

IN HER TIME

23-DE02-W08

After experiencing the seasons of her older sister's deteriorating disease, Ellie gives her a memory garden that reconnects them to the past when they protected each other.

OVER BLACK:

SOFT MUSIC PLAYS.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Our granny used to say: "You may not understand why things happen, but God has a purpose and a plan.

THE MUSIC ABRUPTLY STOPS.

A MALE VOICE SHOUTS and GLASS CRASHES.

ELLIE (V.O.)

What she didn't tell us was what to do when we don't understand God's purpose and plan.

FADE IN:

INT. FARM HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

On a wooden floor, just inside the open door, a series of miniature toy figurines are scattered: a whimsical fairy, a rabbit gripping flowers, a dancing cat, and a bear reading a book.

The blurry silhouette of a tiny GIRL in a tutu scampers in. Her hands come into focus as she snatches up the figurines.

YOUNG KATE (O.S.)

Come on, Ellie. Let's get gone.

BLACK SCREEN:

A SCREEN DOOR CREEKS OPEN AND SLAMS SHUT.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

KATE, 8, and her sister, ELLIE, 6, run hand in hand from the house into a thick forest of trees and overgrowth.

They get to a creek bed with low, flowing water. Kate jumps the stream, but Ellie hesitates.

YOUNG ELLIE

I don't like this. I wanna go back.

Kate puts her hands on her hips and frowns.

YOUNG KATE

You gotta jump it, Ellie. We can't go back. Not now. Not for a while.

She jumps back across the stream, grabs Ellie's hand, and forces her to jump.

As they run ahead, a clearing circled with overhanging, leafy trees comes into view, accented by rays of light beaming down on rich, green moss that covers the spot.

Kate gets to the clearing first, collects leaves and twigs, and pulls back some moss to set up a small play area where she places the rescued figurines.

YOUNG ELLIE

(with eyes wide)

What is this place, Katie?

YOUNG KATE

It's our special, secret place. No one can know about it, okay?

YOUNG ELLIE

Okay.

She sits down and smiles as she picks up the rabbit.

YOUNG ELLIE

Can we come here everyday?

Kate looks up and thinks about it.

YOUNG KATE

I reckon. But, if ever I'm not with you first, you wait for me by the creek, okay? I'll come find you and we'll jump it together.

They share a smile. Kate tussles Ellie's head of hair and picks up the fairy.

They resume playing with the figurines, humming and making animated voices together.

EXT. A SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "50 YEARS LATER. SPRING - A TIME TO PLANT."

INTERCUT - INT. KATE'S CAR / INT. ELLIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Driving her SUV, Kate, in her late 50s, is on speaker phone with Ellie, also in her 50s, who is sipping ice tea at her kitchen island.

In Kate's back seat are boxes of crafts made from nature and a paint canvas.

KATE

She said she sold five wreaths yesterday and requested ten more, and someone commissioned a cousin to the sea painting because they loved it so much.

ELLIE

Oh, Kate, that's wonderful.

KATE

I had no idea a consignment shop could be so lucrative. Oh, and she told me there is a craft fair next month at the convention center and I should sign up for a booth.

ELLIE

See? I told you it wasn't too late to get your work out there. Which sea painting is it?

KATE

The one with the sand dunes and reeds. I'll snap a picture of it when I get home and text it to you. I'm about five minutes out.

ELLIE

How lovely! We can celebrate when George and I come down next week.

Kate smiles and taps on her stirring wheel, excited. Suddenly, she squints as she looks ahead.

KATE

Hold on...I think I made a wrong turn. This doesn't look right.

Ellie sits up on alert and leans closer to her cell phone.

ELLIE

Everything okay?

KATE  
(agitated)  
Yeah. I just...

She pulls up to the next intersection and looks at the street sign. She doesn't recognize it.

KATE  
They must have changed the signs.  
I'm gonna have to call you back.

ELLIE  
Kate, stop and pull over. Get your bearings. That, or call John and tell him where you are. He can come find you, or send one of the girls.

Kate pulls over, looks around, growing more confused by random houses and no one visible to ask for directions.

KATE  
Okay, I'm gonna call John. I'll call you back later.

She disconnects their call.

