

THE WISHING TREE

written by

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A young girl befriends the owner of a nursery who allows her to visit a special tree to make wishes for her mother.

FADE IN:

INT. MARGARET'S NURSERY - SPRING - DAY

CUSTOMERS browse rows of spring flowers. At a potting table, MARGARET JENSEN (45), is up to her elbows in dirt as she transfers a plant to a bigger pot.

She watches as SAMANTHA BAXTER (8), sweet face, blonde pig tails, inspects tables full of Tulips.

As she reaches the end of the aisle, Samantha's eyes fixate on a large Ficus tree in a huge pot. Braided trunk topped with thousands of shiny, green leaves.

MARGARET

You like that tree?

SAMANTHA

It's the prettiest tree I've ever seen. How come it's inside?

Margaret wipes her dirty hands on her apron and heads over to the tree.

MARGARET

It's a Ficus. They actually like being inside. I have others for sale but this one is special.

Margaret points to a little wooden sign that sticks out of the dirt: "WISHING TREE - \$1 A WISH".

MARGARET

You pick a leaf and make a wish.

SAMANTHA

And it'll come true?

MARGARET

Maybe. If you pick the right leaf and wish hard enough. Wanna try?

SAMANTHA

I gotta ask my Mom. Be right back.

Margaret smiles as Samantha darts off, excitedly searching for her mother. She walks up the aisle, on her tippy toes for a better view.

When she finds her mother, Margaret's smile fades.

Her MOTHER(30's), bald head, under a bandanna, listens to Samantha's plea (MOS). She hugs her daughter, hands her a dollar and waves to Margaret in approval.

Samantha approaches, waving her dollar. Margaret holds out a can labeled, "MAKE A WISH FOUNDATION". Samantha drops the dollar in.

MARGARET

You ready? Make sure you pick the perfect leaf.

Samantha painstakingly searches. She circles the tree, scanning the leaves. Finally, she carefully pulls one.

SAMANTHA

Got it. I'm gonna make a wish for my Mom.

Margaret tries to mask her sadness and nods. Samantha closes her eyes tight. A few moments later, she opens them. She looks at the leaf in her hand.

SAMANTHA

What do I do with it now?

MARGARET

Take it home. Tape it on a piece of paper and write down your wish.

Samantha puts the leaf in her pocket.

SAMANTHA

Can I come back next week and do it again? We live around the corner.

MARGARET

Of course you can. I'm Margaret Jensen, by the way.

SAMANTHA

I'm Samantha Baxter.

INT. MARGARET'S NURSERY - SUMMER - DAY

Summer flowers now line the tables. At the potting table, Margaret carefully prunes a rose bush.

Dollar in hand, Samantha, hair in braids, skips in. Margaret watches as Samantha puts her dollar in the can.

She thoughtfully scans the leaves, picks one then closes her eyes. When she opens them she puts the leaf in her pocket and walks over to Margaret.

MARGARET

Hey there Miss Samantha. I have something for you.

Margaret pulls a book from her apron and hands it to Samantha. She opens it and stares at the blank pages.

MARGARET

It's a diary. You told me you didn't have one. Every girl needs a diary. You can tape your leaves in it. Write your wishes and dreams.

Samantha smiles and hugs Margaret.

SAMANTHA

Thank you Margaret.

MARGARET

You're welcome. Now how bout you put those gloves on and help me prune this rose bush?

INT. MARGARET'S NURSERY - FALL - DAY

Mums now fill the nursery. At the potting table, Margaret creates a beautiful fall arrangement.

Samantha walks in. She puts her dollar in the can, scans the leaves, pulls one off then closes her eyes. When she opens them she puts the leaf in her pocket.

She sneezes.

MARGARET

Bless you.

Margaret pulls out a tissue and hands it to Samantha.

MARGARET

Hope you're not catching a cold.

Samantha wipes her nose.

SAMANTHA

I caught one already. I had to sneak out today cus my Mom told me I had to stay in bed.

MARGARET

Then you'd better go back, Sam. I don't want you to get in trouble.

Shoulders slouched, Samantha walks away. She sneezes.

INT. MARGARET'S NURSERY - WINTER - DAY

Poinsettias now line the tables. At the potting table, Margaret wires pine cones to a wreath. Her eyes continually shift toward the door, but no Samantha.

EXT. MARGARET'S NURSERY - LATER SAME DAY

Bundled up and wreath in hand, Margaret walks out of the parking lot and heads over to the next street.

EXT. BAXTER HOUSE

Margaret rings the bell. Mrs. Baxter, Samantha's mother, opens the door, her hair now shoulder length.

MARGARET

Hi, Mrs. Baxter. I'm Margaret.  
I own the nursery around the block.

Mrs. Baxter stares at Margaret as she registers the information. Her reaction is slow and foggy.

MRS. BAXTER

Oh yes. Hello.

MARGARET

Samantha had been visiting me and I haven't seen her for a while. I was just checking. . .is everything okay?

Tears well in Mrs. Baxter's eyes, her voice trembles.

MRS. BAXTER

Samantha passed away Margaret. She had cancer.

Margaret stares in disbelief.

MARGARET

She didn't tell me. I thought you  
were sick. I saw you this summer.  
You had no hair.

MRS. BAXTER

I shaved my head, to make her a wig.  
She was in remission but got pneumonia.  
It was sudden. She was visiting you?

MARGARET

To make wishes. . .for you. I gave  
her a book. She never showed you?

Mrs. Baxter sadly shakes her head "no".

INT. SAMANTHA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Mrs. Baxter searches drawers, rifles through books on a  
bookcase. In desperation she lifts the mattress. Hidden  
underneath is the book.

INT. MARGARET'S NURSERY

In front of the Wishing Tree, Margaret pulls off a leaf  
and closes her eyes. A tear rolls down her cheek.

INT. SAMANTHA'S ROOM

Mrs. Baxter cries as she stares at the first page.  
"PLEASE MAKE ME BETTER SO MY MOM WON'T BE SO SAD."  
Several leaves are taped to the page.

Next page, "I WANT MY MOM TO SMILE AGAIN", leaves taped  
all around. The following pages all look similar.

The doorbell RINGS.

INT. FRONT DOOR

Mrs. Baxter opens the door. On the front porch is the  
Wishing Tree. A note dangles from a branch.

"I WISH THAT WHATEVER SAMANTHA WAS WISHING FOR WOULD  
COME TRUE", a leaf is taped on the card.

Mrs. Baxter looks at the beautiful tree and smiles.

FADE OUT