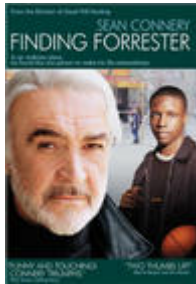


Finding Forrester (2000)



Directed by Gus Van Sant

Writing credits Mike Rich **Genre:** Drama **Runtime:** 136 min **Country:** USA

"In an ordinary place, he found the one person to make his life extraordinary."

Plot Outline: An afro-american teen writing prodigy finds a mentor in a reclusive author.

User Rating: ★★★★★★★★☆☆ 7.3/10 (9,280 votes)

Movies about writers are notoriously difficult to make, since writing by its nature is not cinematic. "Finding Forrester" evades that problem by giving us a man who wrote one good novel a long time ago, and now writes no more: He has turned into a recluse afraid to leave his own apartment. This is William Forrester (Sean Connery), who keeps an eye on his Bronx neighborhood by using binoculars from his upper-floor window. "The man in the window" attracts the attention of black teenagers playing basketball on a court below, and that leads to the turning point in the life of Jamal Wallace (Rob Brown).

Jamal is a brilliant student who has no one to share his brilliance with. At school he conceals his learning because, as an adult observes, "basketball is where he gets his acceptance." He gets C's when his SAT scores show him to be an A student and stars on the high school basketball team. One night on a dare, he sneaks into Forrester's apartment, is startled by the old writer and begins a special friendship. Jamal gets someone to read his writings. Forrester gets someone to lure him out of his hibernation.

The scenes between the old man and the teenager are at the heart of the movie, and it's a pleasure to watch the rapport between Connery, in his 50th year of acting, and Brown, in his first role.

Jamal gets a scholarship to a private academy (his SAT is high enough that it's not an athletic scholarship, although the school certainly hopes he'll play). On its faculty is the embittered Crawford (F. Murray Abraham), coincidentally an old enemy of Forrester's, who simply doesn't believe an African-American basketball player from the Bronx can write at Jamal's level. That sets up the crisis and the resolution.

1. Do you agree that the film is "character-driven" (more about people than action)?
2. Which scene do you find most memorable and why?
3. In your view, what is the main theme of the film?