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“*Forest Gump”*

[www.commonsensemedia.org](http://www.commonsensemedia.org) refers to the movie exactly how it should be explained. They say “This film is "like a box of chocolates ... you never know what you're gonna get" as it serves up an abundance of surprising treats, sometimes sweet and sometimes bitter.” The movie Forest Gump Is about a man from Greenbow, Alabama with very low IQ but yet still lives an amazing life influencing thousands of people. From guys like Elvis Presley to little Forest he finds ways to teach people with his unusual but inspiring personality. During This essay we will breakdown the story line of the movie Forest Gump.

We will Start with Forest Gump, this a man who lives his life like no other. During a time when people judged people based on your skin color or beliefs. Forest always stayed true to his beliefs in what he believed in. From when Forest was a kid he never had a lot of friends. With having a 75 IQ and a “crooked spine” requiring him to wear legs braces, he had a very tough time being accepted into public school. He couldn’t get into public school because of the braces and of course low IQ until his mother had to sleep with the school principle. Forrest and his mother lived together and in a large house outside of Greenbow, Alabama. Forrest never met his dad because his mom said that “he was vacation.” His mom made money from renting out their house to travelers traveling through the area. One of them was Elvis Presley which Forest liked dancing to his music. With Forest’s leg braces, it made him dance in a unique way which attracted Elvis to dance to using his hips for his song “Hound Dog.” Going to School one day Forrest met an angel Named Jenny which he described his relationship with her as “peas and carrots.” Everyone one on that bus didn’t let him sit next to him except for Jenny which was the day Forrest started his love for her. Jenny accepted Forrest for the way he was and helped him read and to stand up to bullies. One of the times was when these bullies started throwing rocks at him which resulted in him running from them but he couldn’t run very fast because of his legs braces. Until they broke off and made him run insanely fast that they couldn’t catch him with a bike.

During his High School years nothing really changed with him and Jenny but the bullies were still there. One Day, yet again they were throwing rocks at Forrest which resulted in him running from them faster than a car. While he was running he ran through a High school football game running faster then everyone on the field. Paul “Bear” Bryant was at that game that he ran through the middle of the game and his speed attracted him to eventually get a scholarship from the University of Alabama. Forrest was used as a kick returner burning through defenders and helping them win crucial games. He later was an All American resulting in him meeting the president of the United States John F. Kennedy. During college, Forrest was at the school while it was getting desegregated which is when he helped Vivian Malone when she dropped a book behind her, he ran out and gave it back to her. After he gave her the book he ended up walking into the school with her and James Hood. He also goes into Jenny’s dorm one day when she goes to an all-girl school which later on gets Jenny in trouble.

After he graduates the University of Alabama he joins the United States Army. Boarding the bus, he yet again gets put in a position on who he will sit next to on the bus. Yet again, no one will let him sit with him except for an African American man named Benjamin Buford Blue. Benjamin or Bubba is from Bayou La Batre, Alabama and his family excels in cooking and catching shrimp. During their training in the army, Bubba explain everything you need to know about cooking shrimp and all the different types of shrimping. They make a pack that after they get done the army they will have their own shrimping company. While Forest is the only one listening he excels in basic training. He set the new company record for putting together a M14 Rifle. Before he gets sent to Vietnam he visits Jenny at a strip club where forest beats up a man harassing jenny to get naked and stop singing. After Forest saves Jenny, he later says how he loves her which then Jenny replies “you don’t know what love is.” The one thing Jenny does tell Forest before he leaves is that whenever he gets in trouble he should just run. Once he gets deployed to Vietnam he gets introduced by Lieutenant Dan Taylor. During their first several months they were just having to walk everywhere looking for people but not finding anyone. One day, they were walking when the Viet Cong eventually shot at them wounding many of the people in their group. They got ordered to retreat, but knowing how fast Forest was he flew by everyone leaving his group behind. Once he got to safety realizing everyone was gone he went back in to look for Bubba, which is when he found LT. Dan and several others in his group which is when he brought them back to safety. When he found Bubba he was wounded bad around the chest/stomach area, he picked him up right before the napalm strike. As he was running back with him he got shot in the buttocks but still managed to bring Bubba to safety. Unfortunately, Bubba couldn’t recover and died from complications with the wound. After being shot in the buttock, he got taken back to the hospital in Saigon, Vietnam. While being in the hospital for his buttocks, he’s in the bed right next to LT. Dan which is where in the middle of the night LT. Dan pins him down and says that Forest ruined his destiny of dying on the battle field with the long of his ancestors that did die on the battlefield going back to revolutionary war.

