

LITTLE BEAR

by

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FADE IN:

INT/EXT. SAN DIEGO MISSION BAY AREA (MONTAGE) - DAY

A) Shots of San Diego attractions: Sea World, Downtown, the Kona Kai Marina, the San Diego Yacht Club's training vessel - "1886."

B) Shots of Balboa Park and the Museum of Natural History where we see a group of high school kids on a field trip.

C) We key in on one cute blond hair, blue-eyed sixteen-year-old Samantha "Sam" Giles.

D) On the bus ride back to school, Sam snatches furtive glances at fellow sophomore and current crush: good-looking, all-American Sea Scout, Tommy Jones.

E) After school, Sam and girlfriends chat over coffee drinks.

F) Sam walks past the marina, eyes searching among the small and large sail boats coming and going.

G) Sam walks on the beach. She sees fellow classmates surfing.

H) Final shot is Samantha sitting on the beach staring out to sea at sunset.

CUT TO:

INT. SAMANTHA'S HIGH SCHOOL CHEMISTRY CLASSROOM - DAY

Amidst initial chatter, students set up for the day's experiment: Bunsen burners, beakers, test tubes, and chemicals.

Duly distracted, SAMANTHA GILES watches TOMMY JONES intently, willing him to look her way.

While staring at Tommy, Sam pours the wrong element into the test tube. We hear a loud sizzle, then a large vapor cloud rises from her station.

SAMANTHA

Shit!

All chatter ceases. Everyone stares at Samantha.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

While the teacher herds the class outside of the chem lab into the hallway, we hear EXHAUST FANS from inside the classroom. Sam, too embarrassed, doesn't notice Tommy looking at her, smiling.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - CORRIDOR - SAM'S LOCKER - DAY

Sam opens her locker while two girlfriends, BROOKE ADAY and CARRIE SIMMS, wait to walk to their next class together.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

I am so lame!

BROOKE

It can't be that bad.

SAMANTHA

You weren't there. It was horrible.

CARRIE

So. Who cares what those losers think?

Sam stares at Carrie, then shakes her head.

SAMANTHA

(under her breath)

I'm such a dweeb. He'll never ask me to the dance.

BROOKE

You are not a dweeb.

CARRIE

What dance? What are you talking about?

BROOKE

(catching up)

Wait. Who's going to a dance?

SAMANTHA

"Beauty by the Bay." I really want to go to the Spring dance with Tommy.

The girls stare blankly at Sam.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Tommy Jones? He's in my Chem class.

Brooke sighs in recognition. Carrie looks away.

CARRIE
I didn't even know you liked him.

SAMANTHA
Apparently, neither does Tommy.
And that's why I need you, both of
you, to help me. How am I going to
get his attention--

BROOKE
(enthusiastically)
You just did that.

SAMANTHA
In a non-dweeb way.

Carrie perks up.

CARRIE
(takes charge)
First things first. You're right.
You want to get his attention so
that he looks at you as potential
girlfriend material. What does he
like to do?

SAMANTHA
He spends a lot of his time at the
Marina with the Sea Scouts.

BROOKE
What's a Sea Scout?

CARRIE
Good. Second, you are going to find
out which is his troop, and join.

SAMANTHA
I can't join the scouts!

CARRIE
Yes, you can. You will, if you want
Tommy to ask you to the dance.

Samantha rolls her eyes and sighs.

BROOKE
What's a Sea Scout?

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - QUAD - SEA SCOUT SIGN UP TABLE - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1) Sam approaches a table wrapped in a banner with the Sea Scout logo, stating "Troop Meeting: FRIDAY, 7:00 PM."
- 2) From across the quad, Carrie and Brooke watch Sam in a conversation with a Scout representative.
- 3) Sam leans over the folding table, and signs on the appropriate clip board to join Tommy's troop.

CUT TO:

INT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Teens in various levels of scouting uniform sit or stand in a semi-circle around Tommy's dad, ELIAS JONES (46). He is framed by photos of himself in Navy SEAL gear on the mantle.

Standing against a back wall, Sam gazes at Tommy as he stands at ready near his father.

Elias commands attention with his presence and steady voice as he goes over the agenda for the evening.

As he speaks, Elias begins to pull out the Scouting Handbook, constellation maps, compass, small telescope, spyglass and sextant.

ELIAS

Scouting takes commitment,
dedication and perseverance. You
will learn all of these as you
strive for excellence in achieving
your merit badges. Each will
require a different skill and mind
set. Each is designed to provide
you an understanding of the skills
needed to tackle the job head on.
Tonight we are going to focus on
the tools and skills necessary to
achieve the Star Navigator's badge.

