

THE TAN CLAN

"PILOT"

Written by

Peter Chen

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Writ Large
Britton Rizzio and Greg Shephard
(323) 553-4300

CAA
Jonas Brooks and Lauren Fox

COLD OPEN

INT. TAN LIVING ROOM / TAN KITCHEN (1990) - NIGHT

A hot summer night. PETER TAN (12) watches tv wide eyed as Bruce Lee kicks some butt in ENTER THE DRAGON.

Four more sweaty Tan children huddle on the couch and floor in front of a single oscillating fan.

ADULT PETER (V.O.)

My dad and I used to bond over kung
fu movies. But ever since he died
in a freak wine tasting accident,
Bruce Lee became the closest thing
I had to a father.

Peter hops around the room, trying to imitate his idol's moves. He launches fancy kicks at the back of the couch.

In the kitchen, SUSIE TAN (40ish) mixes the contents of a large punch bowl.

SUSIE

We'll be in good shape when the
couches attack.

Sweat pours down Peter's face as he takes a break from the kung fu. He heads to the fridge, pours himself a glass of apple juice and takes a big gulp. GAGS and SPITS the juice.

PETER

Oh God, what is that? That's not
juice!

SUSIE

Vegetable oil.

PETER

What's it doing in the apple juice
bottle?

SUSIE

You know I re-use containers.

Peter rinses his mouth out with water.

PETER

GROSS.

Susie carries the punch bowl to the coffee table. She ladles a Chinese dessert made of grass jelly, milk tea, and ice.

SUSIE

This will cool us down. Come on.

JANET (17) ambitious and fierce, NANCY (16) short, heavy-set and dim-witted, DIANNA (14), a romantic book-worm, and AMY (9) precocious and smart, grab bowls of dessert and dig in.

PETER

Why can't we just turn on the AC?

Susie whacks him with the punch ladle.

PETER (CONT'D)

Ow.

SUSIE

Don't be wasteful.

ADULT PETER (V.O.)

Saving money and making money were my mom's favorite pastimes. She'd always been thrifty. But when my dad died a year ago, she started pinching those pennies even harder.

INT. TAN KITCHEN - FLASHBACK

Susie washes ziplock bags and places them on a drying rack.

ADULT PETER (V.O.)

She would re-use ziplock bags.

INT. TAN GARAGE - FLASHBACK

Susie has a make-shift salon in the garage. Susie moves from chair to chair, cutting, blow-drying, tending to the perms of several ASIAN LADIES.

ADULT PETER (V.O.)

And her side hustle was strong.

INT. / EXT. TAN GARAGE - FLASHBACK

From a freezer in the garage, Susie and Janet sell giant freezer bags of homemade frozen dumplings to various ASIAN MOMS who pay them in cash.

INT. TAN LIVING ROOM - BACK TO SCENE

Susie digs through some bills that read PAST DUE on them. She does some calculations on an ABACUS. The kids look to her.

PETER

Before you say anything, could we add a boy's bike to the budget for this year? I really need one.

SUSIE

No. We didn't sell as many frozen dumplings this month as I hoped. When it's hot, people don't like eating hot dumplings.

Nancy, who's NOT the brains of the family, grins...

NANCY

I GOT IT. We wait for the weather to change, **then** sell the dumplings.

NOTE: Overlapping dialogue will be common, as this family talks over each other constantly.

PETER

That's a terrible plan dummy.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Wait...sell the dumplings, then wait for winter?

All the kids groan.

PETER

Did anyone buy my nacho and chili soy slaw dumplings?

SUSIE

No. And don't ever mix Chinese and Tex-Mex again. I know it makes you feel more American, but it's not a winner. We'll be okay.

ADULT PETER (V.O.)

We never really had enough money. But my mom made sure we learned to appreciate the finer things.

SUSIE

Why are we watching kung fu? Turn the concert on.

Peter sighs, and changes the channel to a classical music concert.

ADULT PETER (V.O.)
After money, my mom's other passion
was classical music.

Susie relaxes a little bit and hums along to the music.

SUSIE
Thank God your sister Pauline will
be home soon. She's playing
Paganini's impossible piece at the
recital next week. Mrs. Lee and her
daughter can choke on our dust.