After being released from the hospital, Forrest received the medal of honor because of his bravery in the Vietnam War. Which is when he got to meet President Lyndon B. Johnson. After meeting President Johnson, he went sightseeing in Washington D.C. which is where he ran into Jenny at a veterans against the war rally. When they were reunited, Jenny is now a hippie and has a new boyfriend named Wesley who Forrest was not impressed with. They ended up staying up all night, which is when Forrest told her about Vietnam, LT. Dan and of course Bubba. When Forest is about to leave he gives, Jenny his medal of honor because he said he just did what she told him to do.

In 1969, Forrest joined the Army Special Services where he entertained wounded people with his Ping Pong skills that he learned when he was in the hospital in Vietnam. His Ping pong skills got him a to travel to China to play in the Ping Pong Diplomacy which when he came back he became a National Celebrity. Being a celebrity, he went on the Dick Cavett show with John Lennon and influenced John to write the song “Imagine.” After the show Forrest runs into LT. Dan which now he is an alcoholic. Forrest and Lt. Dan hang out for a while during Christmas and New Years and then after invites him to be his first mate on his shrimp boat one day. After he leaves New York he goes back to D.C. which is where he meets president Nixon with the rest of the US Ping Pong team. Nixon offers him to stay at the Watergate hotel which is where he finds people breaking into a room with flashlights. Forrest later on calls security which then starts the Watergate scandal. Following Nixon’s resignation in 1974, he gets released from the army with the rank of Sergeant.

After Forest’s time in the military, he soon goes home and buys a shrimping boat to fulfil his promise to Bubba. He ends up naming the boat after his girl Jenny and a little after trying shrimping for a little, Lt. Dan shows up as he promise to be his second mate. When they first start off together they get little to no success. Then a hurricane hits whipping out the entire shrimp industry virtually leaving only forests boat behind. After being the only one left they became very successful dominating the shrimping industry naming their business “Bubba Gump Shrimp.” After a while of becoming extremely popular Forest returns home when he figures out take Lt. Dan invests money into Apple which then makes him set for life money wise. With that being said Forest donates half his money to Bubba’s family. When returning home, he realizes that his Mom is sick and then proceeds to pass away a couple day. After that Jenny Comes by the house and spends a couple days with him as he’s recovering his moms lose. While she’s there he notices that Jenny slept almost all day long but loved having her company which included in him getting her flowers every day. One night he proceeds to tell Jenny that he loves her which then she says “you don’t know what love is.” Later that night Jenny sneaks into his room to tell him she does love him and then they proceed to have sex. The next morning, Forest realizes that Jenny left and doesn’t know where she went.

The next day, he realizes he was bored so he proceeds to get up and just start running for no reason. He starts at the end of his street, then town, then county, then he realizes at the end of his state. Forest impacted people across the US even though he was running for no movement or rights. Sooner or late people started running with him and his national attention started to grow more and more. He helped people make t shirts and come up with bumper stickers. After three and a half years of this ongoing running for no reason. He decides to settle back down in his home town again. Once he’s back Jenny has completely settled down from traveling all across the country and tells Forest to come over to her new apartment. Once he gets their he realizes that she has a kid and Jenny tells him he’s named forest after his father. It takes Forest a couple seconds that it’s his kid but once he does he’s blown away. A couple weeks later Forest proposes to Jenny and they get married. They end up living together in Forests family home where he grew up. After some time Jenny at a part with young Forest and Forest tells his husband that she is sick. After a couple weeks the sickness wasn’t curable, and she dies. Forest puts Jenny under the same tree they grew up climbing on and spending most of their childhood on. After that Forest spends all of his days with his son and teaches him all sorts of stuff like Ping Pong and Fishing. The movie ends shortly after with Forest Jr. going to his first day of school almost exactly like Forest did and then once he gets picked up the movie ends.