Ellie sits back in her chair, worried. She picks up her cell phone and dials another call.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

Kate's husband, JOHN, 50s, pulls up next to Kate's car as she rolls down the window.

JOHN  
You okay, babe? You're on Bristol Drive. Our house is two blocks over there on the left.

Kate looks at the street sign again.

KATE  
Oh, yes. Of course. I just got turned around. I'm sorry, honey.

JOHN  
I'm just glad you're okay.

He rolls up his window and waves for her to follow him.

Kate starts her car, looks up at the street sign again, and shakes her head.

EXT. KATE'S HOUSE - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "THE NEXT SUMMER - A TIME TO GROW."

INT. KATE'S HOUSE - DAY

John opens the door to Ellie and her husband, GEORGE, 50s. Ellie holds a birthday gift. Her smile fades when she reads John's solemn face. She and George enter and step inside the foyer as John closes the door.

ELLIE

John, what is it? What's wrong?

JOHN

Kate won't be able to go out to celebrate today.

Ellie puts her hand to her mouth and her brow furrows.

JOHN

She's out on the patio, but first I need to talk to you both about what's going on.

Ellie nods. She and George follow John into the kitchen.

INT. KATE'S CRAFT ROOM - 15 MINUTES LATER

Ellie pauses in the doorway to take in the scene. The back wall is spattered with water color paint. An easel lays on its side still holding a canvas that has been smeared with various colors. Paint brushes, some broken, litter the floor.

She looks out the window to the patio where Kate is seated at table with her back to the house.

EXT. KATE'S PATIO - CONTINUOUS

Ellie steps out onto the patio and closes the sliding door. She dabs the corners of her eyes and takes a deep breath before she proceeds to the table.

Kate is dressed but water color paint has stained her hands and sleeves. She isn't wearing her usual makeup and her hair is disheveled. She looks up when Ellie comes into her view.

ELLIE

Kate. It's a bit windy.  
(she rubs her arms)  
What are you doing out here?

KATE  
I've lost my mojo.

She indicates to her stained arms to show off her messy state.

Ellie takes a seat next her.

ELLIE  
Well, it was good while it lasted.

She laughs but Kate stays silent, watching the trees swaying ahead of them.

ELLIE  
Kate, we all have bad days.

KATE  
There's something wrong with me,  
but John won't discuss it.

ELLIE  
He's just concerned, and he doesn't  
want you to worry.

Ellie reaches out and squeezes her hand.

Kate pulls away from her.

KATE  
(with growing agitation)  
I need to stop forgetting things.  
It's so frustrating. I pick up a  
brush and I know what to do...  
(she mimics the movement  
with her hands)  
but when I go to do it...I can't.

She drops her hands into her lap, looking defeated as tears drip down her cheeks.

KATE  
(looking at her hands)  
I can't...

Ellie pulls her chair closer to Kate and takes hold of her sister's hands.

ELLIE  
Hey, I'm sure it's just the  
season...A phase, ya know?  
We'll get through this together  
like we always do. I promise.

Kate looks at her.

KATE

I'm scared, Ellie. And I don't have  
a garden to run to anymore.

Ellie wraps her arms around Kate and they embrace.

EXT. ELLIE'S HOUSE - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "AUTUMN. A YEAR LATER - A TIME TO SURRENDER."

INT. ELLIE'S ATTIC - DAY

Ellie picks up a box, opens it, and tosses it down. She picks up another box and does the same. She growls in frustration and sets her sights on the next row of boxes on the shelf.

George appears at the top of the attic stairs. He looks around at the state of the attic that Ellie has blown through like a tornado.

GEORGE

What on earth is going on up here?

ELLIE

I gotta find the box.

George runs his hands through his hair.

GEORGE

Could you be more specific, hun?

ELLIE

It's the box Kate entrusted to me  
for safe keeping. It has our names  
on it.

George moves to the other side of the attic to another set of boxes and starts moving them around to search.

Ellie stops and puts her hand on her chest to catch her breath. She scans at the rest of the boxes in front of her and her eyes grow misty.

ELLIE

I don't know what to do, George. I  
feel so hopeless. Time is slipping  
away. She's slipping away, and I  
don't know how to stop it. If only  
I could get her back to the  
garden...

