

A Pinch of Time

Teleplay by
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Second Draft

EXT. THEODORE T. ALEXANDER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Concrete walls decorated with colorful murals surround an empty blacktop.

A school bell RINGS. Students stream out for lunch.

SAGE, 10, Latina, is last onto the playground. Sage wears a jumper over a black turtleneck and black corduroys. The tips of her dark hair are dyed turquoise.

She doesn't look where she's going as she sketches in a notebook. Arriving at a smooth rock, she is surprised to find her usual perch occupied.

KELLY

Man, hummus and carrots again.

IZZIE

Trade you for my hot dog.

KELLY, 9, a stocky Pacific island boy with shoulder length hair, hasn't yet grown to the right height for his bulk.

IZZIE, 10, a Caucasian girl with braids and braces, balances a hot lunch tray on her knees.

KELLY

Oh, it's hot dog day? Too bad you didn't snag a corn dog.

IZZIE

Some kid snatched the last one.

Sage clears her throat.

IZZIE

(rolling her eyes)
Oh, right. This is Sage's spot.

Izzie and Kelly move on to find another place to eat.

Still sketching, Sage sits. She grabs a homemade tamale from a brown bag and savors its aroma, but is interrupted by a nearby commotion.

Izzie and Kelly have pushed LIAM, 8, African American and rail thin, off a nearby teeter totter. Liam's lip is split and bleeding. He squints around. Kelly stands over him.

LIAM

You broke my glasses!

Liam retrieves his cracked glasses from the asphalt. Izzie and Kelly glance at each other, briefly ashamed. But then...

KELLY

If you'd just traded us your corn dog --

IZZIE

What kind of idiot eats lunch on a seesaw?

SAGE

I think what you mean is, 'I'm sorry. I'll ask my parents to buy you new ones.

KELLY

What?

SAGE

Apologize.

IZZIE

Look, Sage, I don't know who died and made you Queen of the playgr --

SMACK. Sage punches Kelly square in the nose.

Kelly stumbles backward and trips over the teeter totter, CRACKING his head hard on the ground.

Izzie moves toward her friend, but not before Sage grabs her by the braids. She forces Izzie to her knees.

IZZIE

Ow-ow! Stop it.

WHISTLES BLOW as faculty members converge on the fight.

INT. NURSE'S OFFICE

On the nurse's bed, Sage sits next to Liam as Kelly is ushered out by his father.

Kelly holds ice on his head and has cotton stuffed up his nose. His father glares at Sage as they leave.

LIAM

You don't have to wait with me...

SAGE

Kinda do. Besides, you want me to wait outside the principal's office like some kind of hooligan?

LIAM

(grinning)

I guess you can stay. If you have to. Hooligan.

SAGE

(also smiling)

Alright, Scarecrow, next time I'll let them kick your butt a little longer before --

WYLIE

There you are. I'm late, Sage. Come on. Liam, how are you, son?

WYLIE BOTHELO, 41, Caucasian, winces at Liam's split lip. Wylie has dark hair, a salt and pepper beard and the beginnings of crow's feet around his eyes.

LIAM

I'm OK, Mr. Bothelo.

Liam hops off the table and heads out the door. Sage puts a protective arm around his shoulders.

INT. BOTHELO FAMILY CAR - DAY

WYLIE

It's too soon to take either of you home. You're going to have to come to the restaurant with me.

LIAM

OK.

SAGE

Sure, Dad.

INT. PEASANT PLATE RESTAURANT - DAY

Wylie guides Sage and Liam through the small but crowded dining room and back into the...

INT. KITCHEN

MALCOLM PARRISH, 34, currently runs the kitchen. This is Liam's father. He wears glasses like his son but has the build of a football player, because, well, he once was.

MALCOLM

Chef!

VARIOUS LINE COOKS & STAFF

(in unison)

Chef. / Hey Chef. / Chef! Good to see you... etc.

The day crew's greeting is warm and genuine although no one pauses long in their work.

Malcolm bends down and puts a hand on his son's shoulder.

MALCOM

You OK, Champ?

LIAM

Ain't no thing, Pops.

WYLIE

I'll take them to the office and set them up with homework. Then I'll be out.

MALCOLM

Sure thing, Chef. And Wylie... Thank you.

