

## **FANTASYLAND:** LOGLINE AND SYNOPSIS

**Logline:** A manic-depressive father kidnaps his estranged eleven-year-old son and takes him on the ride of his life.

**Genre:** Drama

**Synopsis:** This film explores a father's ill-conceived attempt to be something meaningful to the son from whom he is legally barred.

As a child, Philip never had the opportunity to say goodbye to his father and suffers from the recurring thought that he might have saved his father from suicide which we see in the opening scene. Later, as a charismatic professor of art, Philip charms all around him with his colorful take on life, his wildness an open declaration of the transforming powers of the imagination. Without shaking his demons, Philip marries his student, the impressionable Sarah, and has a son Jimmy.

But this is all history when the film opens. Philip now stares down the barrel of a gun just as his own father did, suffering from the same clinically diagnosed manic depression. This time, he almost gives in to the pain that clouds his outlook; but a chance encounter convinces him that a proper leave from his son is in order.

He tracks down Jimmy, who has been warned to stay away from his father, and discovers that his son has a secret weakness. Sarah, in her effort to provide stability, has forced Jimmy to knit, stuck rigidly with a daily routine, and forbidden him to go with his class to Fantasyland, fearing that he is too young and vulnerable to deal with the exuberance he might feel on an unsupervised class trip. Her clinging has angered Jimmy. Philip realizing his advantage as the father who hasn't had a chance to "parent" kidnaps Jimmy and they drive off in a shiny sports car purchased with the last of his money with Fantasyland as their purported destination.

It is a journey of camaraderie, excitement, and some truths about life. Jimmy nervously keeps his father at arm's length, discovering that he carries a gun and is no longer on the medication that controls his mood swings. Philip breaks all the rules trying to win Jimmy's favor, taking Jimmy to a touristy kaleidoscope attraction and then literally showing him the kaleidoscope colors with which he sees their journey.

Of course, in the end, Philip cannot control his sexual appetite, delusions of grandeur, and fearsome swings into negativity. In one particularly painful incident, Philip picks up two lonely women and seemingly forgets that bar games and not too subtle flirtation are inappropriate for the innocent kid he has in tow.

Meanwhile, Sarah is frantic and with the help of her boyfriend a local cop attempts to track Philip down through every possible source from phone calls to credits cards. In the meantime, she has to listen both to her friends and to her lover blame her repressive mothering for Jimmy's deception. Adolescence they seem to be saying and mania have much in common as Sarah is forced to confront the long buried feelings of passion and beauty she once experienced with Philip.

Before the journey begins, Philip and Jimmy have certain expectations about the other; but along the road they are able to forge a new relationship - one that sadly lacks in trust but instead is rich in forgiveness and ultimately redemption. As Sarah strives to regain a fragile order, Jimmy learns that sometimes the biggest insights come out of chaos.