Her lips quiver as she hears an echo from the past:

A MALE VOICE SHOUTS and GLASS CRASHES.

YOUNG KATE (V.O.)  
Come on, Ellie. Let's get gone.

Ellie crumbles to the attic floor, instantly crying.

George rushes over to her.

GEORGE  
Ellie, honey. It's gonna be okay.  
(he wraps an arm around  
her)  
I've got you, babe.

ELLIE  
(looks into his face)  
You don't understand. I have to  
find the box, George. She needs my  
help. I need to find it.

GEORGE  
Okay, okay.

He hugs her, trying to soothe her.

GEORGE  
(with eyes closed)  
Lord, we need your help. Please  
show us the way to this box for  
Kate and Ellie.

He opens his eyes and releases her. He stands and looks around.

GEORGE  
Now, if I were an old box, which I  
am not...

He looks down at Ellie with a smirk. She laughs lightly and wipes her tears with her shirt.

GEORGE  
...where would I be?

He crosses the room and takes down a few boxes in front him. From the back of the shelf he pulls out another box. He turns to Ellie with the box labeled "Kate & Ellie."

Ellie cries with joy when she sees it. She jumps up and rushes to George. He smiles as he hands the box to her and leans over to kiss her forehead.

ELLIE  
 (whispering, eyes closed)  
 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Ellie sets the box down on the floor and opens it. She smiles at the contents inside. She pulls out an old shoebox smudged with dirt and children's crayon colorings on it.

She grips it to her chest, relieved, and closes her eyes as we hear the echo of KATE AND ELLIE'S CHILDHOOD LAUGHTER.

EXT. AN ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "THE FINAL WINTER - A TIME TO REMEMBER."

INT. FACILITY - KATE'S ROOM - DAY

Kate, much aged, sits by the window holding a medium size basket with a handle in her lap as she stares out at a group of children laughing and playing in the snow.

Ellie, looking a tad older, but spry, enters behind her.

ELLIE  
 Good morning, Kate. How are you  
 today?

Kate turns to look at her, but there is no recognition of Ellie on her face.

Ellie kneels next to Kate.

ELLIE  
 Oh my, what a beautiful basket.

Kate's eyes light up as she holds up the basket to show her. It is lined with moss, twigs, and rocks that their four childhood miniature figurines are positioned among.

ELLIE  
 Who's it from?

It takes Kate a moment to answer.

KATE  
 My sister. Ellie. I'm waiting for  
 her to come.

Ellie smiles.

ELLIE  
 How wonderful. What a lovely gift.

Kate fingers the figurines and smiles.

KATE

They're from our secret garden. We have so many memories there. Playing together and hiding from pa...But He got better. We kept going though. We even built little houses for each of these...

Ellie sits in the chair across from her and listens patiently as Kate rambles on.

KATE

We had to cross a creek to get there and Ellie didn't like the water so she'd wait for me and we jumped over it together.  
(she laughs whimsically)  
Always together...

Kate stops, looks down, and fingers the fairy.

Suddenly, she looks up from it to Ellie and her eyes ignite with delight.

KATE

Oh, Ellie! You've come. I've missed you. How much time do you have?

ELLIE

(with misty eyes)  
I've got all the time in the world for you, Katie.

Kate holds up the basket.

KATE

Can we go play in the garden?

ELLIE

Sure we can. But you'll hold my hand, won't you?

KATE

Like I always do.

Kate reaches out and takes Ellie's hand as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

AT THE CREEK

The creek WATER TRICKLES and flows.

ELLIE (V.O.)

"I found God's purpose and plan in the memory garden. It's where Kate and I find each other for as long as we can..."

We hear KATE AND ELLIE'S CHILDHOOD LAUGHTER from a short distance and then...

The girls jump hand in hand together over the creek and run onward.

AT THE CLEARING

CLOSE UP ON: The lush green forest moss as the two young sisters each pick up a figurine to play with.

ELLIE (V.O.)

...There, in our garden, seasons don't matter. Time stands still, and everything has a purpose under heaven. We return to its safety. Happiness. And the joy of being together...It's God's miracle to us. And it's all in her time."

As the view expands, we are back in the secret garden where the girls are laughing and playing once again - young, happy, and carefree.

FADE OUT.