



IMTA JOSH DUHAMEL LIVES IN *SAFE HAVEN*

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Safe Haven opens nationwide Thursday, February 14

“When I was a kid, I dreamed about fame, you know, how cool would it be to be in a movie and to be on TV. I thought about certain movie roles or certain lines from movies by myself in the shower and thought I could do that someday, but I never really believed that I ever had a chance to do it.”

– Josh Duhamel

When IMYA alum Josh Duhamel (NY97) signed on to do the big screen adaptation of Nicholas Sparks’ novel *Safe Haven*, he knew he was in for a challenge. “The expectations are higher in a movie like this, and the comparisons are inevitable, knowing you’re going to get compared against *The Notebook*, *A Walk to Remember*, *Dear John*,” said Duhamel. “And I really admire these guys who have done these movies before... But I wanted to do it if it was going to be different in some way.” And while *Safe Haven* is a romantic novel with some similarities to other Sparks works, it is also a thriller. “This is not a ‘paint by numbers’ romantic love story,” Duhamel adds. “This movie, to me, has a dark edge to it that hasn’t been done before in a Sparks’ movie, and I think the audience is ready for this. It has everything they’ll expect, it has this great romantic story, but it also has this inevitable doom that’s coming, that you know is going to happen, and how is that going to unfold.



Duhamel plays Alex, a widower with two children who owns a general store in a small North Carolina town. He falls for a mysterious woman, played by Julianne Hough, who just moved to the area, but there are complications. A dark secret from her past makes her reluctant to get involved; and he's wary of how a relationship will affect his young children. “Every single parent who is starting a new relationship would have to consider what is going to happen with his kids first. That, for me, is what made it an interesting love story,” Duhamel explained. “My character’s already had what he thought was his first love and lost that, and now anything that comes after that depends on how the kids react to that. So any decision that I make going forward has to be okay with them too.”

Working with director Lasse Hallstrom was a great experience, said Duhamel. “I’ve never felt so free...he really empowers you as an actor, to go for it. Whatever you do is fine, you really can’t do anything wrong. If it isn’t good, we won’t use it. And I trusted him because I’d seen all of his movies. And I love his taste, how simple and subtle he is, he doesn’t force anything.” And on his co-star Hough? “There’s something really relatable about her and what you see is what you get,” Duhamel said. “There’s something really honest about her. Lasse calls her ‘honest blue.’ I think that’s a really good description of Julianne. I probably had very little say in who they cast, but I was really happy when they made that decision because I knew that it would be an easy sort of thing to make feel real.” *Safe Haven* also features Cobie Smulders, David Lyons, Noah Lomax and Mimi Kirkland.



Next up for Duhamel is the world premiere of the independent thriller *Scenic Route* at the South by Southwest Film Festival in March. He stars with Dan Fogler as two life-long friends stranded on an isolated desert road that must fight for survival as their already strained relationship spirals into knife-wielding madness. Duhamel also recently completed filming *You’re Not You*, a drama that also stars Emmy Rossum, Hilary Swank, Frances Fisher, Marcia Gay Harden, Ali Larter and Jason Ritter. The film traces the relationship between a former ad exec suffering from Lou Gehrig’s disease (Swank) and her caretaker, a directionless college student (Rossum) who is engaged in an affair with a married professor. Duhamel is also set to host Nickelodeon’s 26th Annual Kids’ Choice Awards on March 23. “I have a lot of secret plans for when I host the awards, but I can tell you I’m excited to lead millions of kids into total crazy fun, chaos...and, of course, endless slime!”