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English 1100-72

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Stand by Me; 27 Years and Going Strong

Stephen King probably did not imagine a movie he inspired to be such an ongoing hit, but the movie *Stand by Me* has been around for nearly three decades and is still regarded as an overall great movie, still maintaining 8.1 stars on IMDb in 2013. A simplistic film that incorporates a massive amount of deeper content to be found is a value held in high regard when it comes to classics such as this one. It resolves a plot anyone could follow, yet maintains a mature and honest perspective of the preteen age group that almost any audience can relate to. A classic film is one that, is known by many due to its ability to connect with many and has lasting significance, according to dictionary.com. The experiences that many are able to relate to in the film are known to yield lessons that were also learned by the audience during their time as pre-teens. The lessons learned and the relations made by the characters work due to the well-developed characters the writers created and portrayed. They are 'stereotypical' in the sense that everyone can remember a friend they had in their childhood that shared the characteristics of the kids in *Stand by Me*. The 1986 film, *Stand by Me* remains overall, famous, outstanding and enjoyable because almost anyone can relate to it, the lessons learned still hold true to those of today's and previous generations, and the characters are developed in a way that creates an all-in-all more meaningful film.

Stand by Me is a film everyone can relate to because during childhood, you may not have gone looking for a dead body, but you may have shared a friendship or an unforgettable adventure with friends that impacted your life forever. Someone who reviewed the film on IMDb expressed his relatable experience saying, "There were four of us that were friends and we were known as the *Stand By Me* Crew. Mike, Gary, Andy and myself were inseparable. And as this film prophesizes correctly, the group has since split up and now I am only good friends with one of them" (Grant). The four guys in this group related to the story almost spot on, in which the movie contained four friends who shared many experiences, yet each went a different way and contact remained only between two of the friends. Many people who have written reviews have maintained similarities on at least one, but usually more than one point that were just as close so it is easy to see how *Stand by Me* is one of the most relatable films. The major points many express is the sense of comfort and excitement they get while watching this movie because it helps them reminisce in their years as pre-teens. Whether it's the adventures they shared, the smack talk, or the simple bonds they had, almost anyone's childhood can compare to the film.

There is always opposition, no matter the rating of a film, and one comment made about the film regarded a person's view on the maturity or lack thereof of an audience may have who may be viewing and making connections to the film. They assert that, "Twelve year old kids smoking, carrying guns, and cussing? And those topics were too serious for a movie that had teenage actors" (Leigha). Throughout the rated R film there are, as she expressed, kids smoking, carrying guns and cussing in which we have all been socialized to realize this is wrong especially at such a young age in today's society, but the author of this post does not account for the reality of these aspects in the time period the movie is based upon which is, 1959. I realize the impact these concepts could have and that they may impress negative ideas upon a young mind, but the

movie pertains to reality and has a real-world relatable view in which the audience should understand that in some places and at some times, these occurrences are presumable. The argument made is not by any means ignorant, but with a movie such as this one the language and smoking is overlooked because of the deeper meaning the audience draws from it.

Stand by Me provides the opportunity for lessons to be learned throughout the film by the characters and the audience. Almost everyone who enjoys the movie and can relate to it, experience lessons they have learned throughout their life that are also experienced in the movie by the characters. One man's review, that many agree with claimed, "After it all, the boys find out about reality, and how it isn't glamorous. They realize that the body could of been them and they respect that. In my opinion the point of the movie was not to have you think of when you were 12 and your good friends but to think of what you have now, and what you do with it" (Jeff). The main characters grow and learn a lot from each other and their experiences which, again, creates an outstanding movie that many can connect with. Everyone who watches the movie receives a little bit of a different understanding than the next person, but most refer to the same general concepts of learning about life through experiences and growing from them as a person.

When it comes to life lessons in *Stand by Me*, those who struggle to realize the lessons the movie has to offer are the ones who could not relate to it. It was, believe it or not, hard to find a negative review of this movie, although knowing there is always opposition I found only a handful. One critic I came across talked about how this movie was not realistic to their own life so they did not take anything from it. It is evident that a movie you cannot relate to your life will not sit as well with you as one that does. This criticism may be constructive in the sense that not

everyone will like the film, but when there is a vast majority who do enjoy it, it seems as though they realize the lessons and relate to them.