Sam's eyes begin to glaze over at the sheer magnitude of what she has undertaken as doubt becomes anxiety with every successive item Elias pulls out.

INT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Scouts and initiates mingle around the dining room table laden with homemade sandwiches, snacks and dessert, filling their plates and talking excitedly.

Sam stands alone with only chocolate cake on her plate. She overhears a nearby scout's conversation.

SCOUT

Palomar is too far. You only have to go as far as Granite Hills to get away from city lights.

Tommy walks up behind Sam as she takes a larger than usual bite of cake.

TOMMY

Sounds like fun, huh?

Startled, Sam spins around, chokes on the cake, coughs.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Here.

Tommy hands her a bottle of water from the table. Sam, trying not to spew cake when she coughs, drinks the water.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Don't make me go all Heimlich on you.

Laughing, Sam spews water on Tommy. They both stare at Tommy's wet shirt. He grabs some napkins from the table.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

(charming)

You're dangerous to be around, you know that?

He smiles.

She smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. SAMANTHA'S GRANDPARENT'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

JACK (66) AND JOSEPHINE (64) GILES, aka Grampie and Grammie, sit across the dining room table from their precious kinship ward, Samantha.

SAMANTHA

Please! Anything at all. I need to pass this test, I mean badge. Grampie, don't you have a telescope?

Grammie intercepts.

JOSEPHINE

Sam, honey, we support you, of course, but you have to understand our reticence. When you were little, we couldn't get you to play outside. It just seems out of the blue.

Sam reaches into a paper bag on the floor beside her and pulls out the scout handbook, merit badge packet, and permission paperwork that need filling out.

SAMANTHA

First, I need you to sign these saying that I can participate in scouting events.

She pushes these with a pen toward Grammie, but changes mid-stream, swerving them to land in front of Grampie.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

The current training is on the Star Navigator's badge. We're supposed to be able to look up into the sky and find

(she searches the packet)

the constellation Ursa Minor, and Polaris, the North Star, and then be able to tell east, west, north and south at night.

(she looks up)

I can't even do that in the day. Can you please just tell me the answers now so I can fill it out right, and not look stupid?

Beat. Jack and Jo look at each other, nod, then back to Samantha.

JOSEPHINE

Your Grampie and I have been talking, and we realize we've not done you any favors by always stepping in and fixing things for you. This seems to be the perfect opportunity for you--

SAMANTHA

So not the perfect time!

JOSEPHINE

For you to learn to finish what you start, and stop taking shortcuts.

Samantha looks like she's going to cry.

JACK

Honey, that's what scouting is all about. I bet that's the first thing they taught you, day one. "Scouting takes commitment, dedication and perseverance."

Samantha looks up at her Grampie with a sudden realization. She looks to her Grammie for sympathy, sees only steadfastness.

In an "I'll show you" moment, she gathers all the papers necessary for the badge, shoves them into the paper bag and storms out of the dining room.

JACK (CONT'D)

I think that went well.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRANITE HILLS - OPEN FIELD - NIGHT

Armed with a Scout guide, constellation charts, portable telescope "borrowed" from Carrie's parent's house, Sam, Carrie and Brooke struggle setting up the telescope.

SAMANTHA

This was so your idea.

CARRIE

How was I supposed to know you'd open you big mouth and volunteer your first night in to complete a stinking badge.

(giggles)

No pun intended.

Brooke looks up, quizzical.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Never mind. Okay, I think we have it.

The telescope stands for a moment, wobbles as if to fall, then stills.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Okay, chief. What's first?

While Sam uses the light from her phone to read instructions, Brooke wanders around in circles, compass in hand, trying to find north with an instrument she doesn't understand.

BROOKE
 (distressed)
 Why does it keep moving?

SAMANTHA
 "Ursa Minor, the Little Bear,
 contains the cluster of stars
 called the Little Dipper, and is
 one of the most distinguishable
 shapes in the northern hemisphere.
 It is also home of Polaris, the
 northern star. This star marks true
 north, making it very important--"

Samantha looks through the eyepiece on the telescope. Carrie takes the papers from Samantha's hand and uses her phone light by which to read.

CARRIE
 (interrupting)
 That's literally the first of
 twenty-five questions. We're going
 to be out here all night!

BROOKE
 I think I got it! I got it!

Brooke freezes in mid-step, afraid of moving and losing the hard-earned direction.

SAMANTHA
 This telescope is crap. Why is
 everything so blurry?

CARRIE
 You have to adjust the lens. Turn
 the little knob thing on
 the...here. Right here.

Carrie reaches over to turn the knob by the eyepiece.

