

Saving Sammy

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EXT. COAST OF KENNEBUNKPORT, MAINE – DAYLIGHT - SPRING

The movie starts out with a PANORAMIC view of Kennebunkport, Maine's coast line. It is a beautiful, sunny late-spring day. We pass over numerous sailing and fishing boats, and then FOCUS on a lone kayak moving steadily along the bank toward the south.

We see a WOMAN (BETH) paddling the sleek vessel with the ease and grace of a seasoned kayaker. Although she is wearing a wetsuit and a life jacket, we can tell she is in her early forties and fit.

She slows down as she observes a twelve year old BOY (SAMMY) moving slowly along the rocky beach, searching the shoreline and shallow water. He looks up in time to see his mother and smiles.

Sammy

(calling out and waving)

Hi, Mom! You'd better hurry or we'll be late.

Mom

(kayaker- Beth)

No way! Catch anything?

Sammy digs into his bucket and pulls out a small lobster.

Sammy

Just some dinner!

Beth

(laughing and waving him off)

You'd better catch a few more, then.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM, AWARD CEREMONY

The school's cafeteria has a small stage. Fifteen or so STUDENTS sit on the left of the stage while a number of TEACHERS and ADMINISTRATORS sit at the right. The PRINCIPAL is standing next to the podium giving an introductory speech.

There are fifty or so PARENTS sitting on blue hard plastic chairs. Beth is sitting next to her friend CHRIS. Chris leans over to speak quietly to Beth.

Chris

So, are you sure about this move? The boys seem very happy in the house you're in now.

Beth

I can't rent forever and this house is perfect for us.

Chris

What do the boys think?

Beth

They understand, and it's not like we're moving away or they have to change schools. It's just a different house.

Chris raises an eyebrow and nods, then nods again toward Sammy, who is sitting on stage.

Chris

So, another math genius in the family.

Beth

I know, go figure. He definitely takes after his big brother, Josh.

Chris

I knew it couldn't be you. (Smiling) Are sure their father doesn't have math DNA?

Beth

(With a glare and a pretend frown)

You're not supposed to use that word...

Chris

(leaning back)

I know. I know. Well, wherever they got it, both of their math scores are off the charts.

They both look forward. The principal is holding up a small plaque.

Principal

And now, our top math honor at XXXX Middle School goes to a young man who has excelled in his math course work, Sammy Maloney!

Sammy leaves his chair on stage and walks up to the principal. They shake hands and the Principal hands Sammy his plaque. Sammy, with a big smile on his face, turns and waves at his mom. Beth breaks away from clapping to wave back with a huge smile on her face.

INT. KITCHEN OF RENTAL HOUSE– SUMMER DAYTIME

There are boxes all over the kitchen. The cabinets are open and mostly bare. Beth is wrapping one last dish and putting it in an almost full box. She hears her OLDEST SON (JOSH) yelling at her from the den and she heads that way.

Josh
Hey, Mom!

Beth
(turning the corner)
Josh?

Josh
Is it okay to pack up the computer? I know how attached you are to it.

Beth
Very funny, young man... Yeah, I think it has to go with us, but you can leave the XBox if you want.

Josh
Very funny, yourself... Mom.

Beth walks back into the kitchen, obviously pleased with herself. She tapes up the last box she was working on, walking it out to the pickup truck in the driveway. Chris emerges from the side of the house carrying another box. She dumps it next to Beth's.

Chris
There is so much... stuff. Are all lawyers pack rats?

Beth
Comes with the trade.

Chris
Are you sure you want to move all of this yourself?
Couldn't the movers just do it for you?

Beth
They could, but they're too expensive. I appreciate the help, I really do.

We see Sammy walking by the old swing set. He is feeling his way along walking tentatively with his arms out in front of him, as if he is blind.

Chris

(Nodding toward Sammy)

What's Sammy doing?

Beth

(Looking that way)

That's odd. He's been doing that a lot lately. Hey, Sammy, what are you doing?

When Sammy ignores her, Beth cups her hands to her mouth and yells.

Beth

Sammy, acting blind won't get you out of helping us move. What are you doing?

Sammy

Just memorizing.

Beth

Could you memorize while carrying a box to the truck?

Sammy

(Smiling but still holding his hands out blindly)

Will do, Mom!