Wow, after reading all this it’s hard not to say that this movie has so much going on in it. I mean the way Forest lives his life is incredible. Couldn’t even imagine how the rest of his life could possibly go when the movie ends. There’s so many people and characters in this movie but really there are only a couple to consider about talking about. Besides Forest, his mom, Bubba, Jenny, and Lt. Dan, those 4 made the biggest impact on Forests life. We will go more in detail about the summary and break down some content of the movie.

In a movie filled with many extradentary scenes that move the audience and have such impacts on the characters. For the sake of time, I will personally pick the 3 best ones that I believe have the biggest impact towards the audience and the movie. Ones that I personally move me and show and develop things that will eventually happen in the movie. We will also be breaking down camera angles for each scene and show how they are used in the correct way to fully express the scenes importance. The three scenes that I am going to use is the “Run Forest” when he runs away from the bullies for the first time, When Forest realizes he is a father, and then the sad scene of when Forest loses Jenny.

We will start with the “Run Forest Run” scene, which is one of the most memorable considering people still say the phrase of what the scene is called to this day almost 25 years later. The scene starts with Forest and Jenny walking to the end of Forests driveway to get on the bus. All the sudden three kids on bikes ride behind them and start harassing Forest. Forest not knowing how to interact with many people besides Jenny and his mom doesn’t know what to do. Forest Gets pelted with rocks at one point hitting him in the face and dropping him on his back. Being in leg braces and having a very low IQ Forest is an easy target for bullying. Forest not being able to get off his back, Jenny must pick him up and bring him to his feet. Once he gets up Jenny utters the following iconic line “Run Forest Run.” Being in legs braces Forest is almost waddling like a penguin which causes the group of bullies to get back on their backs to chase him. Eventually after running for a little Forest starts running more normal but the bullies keep getting closer. Then soon after, Forest breaks out of the braces and starts running so fast the bullies on bikes couldn’t get him. As Forest is telling the story to someone at the bus stop, he says “From that done on, if I was going somewhere, I was running!” That was essentially the last part of the scene he eventually just runs all around town until he’s back home. Next, we will break down each shot that occurred for each part. The main shot that was being used the most was a point of View shot considering they are talking to each other, so their eyes are right where they are looking which is at each other. Jenny and Forest are looking at the kids talking and then the bullies are doing the same. Before Forest start running Jenny and Forest are also on a Close up shot. There is another shot which is used very well which is an over the shoulder shot which is used when the focus of the camera is on the person talking in front of you, but you can see the shoulder or the object of the person the person focused is talking to or looking at. For the part when the bullies are following forest and when he is running the camera on a crane which is called a crane shot which just follows the people running and on the bike. For the next scene there isn’t as much movement and it’s a more stationary scene.

Another very important scene is this movie is when Forest realizes that he is a father. Half of the beginning of the movie is Forest at a bus stop just talking to strangers essentially about his life story and explaining all his accomplishments and the people that he has met. Not knowing why, he is at the bus stop eventually he tells someone where he is going which is only a couple blocks down the road to Jenny’s apartment. Being the way forest is he decides to just run to Jenny’s house instead of taking a bus to it. Once Forest makes it there and he realizes that Jenny has a kid now. Once he meets the kid, the kid runs into his room and watches TV. After that Jenny talks to Forest to tell him that his name is Forest which then he replies, “like me.” Then Jenny says, “I named him after his daddy” and then Forest says, “He got a daddy named Forest too.” Which then Jenny turns to Forest looks and says, “you’re his daddy Forest.” It takes Forest a couple seconds to comprehend what she just told him and then at that point she calms him down saying that he didn’t do anything wrong and then Forest ask, “Is he smart?” which then she replies he is one of the smartest in his class. Forest asks that because he know he had a tough time growing up because his IQ was so low and that make it hard for him to have friends and get along. Eventually Forest walks over in the room where Little Forest is watching TV and watches TV with him. Jenny looking into the room gives a huge sigh of relief that he Forest took the news well. Next, we will break down the camera shots for this scene which is a lot easier than last one. This one is mostly Mid close-up shot because they just show them talk to each other and they are standing right next to each other. The camera shot doesn’t change for almost 30 seconds and then when Jenny says that Forest is the daddy, the camera goes into another over the shoulder shot. As they are talking to each other and while you can still see the persons shoulder. Then eventually it zooms in back into Forests face with Jenny somewhat in the shot too. Eventually it turns into a Medium long shot with Forest, Little Forest, and the TV in it.