One of the reasons the plot flows smoothly in *Stand by Me* is due to the development of the characters being well thought out. One critic explained, "The first opening scenes introduce us to Gordie, who has recently lost his older brother in a tragic car accident; Chris and Teddy, who both come from violent families; and Vern, who seems slow and slightly simple compared to the other three" (Oelbaum). Each character has his own background that makes him do the things he does, which ties everything together. The characters described are spot on descriptions but what makes these characters realistic to the audience is the connection the audience most likely has to the friends they had growing up. The connection that makes everything come to life for the audience because they can step back and reminisce in a time when they were 12. This point remains a point of interest for many who have seen the film because everyone has at least one friend who was almost exactly like a character in the movie, but many had more.

Stand by Me, after 27 years, keeps its rating and popularity very high due to its ability to connect with the audience, to reiterate lessons learned from a person's pre-teen experiences, and its relatable characters. Overall, this movie should help you remember the glorious time you spend as an adolescent, making mistakes and being adventurous without a care in the world. It will also show you the importance of those friends and adventures, and how they impacted your life significantly at such a young age. The all-around reality of this movie will draw you in and keep you entertained until the end.

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Brady Allen

ENG 2100

29 April 2014

Not So Worn After All

As a bass player for over eight years now, I have owned three different basses. At twelve years old, I started with a beginner Ibanez GSR200, given to me by my parents for Christmas. Several years later, I upgraded to an Ibanez Soundgear SR500 and absolutely loved the tone, playability, and the neck of it. It was slim, smooth, and very easy for my petite hands to move around on. However, after playing it for five years, I decided it was time for another upgrade. When the time came, I researched extensively but had finally narrowed my options down to a Fender Precision Bass. After days of further reading on different forums and websites, I stumbled upon the Fender Road Worn '50s Precision Bass, which is exactly as it sounds. It is a brand new precision bass, but has many of the features and looks of the first Fender Precision Bass of the 1950s. The relics are not over the top, the colors are neutral (unless you get the Fiesta Red finish), and it does look truly "road worn." There are fake cigarette burns, worn spots, and screw holes all over the body. That being said, it may seem surprising that the relics do not look exaggerated, but it truly does look natural and real. I couldn't find the model in any retail stores nearby, as it had been on the market for at least two years at that point, so I took a chance and ordered it online. When the day finally came, I ripped open the box in excitement and played it for hours, getting used to the different tones and the slightly wider, "c"-shaped neck, which surprisingly felt great. I think it's safe to say it was love at first sight.

Almost a year later, I still am absolutely in love with this bass. It is perfect in all aspects for me; I haven't replaced strings, pickups, or knobs. Unfortunately, not all consumers would

agree with me on this. Many bass aficionados believe that nothing is comparable to the quality engineering of a vintage bass, both inside and on the surface. These people might think that the Road Worn is a cheap imitation of the grandeur of a vintage bass, with nothing noteworthy about it. Despite what these bass buffs believe, the Fender Road Worn '50s Precision Bass is a highly respected model that not only looks like a true '50s vintage bass, but also sounds and plays like one.

When it comes to buying any kind of guitar, pickups can either be a hindrance or an advantage. Some basses come with great pickups, while others come with ones that the buyer wants to replace immediately. For the most part, the value of the pickups depends on the consumer's preferences. The first precision single-coil pickup was initially a Telecaster guitar pickup remodeled to fit a four-stringed bass. While this was considered revolutionary at first, there were several problems that Leo Fender encountered after outfitting his new precision bass with the single-coil pickup. It created a 60-cycle hum, which was audible as soon as the player's amp was warmed up. Furthermore, it had a fast attack and a wide frequency range that made it damaging to cabinet speakers at the time. After recognizing these issues, Fender designed the split-coil pickup to resolve the problems. It was quieter, had a smoother attack, and had an increased sustain, resulting in an overall greater quality sound. This pickup's incredible simplicity works to its advantage; it is versatile and adaptable to virtually any style. The Fender Road Worn '50s Precision Bass, unlike the original model, uses the modern split-coil pickup rather than the single-coil. As time has evolved, the single-coil has been used more commonly in jazz basses, as it has a higher attack and works better in a percussive manner. In my year of playing with a split-coil, I have never wanted anything else. It is a passive pickup, and hence creates an immensely satisfying low, thumping sound and gets the job done perfectly. The split-coil pickup creates a foundation for the style I want, and I can tweak it any which way when I use my pedals. Due to the simplicity and

versatility of the split-coil, it is a wonderful piece of electronics that any bass player can use with ease.