EXT./INT. NEW HOME – LIVING AREA – SUNSET – 4th OF JULY

We see the Kennebunkport beach. Thousands of people sit on blankets or mill about waiting for the 4th of July fireworks. We can see several barges in the bay set up with fireworks. We follow the coastline, finally settling in on the Maloney house.

In the den, the family sets up camp. The room is filled with boxes and the trappings of a house just moved in to. In the middle of the room, there is a round coffee table covered with newspapers, soda cans, and two open pizza boxes.

Josh reaches for another slice of pizza to put on his paper plate. The boys and Beth lounge around on pillows from the couches and their beds.

James

Are you sure, Mom?

Beth
(Reassuringly)

Yes. I promise. Your friends will find us. All of their moms know where we moved to. It's just a mile away from where we lived!

Josh

Rocket camp is next week.

Beth

I know. And it won't be long after that before you head off to boarding school. We need to get you settled into your bedroom first.

Sammy

I like Rocket camp.

Josh

Do I have to go?

Beth

We've been through this before...

Josh

I know. It's the most respected math/science school in the state. I should be honored they let me in.

Beth

Well... it is an honor.

Sammy reaches for the last piece of mushroom pizza. James quickly goes to block him.

James
(Heatedly)

Hey! You don't even like mushrooms. That's mine!

The boys wrestle for a moment before Beth steps in.

Beth

Sammy, let James have it. I got the plain cheese for you.

Sammy
(Vehemently)

But I can pick the mushrooms off! Besides, he's in my spot.

James
(Indignant)
I am not. We just got here. How can you have a spot?

Sammy
(Intently and aggressively)
That's my spot!

Sammy jumps on James, trying to dislodge him from where he is sitting. Josh reaches over to pull Sammy off of James.

Beth
(Surprised and confused)
Sammy! Stop that!

At that moment, we hear a number of loud explosions from outside. It is the fireworks show beginning. The four stop what they are doing and look toward the bayside window. James jumps up.

James
Hey, they're starting early!

All four of them scramble up and head for the stairs to the third floor. They go out on the crow's nest to watch the fireworks. The scrap about Sammy's spot seems to have been forgotten. Beth puts her arms around her boys as they watch the fireworks. Sammy is closest to her. We can see brilliant flashes in the sky as several explosions go off.

James
(Excitedly)
Wow! This is perfect!

Sammy
(Frowning insistently as he looks up at his mom)
It was my spot.

INT. BETH'S NEW OFFICE – THIRD FLOOR OF HOUSE – DAYLIGHT

Beth is taking folders out of a box on her credenza. There are several empty boxes lying about. Josh is plugging in the mouse and keyboard to her computer on the desk.

Josh
There. Now you have your computer back.

Beth
Oh, thank you, Obie Wan Kanobie of the geek world.

Josh
(Smiling)

Careful, Obie Wan might just remove your antivirus software...

Beth
Would that mean I don't have to work anymore?

Josh
Ugh, no, you'd just have to work like they did in the Dark Ages... Speaking of work, do you miss your lawyer job in California?

Beth
No, not really. I enjoy being a guardian *ad litem*. I find it rewarding.

Josh
You help children, right?

Beth
Most definitely. I'm part lawyer and part detective, and I represent their best interests in the court of law.

Josh
Sometimes I miss LA.

Beth
Me too... sometimes.

Josh
I guess mostly I just miss Dad.

Beth
I know, sweetie, I know.

Josh
(standing up)
Is there anything else you need? Perhaps I could get your iPod to work again?

Beth
(Sighing and looking around)
You'd have to find it in all this mess.

Josh
(smiling)
Never mind... that would take forever.

Beth
Why don't you go pack your things for Rocket camp and help your brothers make their lunches?

Josh
(Disappearing down the stairs)
Okay.

EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE, VAN IS RUNNING – MORNING

Beth is in the driver's seat of the van. Josh is in the passenger seat and James is in the back. Beth honks the horn in frustration.

Beth
We're going to be late. Josh, can you see him?

Josh
(Leaning out the car window)
Here he comes.

Sammy emerges from the side of the house. He is hopping from one stepping stone to another in a cross over maneuver. With one misstep, he runs back to where he started and begins again. Sammy finally reaches the van; slides open the door and jumps in.

Beth
(Bewildered, concerned)
Are we ready, now?

Sammy nods.

Josh
(Clearly annoyed)
What the heck is wrong with using the front door?

Sammy
Nothing. I just like the back door better.

