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Intermediate Playwriting  
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### Gumped

Mark - A middle-aged arrogant man in a business suit.

Gump- a man in his thirties, convinced he is Forrest Gump, who speaks in a slow, Southern dialect, similar to the Tom Hanks character, but clearly not perfect.

*Mark angrily marches on stage carrying a briefcase and talking on a cell phone.*

Mark: Listen to me. You need to get your head out of the clouds. Be realistic, Sam. You can't just leave the field for two years and expect to have a cushy job waiting for you when you get back. If you leave now, I have to give the position to someone else.

*He turns and sits on one of two benches as he listens to Sam's response.*

Mark: If you understand, don't keep talking like you're going to Join! *(Pause)* It doesn't matter if you already signed the papers, I can make this whole thing go away.

*(Another pause)* Yes, I am listening. *(He sighs)* Look, I'm not going back to the office until we figure this out. Where are you? *(Pause)* Ok, I'm at the park at the corner of Jefferson and First. And hurry.

*He hangs up. Gump walks in, with a suitcase and a box of chocolates.*

Gump: Would you mind very much if I sat here?

Mark: I'd rather you didn't.

Gump: But the other bench is covered in pigeon droppings.

Mark: What? Uh... sure.

Gump: Thank you. Would you like a chocolate?

*Mark pretends to work on papers he pulls from his briefcase.*

Mark: No thanks. I'm kind of busy.

Gump: My name's Forrest, Forrest Gump.

Mark: Excuse me? Oh yeah, we're on a park bench, the film. Cute.

Gump: You sure you won't have a chocolate? Mama always said, life is like a box of chocolates...

Mark and Gump: You never know what you're going to get!

Mark: I've seen the movie, all right. I understand.

Gump: You seem upset.

Mark: Please mind your own business.

Gump: But you seem upset and maybe I could help you.

Mark: Could you just quit this damn charade right now. It is imperative that I finish my work and don't have time for you and your stupid game.

Gump: Well Mama says that stupid...

Mark: Don't... say it, please.

Gump: All right. *(pause)* But I still want you to know why you're upset.

Mark: I am not in the habit of sharing family problems with strangers, much less strangers with Tom Hanks complexes. If you won't move, I will!

*Mark slams his briefcase shut and moves to the other bench. He wipes off the bird droppings and sits, There is moment of silence as Mark he grumpily continues to work and Gump watches him curiously.*

Gump: A family problem, you say?

*Mark does not answer.*

Gump: It must be very serious. A matter of life and death or something?

*Marks whips out his cell phone and dials a number.*

Gump: Who you calling?

Mark: *(Ignoring Gump)* Sam? Where the hell are you? *(Pause)* Go around the traffic!

I've got a meeting in fifteen minutes and I can't wait... Sam? Sam!?

Dammit! *(He hangs up)* Sensitive as his mother!

*Gump rises, walks over to Mark's bench, and sits down next to him.*

Mark: *(Glancing up from papers)* What are you doing?

Gump: I thought I'd come and sit next to you for moral support.

Mark: Moral support?

Gump: Yep, I'm good at giving that.

Mark: You're good at wasting my time!

*Mark begins to pack up his papers.*

Gump: You should call back Sam.

Mark: You should mind your own business.

Gump: You upset him. You should call him back and apologize. Then he'll want to come and meet with you.

*Mark snickers at the advice.*

Mark: *He hung up on me.*

Gump: You were impatient.

Mark: I have a busy day!

Gump: So you should call him back right away.

Mark: And say what?

Gump: Apologize.

Mark: Just apologize?

Gump: That is of course, unless it's not important that you see him.

*Mark looks over angrily, before sighing and sitting on the first bench and pulling out his cell phone.*

Mark: Hey, look. I'm sorry about snapping at you back there, I've just been a little... a

little tense today. *(Pause)* Yeah. Look, just get here as soon as you can. Okay.

Bye.

*Mark reopens his briefcase and starts to take out the papers. He stops and looks over at Gump.*

Mark: *(Still grumpily)* Thanks.

Gump: Oh it's fine. I help lots of people with lots of problems. I...

Mark: I said thanks.

Gump: And you don't need to be so rude. I just wanted to help you with your situation.