However, not all precision players have found the split-coil pickup to be their favorite. Some players, especially jazz-influenced players, like the single-coil pickup better, as gearpage.net user “The Golden Boy” does. He says, “There's a lot more “pop” on a [single-coil precision bass] pickup. It comes across as hotter and, [in my opinion] needs some sort of compression/limiting to tame it. I love that sound” (Boy). Unlike many precision bass players, “The Golden Boy” claims to enjoy the challenge in compressing the sound of the single-coil pickup. It becomes evident that using a single-coil on a precision bass is considered very strange nowadays, and is rarely used with precision basses anymore for the very reason of having too high of an attack. Pickup manufacturers as well as players have found that the single-coil pickup is much more suitable for jazz basses and the respective playing style than it is when played on a precision bass.

While electronics are easily one of the most important parts of a bass guitar, the physical parts play an equally significant role when looking for a new bass. Finding a bass with the right neck was a huge factor in my decision-making. I had always heard that the “c”-shaped neck has been a favorite among bass players, especially those with large enough hands to cover the width of those necks. For being as petite as I am, I have surprisingly large palms and very long fingers, and have found it fairly easy to tackle the Road Worn’s wide neck. After years of playing Ibanez Soundgears and their very narrow necks, I thought it would be difficult for me to get used to the Road Worn’s neck. However, the neck felt surprisingly smooth and easy to play. Keith O, from zzounds.com stated in a review, “The neck is very comfortable and has a worn in feel to it” (Keith O). I have found that this bass was aptly named, as the neck does indeed feel worn, and therefore isn’t as bulky or wide as a standard precision bass feels. In addition, with vintage-style fret sizes, the neck on this bass is exactly what vintage lovers would expect. The Road Worn also has a

beautiful maple neck and fingerboard just like the original. The scale length of the neck is a classic 34 inches, identical to the original '51 Fender Precision Bass. Vintage lovers should definitely appreciate all of these specs, and should have no doubt that the Road Worn's neck feels the same, if not better, than the original.

After looking at just a few aspects of this exceptionally unique precision bass, one of the last factors I used in deciding whether or not to buy it was the price. At market value, this bass is \$1,400; however, it has been on the market for several years now and can be bought for as little as \$900, which is the price at which I was able to buy it. If you are a true vintage advocate and prefer the real thing to a newer bass with relics, you can expect to pay upwards of \$19,000 for an original 1950s P bass. That is over 13 times the highest amount you can expect to pay for the Road Worn, and this model isn't cheap either. However, there are many players like "Pf161" on bestbassgear.com, who believe that it is "just plain stupid to pay for someone to rub your new bass with sanding paper" and who are unwilling to spend the money on a "beat-up" guitar (Pf161). While I can understand that the concept of buying a "damaged" guitar for premium-quality price would be looked down upon, the playability and tone of this bass make up for any skeptical feelings about the finish. As bestgassgear.com user "DevinKevin" remarks, "It wasn't because of the relic aesthetic finish. It didn't grab me. However, after playing a bunch of MIM pbass's (yes, I'm on a budget), the roadworn had the best feel in my hands and the tone was awesome! This is why I own a roadworn" (DevinKevin). So when it comes to price, the Road Worn is actually very well-priced for its features, and I consider it to be a great deal when you compare the value of vintage precision basses or even other relic basses such as the Custom Shop Relic, which sells for more than \$3,000.

Overall, this bass is one of exceptional quality, playability, and has wonderful features such as the maple "c"-shaped neck and the revolutionary split-coil pickup that make is so

impressive. I am so glad I bought this bass; after almost a year of playing it I have had no doubts. It is truly a piece of art and not only stands out from other new precision basses, but also is remarkably unique from the vintage basses. I have received compliment after compliment at shows when I play my Road Worn, and for good reason. This bass is an all-around great piece of equipment, and it is truly worth the money.

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Brady Allen

English 2100-40

13 February 2014

Barefoot Running Shoes

The popularity of barefoot running shoes has skyrocketed in the past few years among avid runners. This craze was further fueled by a book by Christopher McDougall, *Born to Run*, which highlighted an American Indian tribe who run without any type of shoe, with much success. The focus on returning to the “natural” way of running has created a sense of nostalgia in recent years (Chang). Many runners have blindly followed this barefoot running shoes trend without a second thought to the source and quality of the information being provided. Ignorance of proper technique has led many experienced runners to new injuries. Although the popularity of barefoot running shoes has greatly increased in the past few years because of purported health benefits, misleading information and little knowledge of long-term effects indicate that barefoot running shoes lead to new injuries.