SAMANTHA
 Oh yeah. Okay. Which way do I point
 this thing?

Carrie moves to look over Brooke's shoulder.

CARRIE
 (pointing north)
 Over there.

Gently removing the compass from Brooke's hands, Carrie whispers in her ear.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
 (teasing)
 It's not a land mine.

CUT TO:

INT. GRANDPARENT'S HOUSE - SAM'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Still in last night's stargazing clothes, Sam lay horizontal, face down across her bed, charts strewn across the bed and floor.

CUT TO:

INT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The living room and dining room have various stations set up, each designed to review a safety procedure or skill.

Elias stands near a small table in front of the fireplace where a handful of scouts hand in their Stargazer packets, neatly stapled in the corner.

Elias looks pleased as he thumbs through them, then stacks them neatly near him. He looks up to address the troop.

Sam arrives late, making her way up front with packet half destroyed, pages torn, not stapled.

ELIAS
 Looks like there's some very nice,
 detailed work here.

She tries to slip her pages nonchalantly next to Elias. He takes them directly from her hand, looking them over briefly as he speaks. She makes her way to the back of the room.

ELIAS (CONT'D)
 A couple of reminders. First, in order to be considered for approval, all merit badge work must be complete, turned in on time, legible, and organized. Second, tomorrow we are aboard ship, the Eighteen Eighty Six, testing on basic safety regulations and procedures. With that in mind, tonight we'll split into groups for review. Team leaders, it is your responsibility that all members of your team have the information that they need and are up to speed. This also means if you haven't done so, get me those permission slips.

Elias nods to Tommy.

TOMMY

Leaders, find the station with your group number and start there. We'll work our way around clockwise. You can ask me or my dad if you have questions.

Elias shuffles Sam's papers to get them in order and checks if she completed tasks correctly. He looks doubtful.

Sam watches Elias closely as he reviews her work.

As the scouts break into groups, Sam's group leader nudges her to join the group. Sam, startled, knocks over a vase of flowers on a nearby table which she quickly catches.

Surprised at her own dexterity, she looks around for validation, but no one else noticed. She notices her reflection in the mirror above the table as she replaces it.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1) Sam's group leader, TORY CAVANAGH (14), demonstrates bowline knot knowhow.
- 2) Sam gazes dreamily past Tory toward Tommy.
- 3) Tommy talks about CPR certification to his group.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TROOP'S SAILING SHIP - DECK (DAYDREAM) - DAY

A scout runs across deck, slips and falls and is knocked unconscious. The scout stops breathing. Tommy jumps in immediately to administer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, and heroically saves their life.

Tory's voice can be heard over the drama of the daydream.

TORY (V.O.)

The bowline, then, is the most useful knot aboard ship. It forms a fixed noose at the end of a line that cannot run or slip. It's super useful to secure sheets to the clew of a headsail.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM (BACK TO SCENE)- NIGHT

All members of Sam's group have eyes on Tory, except Sam, as he demonstrates the knot.

TORY

The best way to remember is "The rabbit comes out of the hole, goes around back of the tree, and then jumps back into the hole."

Tory sees Sam looking dreamily off into space.

TORY (CONT'D)

No matter how tight it gets, you can always undo it by breaking its back.

Tory hands Sam the practice rope with the knot in it.

TORY (CONT'D)

Break its back.

Startled out of her daydream, Sam turns to look at Tory. Tory releases the knot, handing her the rope.

TORY (CONT'D)

Now you try it.

Sam takes the rope and begins wrapping and twisting it as if performing a slight of hand.

SAMANTHA

(singsong)

I'm the little white rabbit from
Wonderland. Here is my handle, here
is my spout. Hoping everything will
all come out.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN DIEGO - KONA KAI MARINA - TROOP'S SAILING SHIP - DAY

Twenty-five life-jacketed sea scouts, aged twelve to eighteen, stand in a semi circle around troop leaders as they finish reviewing safety regulations on board ship.

ELIAS

We use the buddy system here so
that no one gets lost or left
behind. Right. Next up...

Elias holds up the new badge packets of information.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

I want to give you a brief
introduction to our next merit
badge: The Seafarer.

Sam notices Tommy's eyes light up when his dad mentions the Seafarer badge.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

One of the most difficult and
rewarding challenges a Sea Scout
can attempt, you will learn to sail
a small daysailer by yourself
around the headwaters of the bay
and back to dock.

Beaming, Tommy looks over at Sam. They share his excitement, exchanging a meaningful glance, until the boy next to Tommy leans over and whispers something to him, pulling his attention away from Sam.

