



Saving Sammy: A Mother's Fight to Cure Her Son's OCD

By Beth Alison Maloney

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Saving Sammy: A Mother's Fight to Cure Her Son's OCD By Beth Alison Maloney

The story of one mother's fight against the medical establishment to prove the link between infection-triggered PANDAS and her son's sudden-onset OCD and Tourette syndrome.

The summer before entering sixth grade, Sammy, a bright and charming boy who lived on the coast of Maine, suddenly began to exhibit disturbing behavior. He walked and ate with his eyes shut, refused to bathe, burst into fits of rage, slithered against walls, and used his limbs instead of his hands to touch light switches, doorknobs, and faucets.

Sammy's mother, Beth, already coping with the overwhelming responsibility of raising three sons alone, watched helplessly as her middle child descended into madness. Sammy was soon diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and later with Tourette syndrome. Unwilling to accept the doctors' prognoses for lifelong mental illness and repeated hospitalizations, Beth fought to uncover what was causing this decline. Beth's quest took her to the center of the medical community's raging debate about whether OCD and Tourette syndrome can be caused by PANDAS (Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections). With the battle lines firmly drawn, Beth searched until she found two cutting-edge doctors who answered that question with a definitive yes. Together, they cured Sammy. Five years later, he remains symptom free.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Maloney's debut chronicles her son, Sammy, and the illness that, almost overnight, transformed him from a sunny, bright boy (described by one teacher as "the purest math mind the school had ever seen") into an antisocial stranger "so dominated by obsessions, compulsions, and rules that daily life becomes impossible." Sammy's descent into mental illness was diagnosed as severe Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Tourette's and a number of other ailments, all promising a lifetime of disability; it wasn't until a family acquaintance, whose son exhibited the same symptoms for 10 years, urged Maloney to have Sammy tested for Strep that they learned his condition was treatable. Describing herself as "part courtroom lawyer and part detective," attorney Maloney perseveres with ferocity and sharp storytelling instincts, making this medical mystery-meant to inform families dealing with mental illness—a tear-wrenching crowd-pleaser.

Review

From *Publishers Weekly* (Starred)

Maloney's debut chronicles her son, Sammy, and the illness that, almost overnight, transformed him from a sunny, bright boy (described by one teacher as "the purest math mind the school had ever seen") into an antisocial stranger "so dominated by obsessions, compulsions, and rules that daily life becomes impossible." Sammy's descent into mental illness was diagnosed as severe Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Tourette's and a number of other ailments, all promising a lifetime of disability; it wasn't until a family acquaintance, whose son exhibited the same symptoms for 10 years, urged Maloney to have Sammy tested for Strep that they learned his condition was treatable. Describing herself as "part courtroom lawyer and part detective," attorney Maloney perseveres with ferocity and sharp storytelling instincts, making this medical mystery—meant to inform families dealing with mental illness—a tear-wrenching crowd-pleaser.

From *Booklist*

At 12, Maloney's son Sammy won math awards but exhibited bizarre symptoms. The newly divorced mother's concerns grew as Sammy started hopping and spinning instead of walking and repeatedly resorted to uncontrollable headbanging. His disintegration, diagnosed without any thought about causation as sudden onset obsessive-compulsive disorder, included verbal tics, hours-long crying jags, and sporadic refusals to eat. Linking infection to "mental" illness, as strep antibodies are linked to the neurological Tourette's syndrome, has been rejected by many doctors since the rise of psychoanalysis, but Maloney insisted Sammy be tested for strep titers when he became unable to attend school and to walk. He was diagnosed with pediatric neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococcal infections, caused by strep antibodies attacking the basal ganglia controlling behavior. Antibiotics ended two torturous years...

About the Author

BETH ALISON MALONEY is a successful Maine attorney and guardian *ad litem*. Before moving to Maine, she was an executive and attorney in the motion picture and television business in Los Angeles. *Saving Sammy* is her first book.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mary McCollum:

Do you have favorite book? Should you have, what is your favorite's book? Publication is very important thing for us to find out everything in the world. Each guide has different aim or goal; it means that book has different type. Some people truly feel enjoy to spend their time to read a book. They can be reading whatever they acquire because their hobby is reading a book. Consider the person who don't like examining a book? Sometime, person feel need book if they found difficult problem or exercise. Well, probably you'll have this Saving Sammy: A Mother's Fight to Cure Her Son's OCD.

Susan Munoz:

Playing with family in the park, coming to see the marine world or hanging out with buddies is thing that usually you have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try point that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not sensation tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition info. Even you love Saving Sammy: A Mother's Fight to Cure Her Son's OCD, you may enjoy both. It is great combination right, you still wish to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout people. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its called reading friends.

Ruth Lowry:

Saving Sammy: A Mother's Fight to Cure Her Son's OCD can be one of your starter books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in vocabulary, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nonetheless delivering the information. The article author giving his/her effort that will put every word into pleasure arrangement in writing Saving Sammy: A Mother's Fight to Cure Her Son's OCD but doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest and based confirm resource data that maybe you can be certainly one of it. This great information can drawn you into brand-new stage of crucial contemplating.

Donald Oakes:

Reading a book to get new life style in this yr; every people loves to go through a book. When you study a book you can get a wide range of benefit. When you read guides, you can improve your knowledge, since book has a lot of information onto it. The information that you will get depend on what kinds of book that you have read. If you would like get information about your research, you can read education books, but if you want to entertain yourself read a fiction books, this kind of us novel, comics, as well as soon. The Saving Sammy: A Mother's Fight to Cure Her Son's OCD will give you new experience in reading a book.

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