Wylie nods 'of course' as he ushers the kids away.

SAGE

'Ain't no thing?'

LIAM

What? I talk like that. Sometimes.

SAGE

Whatever you say, Kanye.

Sage's head whips around when the Pastry Chef passes by with a tray of mini fruit tarts.

SAGE

OhMyGodThoseLookSoGood!

Wylie opens a door at the back of the kitchen into...

INT. OFFICE

Somehow two desks have been wedged into the tiny space. Unlike the pristine kitchen, the office is cluttered with clipboards, old menus and supplies.

Sage glances at the wall featuring framed reviews and photos such as 'Local Gem Honored with a Michelin Star.'

In a family photo, Sage sits on a hospital bed in her mother's lap. An exhausted NOEMI BOTHELO, 36, Latina, beams at her twin baby girls held by a very overwhelmed Wylie.

Wylie clears a spot at one of the desks by transferring a pile of papers onto another taller pile.

WYLIE

Um... Here you go, Liam. Your Dad'll be done in a couple hours. Sage, let's go find you a chair.

INT. KITCHEN

Wylie hands Sage a tall plastic storage container. She turns to head back into the office.

WYLIE

Hold up.

SAGE

I'm sorry you had to pick me up, Dad. I told the principal that --

WYLIE

He told me what happened, Sage.

SAGE

Those kids were about to --
 (RE: her Dad's frown)
 Wait, you're mad at me? What was I supposed to do? I did the right thing. If those crapbags --

WYLIE

Sage! Look, this could jeopardize getting into Wildwood --

SAGE

If they pick on Liam again, I'll do the same. Mom would understand.

WYLIE

Well, you can ask her tomorrow.
We've got a call scheduled --

SAGE

If it doesn't get canceled again.

WYLIE

She's not near any active combat
this time. Hey, tell you what, why
don't you help me make you guys
something to eat? We could --

He is cut off as Sage SLAMS the office door shut.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Sage storms in, dragging the storage tub behind her. She
upends it and sits on top, like a stool.

LIAM

Everything OK?

SAGE

Peachy.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The restaurant closed, Sage plays Dominoes with OSCAR, 28, a
prep cook.

OSCAR

*Te estas poniendo muy buena,
pollito*

SAGE

Eventualmente te venceré, primo.

Sage's father walks back their way.

WYLIE

Alright, I'm almost done,
sweetheart. I just need to do the
closing paperwork. *Gracias por
mirarla, Oscar.*

OSCAR

De nada, Chef.

Sage watches her Dad disappear into the office. She darts to
the rack of pastries. Oscar chuckles.

Sage plucks a tart off the tray.

SAGE
Don't mind if I do.

Her father pokes his head out of the office.

WYLIE
Hey Oscar? I forgot --

Sage, looks around for a place to hide. She opens the door and rushes into...

INT. WALK-IN REFRIGERATOR

Sage plucks one glazed strawberry from the top of the tart and pops it in her mouth.

Next, Sage savagely bites into the tart, her face coming away smudged with custard. Sighing contentedly, Sage opens the door to peek out of the walk-in and finds herself in...

INT. PARISIENNE BOULANGERIE - DAY - [ANIMATION]

Sage stops in her tracks. Her world has... changed.

She peers out of a small pantry. Before her sprawls a scene in classic French animation such as The Triplets of Belleville or The Little Prince.

A BAKER, 50s, complete with a comical French goatee HUMS as he pulls baguettes out of a wood burning oven.

Behind him, baked goods ranging from macarons to eclairs are displayed in the windows to entice potential customers.

Out the windows, horses pull carriages down the street. The sun shines on a prominent view of The Arc De Triomphe. This is Paris circa 1790.

Sage looks down at her tart. It is also animated, but more importantly, so is her hand! Shocked, she drops the tart.

The Baker takes notice of Sage.

BAKER
Bonjour, bonjour! Comment allez vous?
How are --

Sage immediately YELPS and slams the door behind her.

BAKER
(smacking his head)
Mon Dieu, J'en ai effrayé un autre! Je suis stupide. Stupide stupide stupide!

INT. WALK-IN

Sage shivers. She's back in the refrigerator. A quick inspection proves -- yup -- she's normal and solid again.