Possibly the most impactful and sad part of the movie is the end when he is updating Jenny about his life. He starts off by saying that she died on a Saturday Morning and then saying she buried her under their favorite childhood tree. Constantly trying to hold back tears he tries to elaborate on his recent activities with his soon and how he’s teaching him how to read, fish and play ping pong. He also elaborates how he had Jenny’s fathers house bulldozed to the ground. The reason for that is because Jenny’s dad was an alcoholic who supposedly would beat Jenny. Assuming Forest didn’t want to leave anything bad behind about Jenny and covered up the things that made her mad. For example, in a scene in the middle of the movie, Jenny and forest are walking around their town and they walk by the house where Jenny once lived and Jenny looked at it and started throwing rocks at it and then eventually breaking down and crying. Anyway, after he’s done talking about Jenny’s old house and says a very famous quote. He goes “Momma always said Dying is a part of life… sure wish it wasn’t.” Forest then says how he is always making sure Little Forest is always ready and is trying to be the best featherily role model that he can. He says how he makes sure he brushes his teeth, makes him breakfast, and comes prepared to school every day. He then elaborates how smart Little Forest is, and how proud Jenny would be of him. Forest then puts a letter on the tombstone written from Little Forest and he says he wasn’t allowed to read it so that letter is unknown what it is about. Then he says how he doesn’t know if we are living a world like LT. Dan which we are all just floating around in space or if we have a destiny and have a spot and a goal to achieve in this world. I don’t fully understand why he says that because I believe he knows his destiny is to be with Jenny, but he has done so much in this world by just floating around. For example, joining the Alabama Football team happened because he just ran through the middle of a football where the Bear Bryant the Alabama football coach was there. He ends it off by saying “If there is anything you need I won’t be far away.” Then he walks off into the distance and looks back then keeps going.

From a camera shot perspective this one doesn’t change that much either. The scene starts off with a long shot to show where she is buried and the tree and the background of what’s surrounding the tombstone. It then turns into a close which is where it’s going to be for most of the scene because its showing Forest looking down on the tombstone. It could be almost an over the shoulder shot because you can see the top corner of the tomb as well, so you know that what his full attention is on. At one point to show the tombstone it shows a zoom in shot to the grave to show when she was born and when she died and get a better understanding how she died young. Finally, it shows a zoom up for the last 30 seconds to Forests face when he’s saying his final words of the scene.

The Last step of the essay to put all the meaning to all the words and ask the “why” question. During these next paragraphs I’ll be showing and interpreting main characters and how the people around them. Some of the characters that we will go over are LT. Dan, Forest Gump, Jenny, and some others. First person we will go over the most famous quote of the movie and put it into more detail. It also will show some summary and talk and analyze about the text.

When you open a box of assorted chocolates, what do you see? Some people look, and they know that there are some chocolates mixed in that are horrid, and they do their best to escape them. Others see the candies and know that one of them will be their demise, but they eat them all anyways. However, a few people gaze into the box and see an opportunity for surprise with each morsel. In the movie Forrest Gump, the concept of destiny is viewed by the characters in various ways. Lieutenant Dan believes in predetermined destiny, Jenny spends her entire life trying to take control of her destiny, and Forrest simply takes life one step at a time, believing that destiny is about the journey. Although each character is faced with poor circumstances, Forrest’s view about destiny leads him through the best life compared to the others.

Early in the film, Jenny Curran’s character experiences horrifying abuse by the hands of her drunken father. As a little girl, Jenny prays to God asking him to make her a bird so that she can fly away from her circumstances. In many ways, Jenny got her wish that day. She first flies away from her problems in Greenbow, Alabama when she goes to an all girls’ Junior College. However, this is also the first time that she gets herself into trouble, when she gets expelled for posing nude in Playboy Magazine. On a rainy night, Jenny asks Forrest if he dreams, and she tells him of her dreams to become a famous folk singer. Jenny has hopeful goals, but even those dreams lead her to an unhealthy world when she becomes a nude singer at a strip club. She is constantly migrating—much like a bird—trying to find happiness, even though all she ever finds is trouble. The confused character of Jenny Curran continually attempts to run away from her past and tries to find herself. Her efforts to take control of her destiny lead her into a life of drugs, abuse, possibly prostitution, and contemplated suicide.

