



## “Here Comes the Boom”: Positive Film With Christian Overtones

Kevin James is his usual lovable self in his latest family-friendly film, *Here Comes the Boom*, which he co-wrote and co-produced. Playing a teacher who loves his school so much that he is actually willing to put his own physical health on the line, James proves that there are no boundaries in his efforts to be entertaining.

Biology teacher Scott Voss (Kevin James) has become jaded over the course of his teaching career. When the movie opens, we see that he has lost the spunk and ambition that characterizes most teachers at the start of their career.

The downfall is a sad one, as Voss had once been an incredible teacher. He was even named Teacher of the Year a decade ago. Unfortunately, the complications of working within the public education system have managed to impact Voss' morale so significantly that he can barely muster the energy to make it to school each morning. He is tenured and has nestled into his job security rather comfortably, losing all motivation to go above and beyond what his position requires.

Voss needs something to stimulate and remind him of why he became a teacher in the first place. And he gets exactly what he needs at a school faculty meeting.

He learns that his school is well over its budget, and so must cut extracurricular programs, including music. He knows that would be a terrible blow to the schoolchildren.

The computer department is led by Marty Streb, whose love and passion for his subject is so infectious that it rubs off on the students. In fact, Streb's department is one of the few remaining that virtually gives the school its heartbeat.

To make matters worse, Streb's wife is just about to have a baby. A job loss could not come at a worse time.

But however devastating the news, it is just what Voss needs to kick-start his involvement in the education system once again. He stands up and speaks in defense of Streb, of the music program, and of the students.





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He may have taken it too far, however, as he vows to help the school raise the money necessary to save the program.

Just how he will raise the moneys anyone's guess, including Voss' — that is, until he recognizes an opportunity in disguise.

Voss has been offering citizenship tutoring to someone named Niko, who happens to train Mixed Martial Arts fighters. Voss comes up with the brilliant, but painful, notion of having Niko train him so that he may fight and make enough money to save the music department.

For Voss, the idea appears to be a good one. After all, even losers make money in these matches. So all Voss has to do is lose.

Well, there's more to it than that. Voss is not exactly in ideal fighting condition. In fact, he is completely out of shape and needs a lot of training, Rocky Balboa-style. Voss has to train in some dingy fighting rings and virtually start from scratch, learning the basics. Each fight brings him closer to his goal, and is not without injury.

But something amazing happens to Voss along the way. The further entrenched he becomes in fighting, the more deeply involved he becomes in the school, and the more his motivation rises. Likewise, people at the school are taking note of Voss' efforts, most notably nurse Bella, the object of Voss' secret affections. Bella becomes yet another source of encouragement for Voss.

*Here Comes the Boom* has a number of positive elements. It teaches viewers that some things are worth fighting for — and in Voss' case, that is a literal statement. Voss' transformation as a fighter mirrors his transformation as a person and as a teacher.

Voss' career crisis at the start of the film seems very realistic and can likely be applied to all individuals who embark on a career such as teaching with a very idealistic mindset that unfortunately becomes jaded by reality. Likewise, the circumstances surrounding the school's dire position in this film are certainly not extraordinary and are in fact becoming commonplace. It is this sort of realism that will have to balance some of the sillier and unrealistic components of the film that give it its lighthearted nature and entertaining quality.

Kevin James' love of MMA, and the Ultimate Fighting Championship's support of the film, help to make the fighting scenes in this movie very realistic. For some viewers these scenes may be more violent than desired. But the agony of the endeavor ultimately highlights just how invested Voss is in his efforts. Moreover, the film packs plenty of comical punches as well as physical blows.

Voss, who delivers on both counts, is a likeable guy. One cannot help but understand and sympathize with his apathy, and as he transforms into the man he once was, moviegoers will not help but root for him. In fact, if the showing you attend is anything like mine, moviegoers may actually call out words of encouragement and applaud at just the right times.

Amazingly, *Here Comes the Boom* not only proves to be a very entertaining family comedy, but also proves to be a positive Christian film. Characters in the film read Biblical verses and pray. And the film's focus on sacrifice and transformation gives it significant Christian undertones. Additionally, Streb participates in a wonderful charitable endeavor in which he purchases old musical instruments and restores them to give them to children who are unable to afford instruments.

And Kevin James does not shy away from the Christian message in the film. He did an interview with Christian website Plugged In, wherein he quotes John 15:13 as a summary of the film.



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“For there is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends,” James paraphrased in an interview with Plugged In. “That’s essentially what this guy does. It’s literally what this movie is about. We don’t go around banging people over the head and preaching to them, but the message is certainly there, and it’s by design.”

There is also a great deal of patriotism in the film. As Voss moonlights as a citizenship teacher, we often hear positive messages on American exceptionalism and the core American principles.

*Here Comes the Boom* proves to be a very inspirational and comical film. In fact, inspiration was James’ goal in producing this film. He told Plugged In, “It’s just good values. It’s things we’ve gotten away from — helping others in every aspect.”

The film is a refreshing change in Hollywood and should definitely be considered for the family agenda this weekend.



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