Avid runners, just like any other athletes, want to know about innovations in technique and equipment. They want to improve their fitness experience and challenge their limits. Although running is viewed as a highly individualistic pursuit, there definitely exists a community outside of personal achievements. Experienced runners trade technique tips and reviews of running shoes and apparel. This shared knowledge creates a sense of community and camaraderie. Runners often look to other runners for insight on new fads and gear. Although running can be highly competitive in some situations, it is also highly welcoming and supportive.

Runners encourage each other to push for personal bests, to be better than before. This is a realization that you are your own competition. This spirit leads to a trust of fellow runners even if you may not have ever met him or her in person. When new fads such as barefoot running shoes came along, many jumped on the bandwagon, with mixed results. With reports from experienced runners coming in that barefoot running radically changed their running performance and overall technique, many others were tempted to try barefoot running shoes for themselves.

Although barefoot running started off with much excitement and fanfare, experienced runners must be wary of how new footwear will affect them individually. Experienced runners know how important it is to stay injury-free because recovery periods for certain injuries are very long. It is important to note that each runner has a different foot length, width, and arch height combination. Runners also have different running strides and some strike the ground with the forefoot, but more commonly, with the heel. Barefoot running shoes are to be used by a runner striking with the forefoot, which is abnormal for many runners. This is due to a typical heel strike because of the use of supported sneakers. Human feet have adapted to this condition and therefore are more accustomed to a heel strike stride. Runners are known to be very determined and enthusiastic. In the case of barefoot running shoe use this can be a devastating hindrance. Runners new to barefoot running shoes often got too hard, too fast, when it is absolutely necessary to build up a tolerance and endurance with these shoes. Because of the interest in barefoot running shoes “doctors say they are treating injuries ranging from pulled calf muscles to Achilles tendinitis to metatarsal stress fractures, mainly in people who ramped up too fast” (Chang). Without knowledge and use of the forefront technique, many injuries may result from running in barefoot running shoes. Some injuries a runner may never be fully able to recover

from, so experienced runners want to know the risks of injury from doctors before trying new activities. A recent study was done by Dr. Sarah Ridge, at Brigham Young University in Provo, comparing the injuries of shod runners with those using barefoot running shoes. Although no injuries were indicated in the lower leg at the end of the study, “more than half of the runners wearing the minimalist shoes now showed early signs of bone injuries in their feet” (Reynolds). Although barefoot running shoes may provide relief to current issues, many doctors are seeing an increase in brand new injuries due to improper technique.

Today there are many fitness and sporting goods companies worldwide providing gear and apparel for athletes of all kinds. Runners trust that sporting goods companies are investing in sound research. Advertisements for many different types of running shoes are often littered with text that leads the viewer to believe that the product has been scientifically tested and verified to be a high-quality product. Experienced runners want to know the risks and benefits of barefoot running with scientific studies and statistics to back them up. Dr. Kevin Kirby, a professor at the California School of Podiatric Medicine, argues that barefoot running shoes are “definitely not for the majority of runners. The Vibram FiveFingers are boat shoes; they were never meant for running” (Abel). This information has been widely looked over, leading to misrepresentation of the product. Knowing if barefoot running shoes are appropriate for their body type and running style long-term is important knowledge to consider before trying out the shoes. Currently there are only a few limited studies of the health effects of barefoot running shoes. Even the CEO and president of Vibram USA, Tony Post admits that his company “need[s] to dedicate more resources to educate people about how to use [their] product” (Abel). With limited knowledge of long-term effects and new injuries, barefoot running shoes cannot accurately be portrayed as the cure-all for common runner pains.

Just like any other fad, the use of barefoot running shoes has created excitement, controversy, and backlash in recent years. Its popularity has led many runners to try something new in hopes of bettering their techniques and overall running experience. Misleading product information and limited knowledge of the long-term effects of barefoot running shoe use have created a cloud over the use of barefoot running shoes. Many runners have been misled by boastful advertisements, nostalgic narratives, and hardcore enthusiasts. Knowledge of proper usage techniques and personal risks associated with barefoot running shoes are important for experienced runners to consider when assessing possible injury risks.