A MOUSE skitters across the room. Peter, Susie and the girls
jump onto the couch and coffee table, hysterical.

PETER	SUSIE / GIRLS
Eeeeeeeeh! Ew, Ew, Ew!	Ahhhh!

ADULT PETER (V.O.)
With my dad gone, I knew that if I
was going to get any respect in my
family, I'd have to become the MAN
of the house. It was either that or
get good at playing the piano. And
I royally sucked at piano. So I had
no choice but to become a man.

SUSIE
It's gone.

The family slowly climbs down off the furniture.

The girls break out their nail polish.

ADULT PETER (V.O.)
And to teach me...I had five
sisters and a mom.

Janet holds two bottles of nail polish up to Peter.

JANET
Pink or purple?

PETER
Purple!

Peter extends his hand out. Janet begins painting his nails.

ADULT PETER (V.O.)
What could go wrong?

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONEEXT. STREET - DAY

Peter rides bikes with a couple BOYS his age. All the other boys, including his friend HENRY (12) ride boy's bmx bikes. Peter rides on a purple girl's banana bike. Henry launches off a curb, catching major air.

HENRY

Come on, your turn Peter!

Peter follows and tries to launch off the curb, but the heavy banana bike isn't built to fly. He weakly rolls off the curb.

A car of TEENAGERS pulls alongside and follows Peter.

TEENAGER #1

Nice bike Sally! I love the streamers on your handlebars.

PETER

Shut up, it's not even my bike!

TEENAGER #2

Ignore him. Purple really suits you. Sissy!

Peter turns to Henry and his friends for backup.

HENRY

Sorry man, they're not wrong. We can't hang with you if you keep riding that girl's bike.

PETER

C'mon you guys. Purple is a neutral color.

HENRY

It really isn't. But even if it was, look at all the pink Huffy logos all over your bike.

PETER

That's not pink, it's just faded red!

HENRY

It's pink man. I'm sorry.

Peter puts his head down and pedals faster and faster. He reaches home, dumps the bike on the front lawn and races inside to the relative safety of...

INT. PETER, DIANNA, AND AMY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tears streaming, Peter throws himself on his bed. He kicks his walls. His youngest sister Amy looks up from the book she's reading on her bed.

AMY

Aww. Why the tears big guy?

PETER

I'm sick of riding around on a stupid girl's bike.

AMY

I hear you. But please take care of it. That bike still needs to be passed down from you, to me.

PETER

Why couldn't you have been a boy?

AMY

When a baby is conceived, a chromosome from the sperm cell, either X or Y, fuses with the X chromosome in the egg cell, determining whether --

PETER

Shut up nerd.

Peter stomps out of the room.

INT. TAN LIVING ROOM /EXT. TAN HOUSE - LATER

Susie peels persimmons as she reads a Chinese newspaper.

ADULT PETER (V.O.)

Like most Chinese families, our backyard doubled as a suburban farm. My mom grew green onions, cherry tomatoes, zucchini, winter-melon squash, asian pears, and persimmons. Those **goddamn** persimmons.

(MORE)

ADULT PETER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

This produce was for us to eat, but also ammunition for a complex barter system in the Chinese community that was one part produce, and two parts guilt and obligation.

Nancy, Dianna, and Amy read library books in the living room, as Peter practices the piano with a scowl on his face. A framed, autographed photo of cello virtuoso Yo-Yo Ma rests on the piano. This is Susie's prized possession.

SUSIE

Peter, why do you look so angry?

PETER

Because I hate piano. And I need a boy's bmx bike, otherwise I'll have no friends.

SUSIE

Don't be ridiculous. The bike you have is fine. And you have five sisters to play with.

PETER

Please Mom, I really need a boy's bike.

SUSIE

I'm sorry. We can't afford one now. Maybe next year.

PETER

NEXT YEAR? There goes my social life. God, this family sucks!

SUSIE

Don't say sucks. Have some persimmons. I just picked them.

PETER

Yuck, I hate persimmons. They're like a fruit that can't decide what they want to be.

Peter looks out the front window as a Super Shuttle van pulls up, and PAULINE TAN (19) steps out.

PETER (CONT'D)

She's home! Pauline's home!

Everyone races to the front window. Pauline is dressed in a conservative ankle length dress...except she has HUGE HOOP EARRINGS and wears BLACK COMBAT BOOTS.