Mark: Don't bother. It's nothing. It's stupid. And like I'm sure you're about to say,

*(imitating Gump)* "Stupid is as stupid is."

Gump: That's not how goes.

Mark: Whatever.

Gump: Do you hate Sam?

Mark: What is your problem? Just shut up ok.

Gump: But I'm Forrest Gump. I can help you!

Mark: You *think* you're a fictional character. That sort of disqualifies you from assisting with real problems.

Gump: Why can't I be Forrest Gump?

Mark: Forrest Gump is nothing more than a character. Look, I don't know what your deal is. If you were abused by a parent, or in an accident, or just born crazy or whatever. The point is, you are in delusion, and just because you pretend to be some lovable character doesn't make you a counselor.

Gump: But I helped lots of...

Mark: No, Forrest Gump did, in a movie you saw and became obsessed with. You are trying to be something you're not, just because it seems noble. You're just like Sam!

Gump: He thinks he's Forrest Gump?

Mark: No, he thinks... Never mind. It doesn't matter.

Gump: He must be real nice, because you said he was like me.

Mark: Trust me, he is nothing like you. He is intelligent, passionate, and... confused.

He's just caring, and... sensitive, he let's his emotions get in the way. Never mind.

Gump: What's he confused about?

Mark: What am I even talking to you for, for God's sake?

Gump: Is your boy confused about school or something?

Mark: Hell no! He graduated from Harvard Law last May.

Gump: He *must* be real smart.

Mark: Yeah. *(Out loud, but mainly to himself)* Smart enough to reject a good job offer and run off to Africa to teach AIDS victims how to farm and shit.

Gump: *(Smiling)* Oh! I get it, you want him to be just like you!

Mark: No, I just want him to be successful and... happy.

Gump: It sounds like he'd be happier in Africa.

Mark: *(Returning to the paperwork)* He's wrong.

*Gump stands up and begins to push his bench towards Mark's. Mark pretends not to notice. The bench bumps against the other one and Gump sits down directly next to Mark.*

Gump: What did you want to be when you grew up?

Mark: What?!

Gump: Like when you were Sam's age, did you want to be a lawyer then?

Mark: Yeah.

Gump: You don't sound very convincing.

Mark: What does it matter!?

Gump: What did you want to be.

Mark: *(After a pause)* I... I worked at a shop.

Gump: A shop.

Mark: Yeah.

Gump: What shop.

Mark: A little place called *DeNero's*. We made... chocolates.

Gump: *(gawking happily)* No. I love chocolates.

Mark: Yeah.

Gump: Why did you leave the shop?

Mark: Because my father convinced me I was too good for it! He showed that there was something better.

Gump: Are you happy with that decision?

Mark: Of course I am! I was young and foolish, now I'm successful, wealthy...

Gump: Do you still like chocolates.

Mark: No.

Gump: Why not?

Mark: It doesn't matter! What's the big deal? Why the hell do you care?

Gump: I want to help you.

Mark: *You* can't help me. You're fucking crazy. You think you're Forrest Gump.

Gump: I *can* help. I am...

Mark: Dammit! You *think* you're Forrest Gump, but that doesn't

make you Forrest Gump.

Gump: Sure it does.

Mark: Stop pretending.

Gump: I am! I... no. (*Gump's accent, though still apparent, becomes weaker. He gets teary eyed*) I'm not Forrest Gump. I'm just a nobody. But just because you think I shouldn't be Forrest Gump doesn't mean I shouldn't try! I like Forrest, he's nice, and people listen to him! They like Forrest Gump! (*Pause*) I can be who ever I want to be. Anybody can. You don't make me who I am! You don't make me who I am.

Mark: Maybe not.

Gump: I like Forrest Gump.

Mark: Yeah. He's a nice guy (*Pause*) You know, you do look a bit like Forrest Gump.

Gump: (*blushing*) Thank you.

Mark: But... but Sam's *my kid*. I might not make him who he is, but shouldn't I have a say?

Gump: You can try and help him, but it's his decision.

Mark: (*Thinking*) His decision.

Gump: Well?

Mark: What?

Gump: What are you going to say to him when he arrives?

Mark: I don't know.

Gump: Would you like chocolate now?

Mark: Yeah. I think I would.

*Gump hands him one and takes his own. They eat them slowly.*

*Lights fade.*