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Brady Allen

English 2100

29 April 2014

Living at WSU is Right for You

There are many reasons why people think that living on campus during college is a good experience. It is a time in an adolescent's life where they are given the chance to live on his or her own and learn to make life decisions by themselves. This experience is important for young people because coming out of high school and then entering college, there is a huge transition into adulthood. At Wright State University, it is beneficial for college students to live on campus because it offers more opportunities to meet new people, it is more convenient and it allows a person to become independent.

To begin, during the first weeks at a new college it is not always easy feeling welcomed. It is hard to start getting involved and feeling a part of something as a freshman. According to an online blog where students can discuss their experience at college, one student talks about the experience of living with roommates. "Living with a bunch of people who are your age and who are going through a lot of the same things you're going through is really something else" (StudentAwards). This quote found off of a website where students talk back and forth about which is better, living in residence vs. off-campus housing shows how even though it is intimidating being a freshman at a new school, does not mean you are alone. There are thousands of other students who feel this same way and who are scared by this too. Living on WSU campus is a great way to meet new people and make new friends. When I first moved into my dorm last year I was scared and nervous that I wouldn't make one single friend at college. It was hard to open up to new people since many of my good friends from high school all went off

to bigger universities for college. I was lucky enough to have two new roommates that I got along with when I lived in the dorms. Being able to get along with my roommates was great because I felt like I had finally been accepted socially at college. I also met one of my best friends now from living on campus. I had been interested in joining a sorority and went to some events on campus last year for informal recruitment. At one of the events I talked and got to know one of the other girls who was rushing for the same sorority as me. We bonded and kept talking even after the sorority event and we now live together this year on campus. I think living on campus shows how much easier it is to meet new friends and to get involved at WSU. Of course, not everyone agrees that living on campus is the right decision for them because it is more expensive than living at home, but I would have not put in the time to meet other people and get to know people if I did not live on campus.

To continue, living on campus is more convenient because of all of the resources available at WSU. I am able to leave my apartment on campus only twenty minutes before my class starts and can still make it on time. It also feels good to be able to walk to class and not waste gas driving to school every single day. Having the option to walk to class every day is great too because I don't have to worry about being stuck in traffic or running late all of the time. I think this is one of the biggest benefits of living on campus because I am not forced to drive to campus because all of the buildings are close to where I live. Also, after most of my classes I like to walk back to my apartment and eat lunch. It's very convenient to have the option of walking back to my apartment and making lunch myself, or going to the Student Union or The Hanger which are two dining areas that are close to many of the buildings on campus. It is definitely less time consuming being able to walk back to where I live than having to drive twenty to thirty minutes plus to grab a sandwich. On the other hand, people who do not like to

walk or who do not want to move away from home may not enjoy living on campus. It may be easier for commuters because if they are on a tight schedule or have a job it could be more beneficial for them to drive because it is quicker. Having lived on campus the past two years, not only is the eating situation convenient, but also having the Dunbar Library and multiple computer labs available to me twenty-four hours of the day makes studying and homework more manageable. In an online study about living on campus, one quote explains how living on campus is beneficial for a student. "Since you're living on campus, you're close to classroom buildings and all of the other facilities that house valuable university services and resources" (Reslife). There have been multiple times I have forgotten to print out a paper before it was due for a class. I never had to be worried that I wouldn't have time to print out a paper because the library is close to where I live and also too many of the buildings on campus. It also doesn't hurt that it is not too far of a walk from where I live either. It is great being able to have a computer and a printer available to me whenever I need it and especially in emergency situations.

Finally, there is more to just living on campus than the friends you meet and that the dining halls are more convenient. The most beneficial reason for living on WSU campus is the independence that a person gains. During my time of living on campus I have had to grow up on my own, learn to take care of myself and make my own decisions without someone to help me. It is a lot of responsibility living on your own, but I am more than glad that I decided to live on campus at WSU. A big reason why gaining independence while living at WSU is important to me is that you are in charge of your own schedule. Living on your own gives you the freedom to study, eat and do laundry whenever you want. I think it also helps a person grow up faster by being thrown into living on your own and makes you more prepared for the real world after college life. It also makes you become more mature with all of the responsibilities you are given

while living on campus. One of my biggest reasons for wanting to live on campus was to not have to listen to what my parents said all of the time. I was able to decide when I needed to study and when I could come home at nights during the week. In an article about why students should live on campus, Robin Raven had this to say, “You'll have more freedom to do small things that maybe you couldn't do it at home, such as blast music sometimes (although you want to be a respectful neighbor in a dorm as well) or frequently eat pizza for dinner as a group” (Raven). This is fully why I believe that living on campus is a different and useful experience for all students, it is definitely the small and adventurous things a person does in college that gives someone more freedom. I feel that I have gained a lot more independence by living on campus and not living at home because of my own decisions I have made for myself. People who live at home may still have the same amount of freedom as a college student if they live on their own, or their parents do not have rules for them. But, I think living on campus gives a student a different kind of freedom because a school campus is its own community and is not like any other place to live. It is something every student should have the opportunity to do because it is worth it to be able to call yourself independent and to show yourself you are capable of living on your own.

