oooh, yeah, I didn't see that before' expressions and noises.*) Now look right above it. See that one!

*(More appreciative oohs and aahs, from everyone, then Walter says...)*

WALTER

You mean both of them? Like one constellation with two stars in it?

UGGUMS

Right! I'm going to name them... 'colon'.

HARRUMP

*(Muttering...)*

Just kill me—

GRUB

*(Picking up on that instantly...)*

What—

HARRUMP

Nothing! Nothing!

MONGUM

I see it!!

*(All turn to stare at him.)*