While the rest of the troop listens attentively, Sam stops listening and beelines it directly to where the extra packets are neatly stacked and takes one.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

In order to be eligible to attempt
the Seafarer, you must pass all
safety and basic skill tests.

Sam reads the title page. "The Seafarer - being prepared is everything." She rolls it up and tucks it inside her windbreaker jacket.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

Team leaders will assess your
knowledge and skill level at each
station before you can move on.

EXT. TROOP'S SAILING SHIP - DECK - MIDSHIP - DAY

Biting her nails, Sam waits her turn to test her knot tying skills. A young scout, GRANT (12), in front of her is readily tying and untying a knot.

SAMANTHA

Hey, Gerald?

GRANT

Grant.

SAMANTHA

Grant, I really need to pass this test, but can't quite seem to get it down. My poor sick Grampie, he was a Sea Scout you know, his dying wish is that I get my Seafarer's badge before he passes. Can you please help me out and let me use your knot, just this once?

GRANT

(snubbing)
Uh, that'd be cheating.

SAMANTHA

It's for Grampie, Grant.

TORY

Next. Giles. Samantha Giles.

Panicking, Sam grabs Grant's rope with the perfect bowline knot, giving him hers. As she approaches Tory with some not-so-convincing slight of hand, she pretends to tie the knot, and presents it to Tory.

Tory stares at the knot, then at Sam.

TORY (CONT'D)

You clearly didn't tie this.

SAMANTHA

(selling it)
Yes, I did. You just saw me.

TORY

Whose rope is this?

Samantha's eyes widen, she backs up a couple of steps. Grant steps forward.

GRANT

Mine.

Sam starts to pace rapidly back and forth. She begins to hyperventilate.

SAMANTHA

I didn't take it! You saw me do it!
He's lying.

GRANT

You cheated, Slim.
(mocking)
What would Grampie say?

The raised voices draw the attention of other scouts and leaders at near by stations.

Tommy hears Sam's voice and looks up from his station to see what is going on.

All eyes are on Sam now. She is at the center of a crowd that is closing in slowly. When she sees Tommy coming toward her, she makes a run for it.

Sam runs across the deck and down the gangplank to the dock below. Tommy is close behind.

TOMMY

Sam! Sam!

EXT. MARINA - SEA SCOUT BOAT DOCK - DAY

Sam runs down the gangplank with Tommy close behind her. She slows as she reaches the dock and Tommy catches up to her.

TOMMY

Sam! Stop! What happened? What did you do?

Tommy grabs Sam by the elbow and she whirls around.

SAMANTHA

Oh, so immediately you think I did something? I couldn't possible know how to tie a stupid knot!

TOMMY

Did you take Grant's rope?

Sam doesn't answer.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Why would you do that? That's not you.

SAMANTHA

How do you know what's me?

TOMMY

You're not a cheater.

SAMANTHA

And, apparently, I'm not a sailer either!

Samantha throws up her hands, turns and runs off. Tommy watches her go, then walks slowly back up the gangplank.

CUT TO:

INT. GRANDPARENT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Josephine "Grammie" Giles places a large, bright yellow smiley face cookie on a plate, and places it in front of Sam at the kitchen counter.

SAMANTHA

How can I ever face those people again? How can I face Tommy?

JOSEPHINE

All right, you messed up. An apology goes a long way to mend fences.

Sam sighs and closes her eyes.

JOSEPHINE (CONT'D)

Sam, look at me. What they are teaching you is for your own safety. Right?

SAMANTHA

Yes.

JOSEPHINE

Okay then. You're smart enough to know accidents happen, and being prepared is your first line of defense.

SAMANTHA

Geez, now you sound like Grampie. And Tommy's dad. And Tommy...

JOSEPHINE

You've got this, Sam. You can do anything you put your mind to. Apologize. And try again.

SAMANTHA

I'll...try again.

Sam pulls out the Seafarer's packet from her jacket, turns the first page and starts devouring the information. Without taking her eyes from the page, she picks up the cookie and bites its face.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MARINA - DOCK - SMALL BOAT SLIP - DAWN

Sam moves quickly, but with caution as she removes the tie line from the slip, and steps into the small practice daysailer.

EXT. BAY WATERS - DAYSAILER DECK - MORNING

Steering the daysailer by engine, she passes the last buoys in the harbor. Sam looks out to the vast ocean with determination, and not a little trepidation.

Beyond the channel opening, Sam cuts the engine and pulls out the Seafarer packet from her backpack. She raises the sail.

The sail billows as it catches the wind. The bow cuts through the water. She smiles broadly and squares her shoulders.

Too busy reading instructions, Sam doesn't notice the wind pick up. The weather turns and waves become choppy. The small daysailer becomes hard to handle.