In conclusion, there are many reasons why a person should live on WSU campus while attending college. The many benefits a person has while living on campus are endless and a person cannot get this same experience if they are not living on campus. Living on Wright State University's campus is beneficial for college students because it offers more opportunities to meet new people, it is more convenient and it allows a person to become independent. I think by living at WSU a student is using all of the resources they can to help make his or her college experiences the best they possibly can be.

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Brady Allen

English 2100-33

11 February 2014

Endings That Are Happy Create "Happy Endings"

When a television show opens with a groom being left at the altar, watching his bride run away with the man who crashed the wedding while wearing roller skates, you know you are going to be in for a wild and fun ride. *Happy Endings* begins in exactly this way, and the gut-busting laughs, surprises, and touching moments don't stop there; they only get better as the series settles in and grows. Throughout its three seasons, *Happy Endings* weaves comedy with interesting, fresh, and zany storylines. The laughs rarely feel recycled, and the humor packs a punch as the characters and actors begin to gel on and off screen. Each character brings a unique sense of humor to the canvas, as well as their own sets of problems and issues. The cast is young and works well together. They are engaging with fans, and produce a show that they clearly love and are passionate about creating. With a distinctively different gay character unlike any other that has been seen on television, relevant subject matter is being covered, exposing a wide audience to situations and people they may have never dealt with before; and it's being done in a funny, intriguing way. Despite its recent cancellation by its host station ABC, the humor of *Happy Endings*, combined with a fresh and connected cast and unique characters and storylines, creates a show that is worthy of a larger audience and a chance at redemption on another network.

Comedy is a big part of the appeal of 30-minute television shows. *Happy Endings* is packed full of funny moments that will have you grabbing your sides through fits of laughter. The craziness doesn't strike through verbal jokes alone. Some of the situations the characters

find themselves in are laugh-out-loud funny, and they only get more hilarious as the characters attempt to wheedle their way out of trouble. For instance, one of the characters, Penny Hearts, meets a guy whom she is interested in, only to discover that his last name is Hitler. Throughout the entire episode, she tries to convince herself to give this guy a chance despite being bothered by his infamous last name. While she is on the phone with one of her friends discussing her dilemma, she doodles on a piece of paper. Her doodles include things such as what she would change her name to if she ended up married to this guy, and some advice that her friend is giving her on which topics she could talk about with the man and which topics she should avoid. At the end of the conversation, Penny decides that she truly likes the guy and she is going to give him a chance. When he comes over later that night and Penny excuses herself to the bathroom, he stumbles across the notepad she had written on during her conversation with her friend. He reads what she had written down, becoming shocked when he sees "Penny Hearts Hitler" and "Jews" with a giant, black X scratched through it (one of the topics her friend suggested she avoid in conversation). Needless to say, the guy gets the wrong impression, is freaked out, and takes off. Once Penny sees the open notepad, she realizes how she came across and doesn't blame him for bailing.

This is just one of the many hilarious moments that *Happy Endings* produces. The natural comedic talent of the actors comes across well on screen. The wacky antics of the characters will surprise and humor you, and you won't be able to keep from bursting into fits of laughter. Maureen Ryan from the *Huffington Post* appreciates the humor, writing, "For my part, I can't say there are many comedies that make me laugh so hard that I have to pause the DVR to wipe tears from my eyes as the rudely awakened cats on the couch next to me look on with sleepy concern, but last night's "Happy Endings" double-shot did just that" (Why...). It takes a special kind of

show to have someone laughing so hard that there are tears in their eyes. If you're the type of person who may only smile or emit a half-hearted laugh while you're watching TV, you will find yourself unable to contain your giggles during *Happy Endings*.

