

A Playful Heart

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. BEACH-EVENING

JOHN'S P.O.V: JOHN, carefree, 9, walks along the beach kicking pebbles on his way.

An idyllic sight.

The wind catches his hair just as his mother, MARY (29) calls from behind. Her cheeks stained with tears.

MARY

Come on John! We gotta go now!

He ignores her before defiantly squatting down on the beach.

He's not moving.

His mother calls again, this time more insistent.

MARY

Come on! We have to go. Daddy wants us back.

Again, she is ignored.

MARY

Please?

JOHN

No.

MARY sighs. She strolls to JOHN and squats next to him.

MARY

Why won't you go?

JOHN

In 15 minutes those seagulls will fly.

JOHN points to the seagulls that are resting on the water's edge. MARY is bemused.

MARY

And how do you know that?

JOHN

They told me.

MARY chuckles lovingly.

(CONTINUED)

MARY  
Seagulls can't talk silly boy.

JOHN is shocked. How dare she?

JOHN  
No they can talk. They talked to me.

MARY decides to humour him.

MARY  
Really? What did they say then?

JOHN  
Well, they told me that the water was very dirty and that their favourite thing to see is little boys, not little girls or mean dads like-

MARY looks concerned about the last sentence.

MARY  
What did you say about daddy?

JOHN  
He's mean. He hit you and screamed at you. I don't want to go back to him.

MARY  
Your daddy loves you still, ok? Remember that. Now, about these seagulls, what else did they say?

JOHN  
That they would go home in 15 minutes.

MARY  
Right. Then we'll play a game. If the seagulls don't leave in 15 minutes, we're going home. If they do...

MARY trails off, trying to think of a reason.

JOHN  
We don't go home.

A beat. MARY considers this.

MARY  
Fine. We don't go home. The game  
starts now!

CUT TO:

15 minutes later, MARY and JOHN are lying on the beach waiting for the seagulls. JOHN has an eager and expectant face while MARY is plain bored.

In the background a car pulls up. However, MARY and JOHN don't notice it. A strong man emerges from the car. This is CARL, JOHN's father and MARY's husband.

The seagulls take off on their plight, flying in a V-shape. JOHN spots them and jumps up in excitement.

JOHN  
Look at them mommy! Look!

MARY  
Yes.

JOHN  
We don't have to go back now do we?

MARY  
Well...

CARL calls from behind.

CARL (O.S)  
Mary and John! What the hell are  
you doing looking at those stupid  
birds?

MARY and JOHN turn to see him and gasp. MARY gets up awkwardly.

MARY  
Nothing we're just-

JOHN  
Not going home.

CARL  
What are you talking about you  
little-

JOHN  
Look at those seagulls. They're  
birds but their daddy still loves  
their mommy more than you could

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOHN (cont'd)  
ever love mommy. And they stick  
together, unlike us.

CARL looks astonished.

CARL  
You've been watching too much t.v.  
Come on Mary let's go home. It's  
been a long day and-

MARY  
No.

CARL  
What?

MARY  
No. We're not going home.

JOHN  
You heard her!

CARL still does not understand.

CARL  
Ok. Maybe we can all stay and watch  
these birds.

MARY  
No I mean we are never going home.  
John and I are gonna stick  
together.

CARL  
No you listen to me woman. You need  
me, you told me you need me.

MARY  
I don't anymore.

CARL scoffs.

CARL  
Remember? You tried to leave before  
but you came back because you need  
me. So I'll see you when you come  
back. See you 'round kiddo.

CARL smirks at JOHN who gives him a scowl in return. Hopping  
into the car, CARL speeds off without a second glance. MARY  
stares after him.

JOHN pulls on MARY's sleeve.

JOHN

Where are we going mommy?

MARY

I don't know. But it's an adventure  
and we'll be together.

They smile before the smile dissolves into fits of giggles.

Hand in hand, mother and son walk off, unafraid.