PETER (CONT'D)	AMY
Oh my god, look at those combat boots.	And those sexy earrings. Cool!

Susie is confused.

SUSIE
Amy, don't say the "S" word!
That's not Pauline.

Pauline walks up the driveway, closer so there's no doubt.

SUSIE (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Jesus. That's too sexy.

INT. TAN LIVING ROOM - LATER

Janet intensely practices scales on the piano. Dianna reads a romance novel, Nancy flips through Seventeen Magazine and eats cheese balls out of a plastic tub. Pauline puts clip-on earrings and makeup on Amy. Peter walks to the center of the room and clears his throat.

PETER
Your attention please.

His sisters look up momentarily.

PETER (CONT'D)
I need money. For a MEN'S bike. I'm coming up on...some would say *past* the age, where I can't keep riding Dianna's old banana bike.

The girls all go back to what they were doing.

PETER (CONT'D)
LISTEN. I'm not here for a handout, or your charity. I'm here to do the **man's** work that is sorely needed around here.

DIANNA
I don't see a man anywhere.

The girls chuckle.

PETER
I'm serious. And I'll work cheap.

This gets their attention. Peter passes a list to Janet.

PETER (CONT'D)
Check out my prices. For your
convenience, I've also posted a
list of my pricing on the fridge.

INSERT CLOSE UP of Peter's list on the fridge.

JANET
(reads the list)
You don't know how to fix a leaky
shower head. You barely know how to
use a toaster.

PETER
Those were giant bagels! And of
course I do. Plus if you book me
today, I'll give you my best price
of the summer season.

JANET
Alright. I'll hire you to fix the
leaky shower head upstairs. Fifty
cents?

PETER
Yes, payment up front please. And
did you want the extended warranty?

JANET
Haha, NO. Half up front. Half upon
completion.

Janet flips a quarter to him. Peter catches the quarter and
pockets it. Solemnly nods and moves to shake her hand, which
she ignores.

JANET (CONT'D)
Get to work little man.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - A BIT LATER

Peter eyeballs the dripping shower head.

ADULT PETER (V.O.)
You have to understand, these were
the days before I could find a
Youtube video on how to fix almost
anything.

Peter unspools duct tape in circles around the shower head.

ADULT PETER (V.O.)

Back then, it was up to young men
like myself to follow our instincts
and intuition.

Peter inspects the taped up shower head. Good enough. He
turns to leave...when DRIP, DRIP, DRIP...

PETER

Damnit.

INT. TAN KITCHEN - LATER

Peter crosses through the kitchen and stops abruptly. On the
fridge, a new sign reads: HANDY-WOMAN AVAILABLE! ASK FOR AMY.

Amy's sign undercuts **all** of his prices.

Amy saunters into the kitchen drinking a chocolate milk.

AMY

Hey big brother. How's business?

Peter glares at her.

AMY (CONT'D)

Little slow? That's funny. Cause I
just made three bucks this morning,
even though women **only** get paid
three fourths of what men make.

PETER

Three bucks? Hey Gordon Gekko,
you're stealing all my customers!

AMY

Gotta love this free market. It's
great for business.

Peter takes out a pen, and writes a few more jobs on his
sign: CAR WASHING, DETECTIVE WORK, BODYGUARD.

PETER

Shut your trap. You don't have the
skills, height, or physical
strength to do these jobs.

Amy takes a pen and adds those same jobs to her sign, only
cheaper. Peter ATTACKS, Amy SIDE-STEPS, narrowly escapes. She
races around the kitchen island, looking for safety.

AMY
Easy...let's not resort to violent,
immature behavior.

PETER
Immature? You're nine!

AMY
Yes, but girls mature faster than
boys. That's just science.

Peter lunges at her.

AMY (CONT'D)
Not a science guy.

Amy takes off running...Peter hot on her heels.

AMY (CONT'D)
MOM!!!

INT. TAN FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Amy races into the family room, where Susie and some of the girls fold laundry on the couch. Peter catches Amy from behind and tackles her into a mountain of folded laundry.

SUSIE
(in Mandarin)
STOP.

The Mandarin command cuts through the air. Peter releases Amy. They look in fear to their mother.