I understand that some people might view the jokes and situations as stale or too surreal; however, if you give *Happy Endings* a chance, you will discover that the humor is often fresh and so funny that you will not mind the sometimes crazy situations the characters find themselves in. Once in a while a joke may fall a little short, but it is nothing out of the ordinary for a comedy show. Every TV show has its flat moments and *Happy Endings* is no different. But if you devote time to watching an entire episode, or two or three, you will realize that most of the time they produce situations and puns that are witty and will have you laughing your head off.

The main reason the jokes hit their mark is because of the cast. Not only are they excellent actors, but they are naturals when it comes to comedy. The cast works well together, care about their fan base, and love the show they make. Each and every member adores *Happy Endings*. That adoration shines through in their performances on screen, but also in their interaction with the *Happy Endings* fans. Utilizing social media sites—specifically *Twitter*—the actors answer fans' questions about the show, tease storylines, and encourage people to watch. When discussing the possible cancellation of the show, several of the actors gushed about their fan base. Adam Pally, who plays Max, says, "We have a really hardcore, strong fanbase" (Brown). To that, his costar Eliza Coupe says, "...Our fans love our show. And we love our show" (Brown). The passion the actors carry for their art and their show is revealed throughout multiple blogs and interviews. It's encouraging to watch a television show that not only entertains you, but also showcases talented actors who truly care about amusing you.

While many people might feel that this enthusiasm is a necessary part of producing a television show, it is easy to tell when someone is not being genuine with their fervor. Countless interviews and Twitter posts show just how much the cast of *Happy Endings* adores their show and appreciates their fans. Not only is the final product great entertainment, but it's nice to know that your devotion to a show is valued by those who are making it. Even after the show was cancelled, the cast thanked their fan base and stood by them as they waited to find out whether or not the show was going to be picked up by another network. In an age where loyalty is almost unheard of, and actors are quick to jump ship the moment a better offer arrives, it is touching that the cast was so devoted to their show and their fans that they basically put their careers on hold as they held out hope for their show to survive.

We all get tired of the same, tried storylines being portrayed by the same, regurgitated characters. This is where *Happy Endings* makes a turn from the status quo. Although it has drawn comparisons to *Friends*—which isn't a bad show to be compared to—for having a similar makeup, the end result is vastly different; that's because the characters are vastly different. Too often when a show includes a gay character, that character is portrayed in a clichéd, stereotypical way. On *Happy Endings*, three of the main characters are men, and of the three, the two “gayest” characters are both straight. The gay character is a slob who loves to eat and watch sports. In yet another hilarious episode, we follow Dave, one of the straight characters, and his obsession with v-neck shirts, something that is typically attributed to gay men. The “straight” guys are never afraid to showcase their feminine side, and they aren't afraid to get involved in their gay friend's love life. It's such a refreshing change from the way that homosexuality is usually portrayed on television. On Max, the gay character, and his portrayal, Katy Kroll from *Rolling Stone* writes, “...Max... who, as the antithesis of the well-groomed, politically correct, flamboyant stereotypes

we're often presented with, may well be the greatest gay character in network TV history" (Kroll). It isn't often we are presented with a unique character on television, but when we are, it is such a refreshing change that it makes you stand up and take notice. The characterization of Max does just that. You haven't seen many characters like him in the past. But, even though it is a fictional show, the reality of his situations and personality will hit home with a lot of people.

Some viewers might claim that having a gay character who barely comes off as gay is not accurately representative of that section of the population. I don't believe having a subtly gay character is a bad thing. There are too many stereotypical gay men on television, and it's an insult to the hoards of men that that stereotype does not represent. Plenty of slovenly men who like to drink beer and watch sports are gay, and they are finally being represented on screen in Max's character. Max's sexual preferences are clearly defined and never hidden. He goes on dates, flirts with and hits on men, and his friends are often trying to set him up with guys. Max also eventually gets boyfriend whom he kisses multiple times. All of these things occur on screen. There is nothing overly subtle about it. This is just a normal part of Max's life. And his life is just a normal part of his friends' lives. Sexual orientation is not an issue at all for any of the characters, and that's a change that a lot of people can appreciate.

Being entertained is the key ingredient in a good television show. *Happy Endings* entertains from start to finish. It is laced with golden comedic moments that seemingly never end. The cast is engaging and passionate about the product they are putting out there, and they love and appreciate their fans. The storylines are fresh, utilizing characters that aren't seen too often on TV. When you put everything together, it creates the show *Happy Endings*, and it is a show that is worthy of being watched, adored, and revived.

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