CUT TO:

INT. GRANDPARENT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Josephine is making biscuits, bacon and eggs. Jack pours orange juice for everyone.

JACK

She'll come around, Jo, not to worry. As a matter of fact, I'm surprised she's not down here already. You know she can't resist the smell of bacon, or your biscuits.

(yelling upstairs)

Sam, breakfast!

INT. GRANDPARENT'S HOUSE - SAM'S BEDROOM DOORWAY - MORNING

Jack knocks, then opens Sam's bedroom door to see her room empty, bed unmade.

INT. GRANDPARENT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Jack and Josephine sit at the kitchen bar. Jo is on the phone.

JOSEPHINE

Thank you so much for understanding. We just thought you'd know where to look for her.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Elias, wearing a sweatshirt with a Navy SEAL emblem, is on his cell phone. He stands near Tommy who places breakfast dishes in the sink. Tommy listens with interest.

ELIAS

Of course. Do you have any idea why she took off?

JOSEPHINE

She was so upset about what happened yesterday. All she said was she was going to try again.

ELIAS

Try not to worry Mrs. Giles. I'll find her.

CUT TO:

INT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Tommy waives his hands and motions to himself.

ELIAS

Tommy and I will find her.

Elias looks out the window to see the storm breaking as he hangs up the phone. Looking over to Tommy, and puts his hand on Tommy's shoulder.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAY WATERS - COAST GUARD BOAT - BRIDGE - DAY

A radar screen shows a blip. Coast Guard personnel talk on the radio stating their location. Crew member relays storm conditions to the captain.

Wearing life vests and standing on the bridge, Elias and Tommy's eyes narrow as they peer out through the windows at gray clouds and sea spray. Tommy stands quietly still, hands in his vest pockets.

Crew member, ENSIGN DAN WRIGHT (24), stands near them peering through binoculars.

ENSIGN DAN

Captain, we have a visual on the vessel.

CAPTAIN DAVID MERCED (55) nods in confirmation.

CAPTAIN

Thank you, Ensign.

Ensign Dan hands Elias the binoculars, pointing toward the sighting.

Elias looks through them and sees Sam has fallen out of the boat and clings to the side. He hands the binoculars to Tommy, and again places his hand on Tommy's shoulder.

EXT. BAY WATERS - SAM'S DAYSAILER - DAY

Sam, now in the water, struggles to climb back into the boat without capsizing it.

She hears the Coast Guard boat approaching and turns to see it just as they call to her on their bull horn.

With every effort she can muster, she pulls herself back into the boat. Wet and cold, Sam shivers overtly as she struggles to finish her tasks.

The Coast Guard boat is now almost along side the daysailer. Elias and Tommy are at the side of the boat.

EXT. BAY - COAST GUARD BOAT AND SMALL DAYSAILER SIDE BY SIDE - DAY

With the hulls practically touching, Tommy leans over from Coast Guard boat toward Sam.

TOMMY

Sam! Stop. Let us help you. You don't have to do this alone.

Samantha, hands shaking, ties a perfect bowline knot to secure a line.

SAMANTHA

All I wanted to do is prove I could do it.

TOMMY

And you did. Now, let me help you.

Tommy reaches his hand for Sam and just then a swell knocks the boats apart and Sam on her butt.

Both she and Tommy freeze for a moment, then Tommy cracks a smile and Sam does too. Crew members help bring Sam on board.

INT. COAST GUARD BOAT - CABIN - DAY

Sam is swaddled in blankets with a cup of hot chocolate cradled between her hands. Tommy sits by her on a bench.

SAMANTHA

It was crazy, but I really thought
I could do it.

TOMMY

Yeah, it was crazy all right.

SAMANTHA

Hey! Whose side are you on?

TOMMY

Yours.

Sam's expression is, for the first time, serene.

SAMANTHA

I was scared, but I just had to
prove something. To myself.

(beat)

Tommy, do you want to go to the
spring dance with me?

Tommy smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL - PATIO - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

Exhausted from dancing, Sam and Tommy leave the Beauty by the Bay dance floor and spill out to the venue's adjacent beach, overlooking the bay.

They hold hands as they cross the threshold onto the sand.

EXT. BEACH - NEAR HOTEL - NIGHT

It is a beautiful clear night, stars twinkle. Tommy runs back to get them something to drink, but not before kissing Sam's cheek.

As Sam walks to the water's edge, she looks up at the stars, finds the Little Dipper.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Ursa Minor, the Little Bear,
contains the cluster of stars
called the Little Dipper. It is
home of Polaris, the north star.
True North.

Sam looks confidently out to the sea, and smiles.

FADE OUT.