ADULT PETER (V.O.)
When she spoke Mandarin, we knew we
were screwed.

The other girls flee the room.

SUSIE
(in Mandarin)
*Kneel. With the chairs up high. One
hour. No talking, no moving.*

Peter and Amy know this drill all too well. Peter grabs a small wooden oak stool, and Amy grabs a small toddler's chair. They kneel down and hold the chairs above their heads.

ADULT PETER (V.O.)
 It's an old school form of
 physically exhausting punishment,
 perfected by generations of Chinese
 parents tired of beating their
 disobedient kids.

SUSIE
 (in Mandarin)
Butts off your heels.

Susie looks at her watch.

SUSIE (CONT'D)
 (in Mandarin)
One hour begins now.

Susie leaves the room.

PETER
 (whispers)
 This is all your fault. If you
 didn't try to steal my business, we
 wouldn't be here being tortured
 like John McCain.

AMY
 Shut up, you're the one with no
 self control. And for the record,
 I'd rather be in a POW camp. Mom
 could teach those North Vietnamese
 a few things about torture.

INT. TAN FAMILY ROOM - 45 MINUTES LATER

Susie sits on the couch folding clothes and listening to
 classical music. From time to time she admires her framed Yo-
 Yo Ma photograph on the piano.

Still kneeling, Peter and Amy look exhausted. Susie looks at
 her watch. She switches back to English.

SUSIE
 Got any more energy to fight?

No. PETER

No. AMY

SUSIE
 Okay get up.

Peter and Amy put the chairs down. With their knees and
 joints crackling, they get to their feet.

SUSIE (CONT'D)

That was only forty five minutes.
Next time you fight, it's going to
be Problem Child.

PETER

What?

SUSIE

Eighty one minutes of profound
disillusionment and soul crushing
horror.

PETER

Why do you always reference movies?

SUSIE

My English is so good because I
watch American movies. Even the
awful ones like Problem Child.

PETER

God, you can't keep punishing us
like this. This isn't Taiwan.

SUSIE

You're right. If this was Taiwan,
I'd beat you with a wooden
yardstick just for getting an A
minus.

Peter and Amy move quickly to exit the room.

INT. TAN LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Susie puts the finishing touches on a long, formal and very
conservative red dress. She bites a thread off her needle and
holds the dress up to Pauline.

SUSIE

All done. It only took me a hundred
hours to sew this dress by hand.
It's made of **almost** real Chinese
lambs wool. I may have carpal
tunnel, but it will have been worth
it just to see you wear it at the
piano recital.

PAULINE

Great...it doesn't look stuffy or
itchy at all.

SUSIE
A simple "thank you Mom" would do.

Pauline leaves. Susie yells...

SUSIE (CONT'D)
NANCY, I NEED YOUR MEASUREMENTS TO
FINISH SEWING YOUR NEW DRESS!

INT. TAN STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy races to the edge of the stairs.

NANCY
What!?

Like a chubby penguin Nancy trips, and tumbles down the stairs. She belly flops to the carpeted ground with a THUD. Peter is first to Nancy's side.

PETER
Oh my God, she's dead.

Susie does a quick inspection of Nancy, who groans.

PETER (CONT'D)
Maybe she should go to the
hospital.

Susie shoots Peter a look. Know how much that would cost?

SUSIE
(to Nancy)
You'll be fine. Drink some ginger
ale.

INT. TAN GARAGE - LATER THAT DAY

Peter spray paints a dish towel metallic silver.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - A BIT LATER

Peter presents his work to Janet. She inspects the metallic colored dish towel duct taped around the shower head.

JANET
This looks so bootleg.

PETER

Yes, but the leak is fixed. And notice how I matched the color of the cloth, to the finish of your shower head.

JANET

I mean I *guess* you fixed it.

Janet reluctantly hands him a quarter.

PETER

Nothing beats hearing the satisfaction of my customers - except for a nice BRT - bacon, ramen and tomato sandwich, where the bacon is nice and thick and the ramen is crisp. I love that.

JANET

I'm like sorta kinda satisfied.

PETER

Great. Need a car wash, body guard service, or any lost items found today?

JANET

I lost my watch, but I just hired Amy to find it. Her prices are REALLY low. And she's so cute. All the girls are hiring her for everything.

