

SHANNON
 Hey Bart! Bus is here. You 'bout ready to-

She freezes in her tracks, looks down.

Bart sits in the hallway, amid a couple pieces of roller luggage. He makes a SHHHH gesture at Shannon, then points to the large AC intake panel in the middle of the hallway.

Shannon understands, she smiles and slides down next to Bart.

BART
 (playing it up)
 Well dang. Bummer 'cause I was hoping to see Sam before I left.

SHANNON
 (plays along)
 Yeah I wonder where he is.

BART
 I was gonna let him borrow my name. Loaded up some saaaawheeeeeet new UE, some Jars, Big Band.
 (look at the vent)
 Yeah. Too bad he's not here.

SHANNON
 (amused)
 Yes. Too bad.

EVEN IF

START →

CLICK. CREAK. The AC vent slowly opens, and a cute little 4 year old hand reaches out ... open-handed, expectant. Bart and Shannon smile as Bart places the Nano and a wound-up set of ear buds into the little hand. The hand retreats back.

Bart and Shannon gently open up the vent all the way, revealing SAM (4), their firstborn, still in superhero PJs. He sits inside the vent, his little hideaway, fussing with the nano, sulking. We can tell they've done this before.

BART
 Hey, Big Man. Wanna talk about it?

Sam shakes his head, wipes his nose.

SAM
 Why you always miss the good stuff?

Bart is stunned. Not sure how to respond. Shannon gently covers for him.

Scene A



Cont'd

SHANNON

You're dad's out working for us
Sam. But yeah ... I miss him too.

Shannon and Bart lock eyes. A strength there.

A HORN HONK outside. They both turn towards it, then back to each other, then back to Sam. Bart is tentative...

BART

I'll be back in 2 days bud. Then
maybe me and you can-

WITHOUT WARNING, Sam dives out of the AC vent and into Bart's arms, surprising Bart and Shannon. Bart pulls Sam into a tight hug.

Sam lets go of the hug, dials the nano as he offers one bud to his dad, and puts the other bud in his ear.

Sam pushes play and the two enjoy the song together. I CAN ONLY IMAGINE (The Movie Session) plays as OPEN CREDITS roll.

END →

PRELAP - EXCITED CROWD, COMMOTION, CLICKING CAMERAS.

EXT. AWARDS SHOW RED CARPET - NIGHT

The crowds bustles with excitement. Reporters and photographers call out, trying to get the attention of the next music artist as they step on the carpet.

Bart, the band, and Brickell are dressed to the nines, but also look uncomfortable with all the noise and chaos.

Bart signs albums and autograph books for fans behind a barricade. A young boy with a Mercy Me poster catches his attention. He pushes to the front of the crowd with his mom, sharpie in hand waving at Bart. He finally gets to Bart.

YOUNG FAN

Your song meant a lot to me man. My
dad was ... my dad ...

The young boy tears up. Bart immediately dials in. He kneels down to him. Time slows down.

BART

I get it bud. I know how that
feels. Hang in there man. It gets
better. Can I sign your poster?

There is a sincerity to Bart as he signs the kid's poster and gives him a comforting smile.

EVEN IF

EVEN IF

BART (CONT'D)
 Get a real job." Well Memaw, God is good and dreams do come true! We did it! Goodnight everyone!

APPLAUSE. Standing Ovation. Brickell is a proud papa as the boys hug Sheryl Crow and begin to exit the stage.

EXT. BACKSTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Tons of awards-show workers & artists swirl about as the band emerges. They say their thanks/goodbyes, walking away from an interview setup. They laugh and celebrate their win together.

Bart's phone rings in his pocket. He pulls it out and steps away to answer.

BART
 Hey!

SHANNON
 Hey! Just thought I'd check on you.

BART
 We won!

INTERCUT: INT: BART/SHANNON'S HOUSE

REVEAL: Shannon, dressed in a frumpy Raggedy Ann costume complete with full face makeup, holds 6mo old GRACIE, as she does her best to host a ridiculously out-of-control neighborhood party.

Shannon looks around. It's complete mayhem all around her as kids run through the house in costume, chasing each other, screaming. Explosive colors, parents in stupid costumes.

SHANNON
 I'm glad one of us is winning.

BART
 Sounds like World War 3.

SHANNON
 That would somehow be easier.
 (before Bart can respond)
 Hey Sam wants to talk to you.

Sam, dressed in a primitive BATMAN COSTUME has wandered up to Shannon. He snatches the phone from Shannon and puts it up to his ear. Shannon smiles down at him.

SAM
 Hey DAD!

Scene B

START →



Cont'd

EVEN IF

BART

Hey Sam! How's the party? You havin' fun, my big man?

SAM

I barfed.

BART

(stunned for a second)
Is that right. Well, are you-

SAM

-I won the costume contest!

BART

Really!?! That's amazing bud. I bet you are a great batman. Do you have the utility belt? Grappling hook?

SAM

I lasso'd the white lamp and it broke ... so mommy took it away.

BART

I never cared for that lamp.

SHANNON (O.S.)

Alright Sam, tell Daddy bye.

SAM

(exuberant)
BYE DAD! I love you!

BART

Love you too Big man!

SAM

To the Batmobile!

Sam races off to rejoin all of his sugar-addled friends in their party frenzy. Shannon speaks to another SOCCER MOMMIE as she whizzes by with cake ...

END →

SHANNON

(to Soccer Mommie)
Hey have you seen my brother?

SOCCER MOMMIE

Haven't seen him. Have you tried out back?

And she's gone.

START →

Shannon sits in the corner of the room, holding Gracie, trying to hold back tears. It's not working. As Bart gets ready to prick Sam's finger, Sam pleads.

SAM
Do we have to, Daddy?

Bart's eyes glass.

BART
Yeah, bud. I'm afraid we do.

Bart's hand shakes as he takes Sam's little hand, finds his finger and moves into place for the prick. Sam watches.

SAM
(becomes anxious)
Wait wait wait wait.

Bart holds up. Catches his breath. Almost relieved.

SAM (CONT'D)
What do you do. When you're scared?

Bart thinks for a moment, then takes the gun and shoots himself in the finger. Blood trickles from Bart's finger. Sam is in wonder.

BART
Everything's a lot less scary ...
With a friend.

He reaches for his nearby jacket, pulls out his NanoPod with wired earbuds. He gently helps Sam put the buds in. Bart puts one of the buds in his ear. Shannon tries to stay brave.

Sam scrolls through and finds a song he likes. He pauses. Takes a breath before ... He pushes play. Bart steels himself. Grabs Sam's hand again. Finds a place on Sam's little finger. He's about to inject ...

ANGLE ON Sam's face as he STARTLES at the needle. Tears well in his eyes. He tries to stay brave. Bart is devastated.

END →

Bright blood trickles down a tiny finger. Sam nods, brave, as they work through the procedure. Bart pulls the proper dose. He turns to the nurse who is looking on.

BART (CONT'D)
(to nurse)
Where am I supposed to...?

Scene C

EVEN IF