But what the hell just happened?

She slowly opens the door to the walk-in again.

WYLIE
Sage? Where are you? Time to go.

It's her Dad's restaurant.

Sage breathes a sigh of relief.

EXT. SAGE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sage and Wylie pull into the driveway.

WYLIE
Everything alright?

SAGE
Yeah.

Sage hurries out of the car.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A NANNY, 22, surfs her tablet as Wylie and Sage enter.

WYLIE
Twins go down alright?

NANNY
Hey, Mr. B. Ginger did. Pepper's runny nose kept her up a bit, but they've been quiet for a while. They are as adorbs as ever.

WYLIE
Great, thanks...

The sound of their conversation fades as Sage hurries upstairs, down the hall and into...

INT. SAGE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sage closes the door behind herself. She takes a breath and looks down at her hands.

Still normal.

She takes out her phone and dials.

INT. LIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Liam's phone BUZZES on his nightstand, startling him awake.

LIAM
Let the wookie win!

Liam shakes his head to clear the dream. He grabs the phone.

LIAM
Sage? Everything OK?

INTERCUT SAGE / LIAM

SAGE
Hey Scarecrow.

LIAM
Hooligan.

SAGE
Listen, did you go into the fridge today?

LIAM
What?

SAGE
The walk-in refrigerator? At the restaurant? Did you ever go in today?

LIAM
You're moving up from pastry theft? To what? Gazpacho?

Sage's silence concerns Liam.

LIAM

...Why?

SAGE

I... no reason. Just had a weird day dream I guess? Needed to hear a friend's voice is all.

LIAM

Um. OK...

There is a KNOCK on Sage's bedroom door.

SAGE

Gotta go.

LIAM

Sure...

Sage ends the call.

SAGE

(towards the door)

Yeah?

WYLIE

Sage, can we talk for a sec?

SAGE

Sure, Dad. Come in.

Wylie enters and sits on the edge of her bed. She remains standing.

WYLIE

I miss the days when I could just ask you for hugs and kisses and everything would be fine afterwards.

SAGE

I'm not a kid anymore, Dad.

WYLIE

I know. And, look, I completely understand why you did what you did today.

SAGE

They were hurting Liam.

WYLIE

Right. I know.

SAGE

What was I supposed to do?

WYLIE

I wasn't there, Sage. So I don't know for sure. Maybe what you did was the only thing. But you really hurt those kids.

Sage remains stoic.

WYLIE

Look, that's not what I want to talk about right now. I realize that I put Wildwood first today, not you. If you don't want to go to Wildwood I understand.

Sage softens.

SAGE

No. It's not that. I do want to go, Dad. I just...

WYLIE

I get it. And protecting Liam is great. I should have started with that. But, accident or no, Kelly needed stitches tonight. I talked to his Dad and he's doing fine, but things could have been worse. You understand?

Sage nods, thoughtful.

WYLIE

OK. I love you. Goodnight. Early morning tomorrow.

Wylie heads to leave but is stopped by Sage.

SAGE

Dad?

WYLIE

Yes, sweetheart?

SAGE

I... did you buy your restaurant from somebody?

WYLIE

I -- um -- of course. That building has been there forever. I think I once found a photo of streetcars running in front of it on Pico.

SAGE

Right. I know, but was it always a restaurant?

WYLIE

Oh. No. I renovated it when I bought it. I don't really remember what it was before.

SAGE

Is there any way to find out?

Sage is quiet for a moment.

WYLIE

Can I ask why you're curious?

SAGE

I -- Dad, you know how I steal a pastry once in a while?

WYLIE

Sage. Everyone knows. The pastry chef literally makes at least two extra every time just for you. We call it Sage's Dozen.

SAGE

Well, today... I...

WAAAHH. A baby cries from down the hall. Wylie looks toward the door.

WYLIE

You what?

SAGE

One of the babies is crying.

WYLIE

I know, but what were you -- ?

SAGE

It's fine, Dad. Go.

A second WAIL joins the first. Wylie steps toward the door.

WYLIE

Sage...

SAGE

Dad. Go.

Wylie reluctantly turns and leaves toward the twin SCREAMS.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

As Wylie heads away, the door SLAMS behind him. He looks back. A 'Do Not Disturb' placard rocks on Sage's doorknob.