EXT. PARKING LOT WITH BUS, MORNING

There are TWENTY or so back pack carrying KIDS lined up to get onto the bus. TEN or so PARENTS have stayed to see their kids off. Beth, dressed in old denim jeans and a

sweater, is holding a cup of coffee and is standing next to her friend, MAUREEN, who is in a power dress outfit.

Maureen

I was beginning to worry about you.

Beth

Yeah, we were running a little late.

Maureen

That's not like you.

Beth

We're still adjusting to the new house.... Sammy won't use the front door for some reason.

Maureen

He's just adjusting. He'll be fine.

Beth

I guess. How's your summer going?

Maureen

Oh, fine, getting ready for our son's bar mitzvah.

Beth

(somewhat surprised)

Isn't that next summer?

Maureen

True that, but it never hurts to be early.

Clumsily swirling about, Sammy is one of the last children in the line to board the bus. He looks over at his mom. She waves at him.

Beth

(Puzzled but wanting to be reassuring)

See you tonight!

Sammy grimly nods and climbs on the bus.

INT/EXT. FAMILY HOUSE –FALL, CLOUDY AND MISTY – DAYLIGHT

Beth walks into the TV room. James is on the couch watching a cartoon. Beth looks around.

Beth
James, have you seen Sammy?

James
(Not looking up)
No. He's around here somewhere.

Beth searches around the lower floor, finally coming to the front foyer closet. As she opens the door, we see Sammy curled up on the floor behind the coats. Beth kneels down and parts the coats. Sammy has a look of awestruck panic on his face. Beth reaches for him.

Beth
Sammy, are you okay?

Sammy reacts by violently swatting her hand away. He explodes off the floor toward her knocking Beth over as he screams uncontrollably. He rips open the front door and heads out. Beth recovers from being knocked flat on her back and scrambles to her feet.

Beth
Sammy! Come back! Stop!

We see Sammy racing across the front yard. Beth gives chase, sprinting toward her son. Sammy zigzags across the street as if he is trying to avoid dangerous objects. This gives Beth time to close the gap, but once on the other side of the road, Sammy is accelerating again and heading toward the nearby trees.

The swamp is on the other side of the tree stand. Beth is frantically chasing after her son but cannot gain ground.

Beth
Sammy! Stop! Please!

Sammy dodges through the trees. He is still screaming. Beth fights through the trees after her son. We lose track of Sammy as he is too far ahead, but then we hear a loud splash.

Beth comes around a tree to find her son ten feet out and thigh deep in the swamp. He is struggling to free himself. Beth comes to a screeching halt at the bank. She quickly looks around and finds an old branch. She wades into the water.

Sammy has sunk to his belt strap and is beginning to panic. Beth pushes the branch out but it is not long enough. She quickly climbs out of the water to look for another branch. She rushes around until she finds a longer thicker branch. She wades further out this time into the swamp and slaps the water with the branch as she pushes it out.

Beth
Sammy! For God's sake! Grab the branch.

Sammy has sunk to his rib cage. He reaches back for the branch, struggling to get close.

Beth
Come on, Sammy! You can do it!

Sammy pushes towards the branch, disappearing under the water as he does so.

Beth
(Screaming)
Sammy!

She starts to move toward him, but then his hands reach up through the water and grab the branch. She pulls the branch toward her and Sammy comes back to the surface. She gets him within arm's reach and pulls him the rest of the way.

Together they struggle to shore and collapse on the ground, but only for a moment. Sammy immediately starts to scramble to his feet to escape again. Beth is ready for it this time and tackles him, landing on top of Sammy and pinning his arms beneath her. Sammy screams as he hyperventilates. His legs are kicking out but to no avail.

Beth
(In a soothing voice)
It's okay, Sammy. I've got you. Nothing's going to happen to you.

Sammy's screaming slows down and his legs slowly stop kicking and you can see the fight go out of him. He sobs for a moment. Beth looks to the sky as if asking God for help. Sammy's sobbing quiets and we can hear him ask.

Sammy
Mom????

Beth
Yes, baby, I'm here.

Sammy
Mom.... Am I going crazy?

Now Beth fights not to cry herself as she struggles to answer, yet tears are streaming down her face.

Beth

No, baby, you're not going crazy. I promise. We're going find you help. I promise.

Beth comforts her son by stroking his hair. He reaches up to hug her and is content to lay there. Autumn leaves are falling around them as a slight breeze blows through.

SLOW FADE