When Lieutenant Dan Taylor’s character enters the film, his views about destiny are made apparent straightaway. Lt. Dan lives his life, so everyone knows exactly what he believes in. When Forrest Gump and his good friend Bubba first encounter their new Lieutenant in Vietnam, Forrest already knows that “he was from a long, great military tradition”. Dan’s belief that his destiny is predetermined, and that he is going to die in an American war is not debatable. In Forrest’s word’s, “you could say he had a lot to live up to”. Therefore, when Forrest saves Lieutenant Dan’s life when their squadron comes under attack by “Charlie”, Dan resents Forrest. Rather than dying with honor like his grandfathers, he becomes a legless cripple. Lt. Dan laid all of his faith in the belief that he would die in Vietnam, and as effect of his undesired survival, he throws himself into alcoholism and a cynical lifestyle. A quote by Democritus describes Lt. Dan’s character very well: “everywhere man blames nature and fate. Yet his fate is mostly but the echo of his character and passion, his mistakes and his weaknesses”. Dan’s certainty that he is meant to die in war leaves him reeling for many years after Vietnam. He does not know what his purpose in life is after that. Although he puts off a strong exterior, Dan becomes a weak character, turning to booze and openly doubting God. As a result of Dan’s once stringent belief in a prearranged fate, he struggles through most of his life until the end of the film when he makes peace with Forrest, the Vietnamese, and ultimately God.

The peculiar character of Forrest Gump, although not the smartest being, has the most encouraging and ingenious view of destiny out of all of the individuals in the film. As a young boy, Forrest not only has scoliosis, but also a below average IQ of 75. However, with his momma’s constant encouraging words, “you’re no different than anybody else, Forrest” and “stupid is as stupid does”, Forrest grows into an inspiring character. Forrest does not truly understand the concept of destiny. He rarely thinks about the purpose of events or where the destination of his life lies. When he befriends Jenny, their differing personalities and characteristics—which only deepen as they grow older—causes Forrest to ponder the notion of destiny. One night, Jenny and Forrest were talking and she asked, “do you ever dream, Forrest, about who you’re gunna be”? Forrest is confused by this question and states “aren’t I going to be me”? Forrest never thinks ahead, he simply does as he is told and faces the obstacles life throws at him as they come along. Everything in Forrest’s life happens by chance. He never looks for something better to come along, and he does not think that events will happen before they have occurred. While running from bullies and stumbling onto a school football field, interrupting practice, Forrest’s impressive speed captures the eyes of coaches. From there, he is recruited after high school to play for the University of Alabama’s football team, and with an IQ of only 75, he achieves a college degree. When Forrest graduates, he is met by an army recruiter who asks him if he has thought about his future, while handing Forrest a flyer for the army. Forrest looks from his momma to the soldier asking “thought? Yet, from there Forrest goes on to become a war hero, saving his surly lieutenant’s life along with almost his entire platoon. Forrest’s character never sought out an extravagant life, but by living with an open mind, he accomplished more than any of the other characters in Forrest Gump.

Only in the end of the film, after a life of so many accomplishments and sorrows, does Forrest come to his conclusion about destiny. Standing at his beloved Jenny’s grave, he reveals to her what he has deduced about destiny and fate. In front of her headstone underneath the tree they played on as children, Forrest tells her “I don’t know if Momma was right or if it’s Lieutenant Dan. I don’t know if we each have a destiny or if we’re all just floating around accidental-like on a breeze, but I think maybe it’s both”. And so, when a person opens up a beautiful box of assorted chocolates, it is always best not to know which chocolate which is. In the end, there will always be a few foul chocolates mixed in with the tastier morsels. As his Momma always told him, “life is like a box of chocolates, Forrest. You never know what you’re going to get”.

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