Wylie SIGHS and hunches his shoulders. Until...

WAAAAH.

And he's off down the hall.

INT. SAGE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sage, now in pajamas, finishes a sketch in her journal. Her style is different than before. It depicts the boulangerie.

Sage yawns. She checks her clock. 10:43 PM.

Sage turns off her nightstand light and pulls up her covers. Her eyes flutter closed...

INT. SAGE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

...just to be shaken awake immediately by her father.

At least it seemed immediate. The bright light through the curtains tells a different story. Her clock reads 5:31 AM.

Sage GROANS.

WYLIE

C'mon. Your Mom calls in a half hour.

Sage is suddenly alert and beaming. She throws off the covers and runs into her...

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Sage starts getting ready.

SAGE

Be right down, Daddy!

WYLIE (O.S)

Wanna help me make french toast?

SAGE

No thanks. I'll just have cereal.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Sage rattles off during a video call with her Mom, NOEMI, 39, Latina, curly hair tied back. She wears the uniform of an Airforce Lt. Colonel.

Meanwhile, Wylie plays zone defense as the two year old twins, PEPPER and GINGER, wander the room.

SAGE

And Zoe and I went to see the new Star Wars. And it kicked butt. Oh, and I learned how to ice skate. It totally kicked butt. And Dad took us all sledding. He totally wiped out and got his butt so kicked. And... and... Oh! Yesterday, some kids were bullying Liam and I totally kicked their b --

Noemi, smiling broadly up til now, frowns.

NOEMI

Hey, hey. Hold on. What happened?
Is Liam OK?

Wylie realizes where the conversation has gone.

WYLIE

Liam's great! Sage is great too. Everyone is great now. Hey, Sage, why don't you go get dressed for school, OK? I won't let your Mom leave without saying goodbye.

SAGE

Oh, right. School. OK. I love you *Mami*.

NOEMI

I love you too, *Mija*.

SAGE

See you next month!

Sage runs off up the stairs. She stops halfway and heads back down, having forgotten to tell her mother something.

NOEMI

So... speaking of next month...

Sage stops to eavesdrop.

WYLIE

No... don't tell --

NOEMI

They need me three more months, babe. I am so sorry.

One of the twins trips over a toy and starts to CRY. He grabs her to comfort her.

NOEMI

I hate it, but the opportunity --

WYLIE

(it's not)
It's fine.

NOEMI

What was that last part about? Is she fighting? She might not get into Wildwood. I want to talk to her again.

Sage opens her mouth ready to barge out and argue, but is surprised when her Dad defends her.

WYLIE

We've talked about it. She says she still wants to go --

NOEMI

As if it's her choice --

WYLIE

Well, it is her choice.

NOEMI

Like hell it is.

WYLIE

Really? That's how you want to play this?

NOEMI

And why not?

WYLIE

Maybe my choices are right, maybe they're wrong --

NOEMI

This time they're wrong. How dare she beat up --

WYLIE

Godddammit, Noemi. You want a say in how these kids are raised? Be here.

NOEMI

That's not fair.

There is some indistinct talking on Noemi's end.

NOEMI

I have to go.

WYLIE

Right. Heaven forbid your family be a burden on you. I'll see you in several months... apparently...

Sage bolts for her room in tears.

INT. SAGE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sage SNIFFS and wipes away tears as she stares at a sketch she drew of her mom and herself both in military uniforms.

KNOCK, KNOCK.

WYLIE (O.S)

Sage? Honey? Get ready for school. I'm going to walk your sisters to daycare real quick, OK?

(when there is no answer)

Sage?

SAGE

OK, Dad.

Sage listens to her Dad's footsteps as they fade away.

She grabs a duffel bag from under her bed and throws clothes into it. She heads out of her room, downstairs into...

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sage shoves snacks into the duffel. They're not well planned. The things a kid might want on a long trip: Gummi Bears, Cheez-Its, M & M's etc.

After some thought, she adds a jar of green olives.

EXT. / INT. PEASANT PLATE - DAY

Sage peers in the front windows of the closed restaurant.

Nobody.

Satisfied, Sage heads around back and climbs atop a dumpster. She pushes her duffel through a window and then crawls through it herself.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sage hangs from the window for a moment. Then she lets go, falling uncomfortably onto her duffel.

