

TIME FOR A CHANGE

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A short play for young audiences and families
commissioned by La Jolla Playhouse

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CAST:

Mel and Karl, siblings

Sheryl and Larry, their parents

NOTES:

In this script, the family is identified as a mum, dad, son and daughter. However, full permission is given for edits along gender, age and relationship lines, as applicable. If your household requires that the characters be twin girls, say, who live with their gran and a roommate, go with that option. Pronouns/descriptions can of course be changed accordingly.

Thanks for bringing it to life – sure you'll do wonderfully.

Scene One – lounge

Mel and Karl are sitting on their couch, bored. Their dad Larry comes in.

Larry: Hey kids – what you doing?

Mel: Watching the fish tank...

Karl: Watching Mel watch the fish tank...

Larry: That sounds... super boring.

Both nod.

Larry: Well help me out then. It's daylight savings – the clocks need putting forward one hour. Come on.

He exits and the two look at each other.

Karl: It's hard, you know... I'm bored. But I'm also lazy. Huh.

Mel: Let's rock paper scissors then.

Both: 1... and 2... and...

Karl makes scissors, Mel simply points to the clock and both shout at the same time.

Karl: Scissors!/
Mel: /You do it!

Karl: Well played, annoying sister...

Mel: Thank you, lazy brother.

He gets the digital clock off the shelf and considers it.

Karl: One hour – okay then.

Scene Two – dining room

An instantaneous change. Karl and Mel sit at their dining table, with parents Larry and Sheryl, empty plates in front of them. Karl still holds the clock.

Mel: Um...

Karl: What was that?

Sheryl: That was some great pie, was what that was! Excellent baking, love.

Larry: Thanks, honey. *[Laughs]* Who knew being locked indoors'd turn me into a baker!?

Sheryl: *[Laughs too]* Not me!

Larry: *[Laughs more]* I've literally got 23 more pies cooling in the kitchen!

Both are suddenly serious.

Sheryl: *Twenty-three?*

Larry: ...Yeah I'm actually going crazy.

Mel: *[Ignoring the discussion]* We mean... what are we doing at the table?

Karl: We were... just watching TV.

Sheryl: That was, like, an hour ago?

The children look at each other. Mel grabs the clock.

Mel: Forwards?

Karl: Backwards!

She nods and presses it.

Scene Three – dining room

An instantaneous change. Karl and Mel sit at their dining table, with parents Larry and Sheryl, empty plates in front of them. Karl holds the clock.

Mel: Um...

Karl: What was that?

Sheryl: That was some great pie, was what th/

Karl: /How far back did you go?

Mel: Just one minute.

Karl: Mel!

She grabs the clock again.

Mel: But look, there's a date function too! Say hello to 2021...

She presses it.

Scene Four – bathroom

Both stand there, dressed in different outfits and with long wigs on. Karl laughs.

Karl: Ha! You've grown your hair really long – it looks ridiculous.

Mel: Karl... Maybe look in the mirror...

He does so, and screams, dropping the clock.

Karl: Why would I do this!?

Larry enters, holding a phone out to Karl.

Larry: It's your death-metal band, asking why you're late for rehearsals?

Karl: That's why... Dad, remind me again what I play in the band (please be electric guitar, please be electric guitar).

Larry: The tambourine of course.

Mel explodes with laughter.

Karl: Death-metal tambourine – who am I?

Mel: 2021 Karl is hilarious!

Sheryl: *[Enters]* Mel, why are you standing round? We're going to be late for your snake-handling workshop.

Mel stops laughing, and Karl begins.

Mel: Sorry, what? I'm terrified of snakes!

Sheryl: Don't worry – *they're* more terrified of *you*.

Larry: Well... except the one that bit her last month.

Sheryl: Yeah. That thing was huge.

Larry: We are bad parents.

Sheryl: I see that now.

Mel: *[To Karl]* Do you mind if we *leave* 2021?

Karl: Now. Do it right now.

She picks up the clock.

Mel: Yes! This stupidly-powerful clock still works.

Karl: Reset for 2020, Mel – right back to us sitting on the couch.

Mel: And then we smash this. And I stay away from snakes.

Karl: And I ignore any musical, or hair-growing, dreams I might have.

She nods and presses the button.

Scene Five – lounge

Mel and Karl sit back on the couch.

But are both really, really old [have fun playing with costumes and makeup to age yourselves]

Karl: What... did you do, Mel?

Mel: What did I do!? You broke it when you... dropped it!

Karl: For some reason I want to... Play backgammon. And eat soup.

Mel: Oh soup sounds lovely. I want to... Sit on a bus. And talk to people I don't know.

Karl: That would be wonderful.

Mel: *[Looks at the clock]* Shall we try again for 2020 then?

Karl: *[Shrugs]* Well... This feels quite... Nice. For the moment.

Mel: Oh I agree.

Karl: Oh that's good.

They sit in contented silence.

Karl: Thanks for growing old with me, Sis.

Mel: No problem, Bro. Shall we watch the fish tank?

Karl: Love to.

Both smile.

The End