She stands, takes a deep breath and then marches to the walk-in, pulls open the heavy door, and enters.

INT. WALK-IN REFRIGERATOR

Sage shivers.

She spies a container of edamame. She grabs a few handfuls and cups them in her shirt.

She pops a few beans out of a pod into her mouth as she excitedly reopens the refrigerator door into...

WHITENESS - [ANIMATION]

The blank canvas comes to life via Chinese paint brush strokes. (Think Nintendo's Okami or Chinese zen painting.)

The brush strokes reveal a Dim Sum counter in Hong Kong circa 1890. CHEF ZHONG, 70s, cuts sesame balls with scissors and serves them to waiting hungry British customers.

Zhong is tall with a thin beard and a deep bass voice.

Sage watches in bewilderment as she is brushed into existence.

She looks behind to see that she has stepped out of some sort of room filled with ice blocks keeping hanging butchered pigs and ducks cool.

ZHONG

Gwaan mun! Gwaan mun! Close the door!

Sage, overwhelmed, complies.

ZHONG

Gum xia. Thank you. Come, come, I need your help over here.

Zhong steers her towards a counter.

SAGE

But -- where's...? Before, I -- Wait. You speak English?

ZHONG

English? No.

SAGE

But how can I...?

ZHONG

You travel through time and around the globe and you worry about how you suddenly understand Cantonese? Oh my. But do tell me, who did you visit before me? Magnus? Jonte?

SAGE

Um... there was bread. Lots of bread.

ZHONG

Ah. Louis. Does he still have that ridiculous goatee? When you see him again give him greetings from Chef Zhong. ...Which is me.

SAGE

What?

ZHONG

You look confused. I wanted to clarify that Zhong is my name.

SAGE

I just --

ZHONG

Enough chit chat. You must must help me with these dumplings.

SAGE

Dumplings?

ZHONG

Yes. Soup Dumplings.

Sage sees dough, pork and other ingredients on the counter.

SAGE

Oh! Like won tons? I've made won tons with my Dad. We used to do that a lot actually.

ZHONG

No. No. Wontons go into soup. With my soup dumplings the soup is INSIDE the dumpling. It is incredible, I will show you.

Sage looks down at the shirt full of edamame she holds.

SAGE

Where can I...?

ZHONG

Ah!

Zhong grabs a bowl from under the counter and holds it out. Sage deposits her edamame. Zhong takes one out and pops a bean into his mouth.

ZHONG

Soybeans. Mmm... here! Enjoy.

Zhong places the bowl in front of his customers who dig in.

SAGE

I was going to eat those...

Zhong hands Sage a small rolling pin.

ZHONG

First we must roll the dough out like this until it is a circle... good! Throw on a little flour so they don't stick and onto the next.

SAGE

Why'd you call my edamame soybeans?

ZHONG

Because my dear, that's what they are!

This time, when Zhong dusts his rolled dough with flour, it lands in the shape of a map of China and Japan. The flour blackens into black brush lines and takes on life in front of Sage's eyes.

SAGE

Whoa. This place really kicks butt.

ZHONG

While edamame may be a Japanese word, it's because a Japanese monk named Nicheren traveled to China.

On the dumpling wrapper, Nicheren sets sail from Japan to Hong Kong. The story continues to play out as Zhong weaves his tale.

ZHONG

He thanked a Chinese parishioner -- I don't recall telling you to stop rolling -- for the snack he gifted him. The word he used meant 'beans on the branch.' Or so legend has it.

And, with that, Zhong plops a helping of ground pork stuffing onto the wrapper, dispelling the conjured scene.

ZHONG

I know Japan loves their edamame, but we started serving it here in Hong Kong. Especially when we found out the British had a taste for it.

SAGE

The British?

ZHONG

Yes, the British. Now we stuff our dumplings. A dab of ground pork mixed with egg, sesame oil, soy sauce -- which, by the way, is made by fermenting older soybeans -- ginger and green onion. And now... the soup!

SAGE

Won't soup just make it all soggy?

ZHONG

You would think so! But wait.

Zhong twirls over to the cooler room Sage entered from. He returns with a pan of what appears to be jell-o.