Peter's face flushes red with anger.

PETER

She's not that cute! I have dimples!

Janet leaves.

PETER (CONT'D)

SHE DOESN'T EVEN NEED THE MONEY.
I'M THE ONE THAT NEEDS A BOY'S
BIKE!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. TAN LIVING ROOM - DAY

Peter stares sadly out the window at Henry and his friends launching off curbs on their bmx bikes and drinking juice boxes. Susie enters with a bowl of her famous dessert.

SUSIE

Grass jelly?

PETER

Sure, I guess.

Peter continues staring at his friends drinking juice boxes. Susie scoops Peter a bowl of grass jelly.

SUSIE

This is even more refreshing than boba tea from a shop. And **way** cheaper. The prices they charge are like Dog Day Afternoon.

PETER

What?

SUSIE

Like a man robbing a bank to pay for his lover's operation.

The wheels in Peter's head churn.

PETER

Could you teach me how to make this grass jelly?

SUSIE

Sure, it's easy. We just have to go easy on the sugar, I think I added too much this time.

Peter jumps up, knocks his grass jelly over.

SUSIE (CONT'D)

Watch it! Grass jelly doesn't grow on trees you know.

PETER

That's it! Mom, you're a genius!

EXT. TAN HOME / SIDEWALK - LATER

Peter sits at a cute home-made stand. Curious NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS, Henry and his friends crowd around to see what Peter is selling.

PETER
Get your grass jelly, get your
healthy grass jelly here!

HENRY
Ew that looks like frog eggs! Are
you trying to sell us frog eggs
that are healthy?

The kids laugh.

PETER
(whispers)
Listen up. None of your parents can
know this. These frog eggs have
more sugar than a can of Coke in
each scoop. I'm not bs'ing, try it.

HENRY
Alright, I'll try your frog eggs.

Peter scoops a bowl for Henry. Henry slurps a tiny scoop with a spoon. Henry tosses the spoon aside and guzzles the grass jelly straight from the bowl.

HENRY (CONT'D)
IT'S SWEETER THAN SUNNY DELIGHT OR
COKE!

Kids push forward. Peter slings grass jelly to kids. Cash is stuffed into a jar. Business is booming.

ACROSS the street, JAMES UNDERWOOD (40s), waspy, and his son JOSH UNDERWOOD (12) call out from their LONELY lemonade stand.

JAMES	JOSH
Ice cold lemonade! Only ten cents!	Get it while it lasts!

The crowd ignores James and Josh. James crosses the street in a huff, drags Josh along. They push their way to the front.

JAMES
What the heck is grass jelly?

PETER

Chilled milk tea with jelly cubes
made from leaves and stalks from
the Mesona Chinensis plant.

JAMES

Let me try one.

PETER

Sure, that's one dollar.

JAMES

That's absurd. Unless it has rum?

PETER

Completely non-alcoholic sir.

James pays, slurps the grass jelly...his eyes WIDEN.

JAMES

This is absolutely...delicious.

PETER

Thank you.

JAMES

Not a compliment. This isn't over.
Josh, stop ogling the grass jelly!

James stomps away as Josh trails behind.

EXT. CONCERT HALL - THE NEXT DAY

With Susie's blue van parked behind them, the Tans walk
towards the concert hall.

ADULT PETER (V.O.)

Pauline was my mom's pride and joy.
Musically gifted, disciplined, and
high school class valedictorian.

Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" plays as the camera pans to find
Pauline in the homemade red dress, with a large red purse.

ADULT PETER (V.O.)

In my mom's eyes, you could not
have designed and engineered a more
perfect child than Pauline.

INT. CONCERT HALL - MOMENTS LATER

With Handel still pumping, the Tans walk into the concert hall, Susie beaming.

ADULT PETER (V.O.)
 Having a daughter attend Juilliard was probably my mom's greatest accomplishment in life. And more importantly, it left Mrs. Lee and her daughter Sarah Lee as second best.

MRS. LEE (40ish) and her daughter SARAH LEE (19) frown as the Tans walk past. Pauline is adored by all the other Chinese piano students and their families. Nancy trips and falls.

ADULT PETER (V.O.)
 In the Chinese community, your social status was determined by a very specific formula. Money, plus the elite college attended by your children, divided by number of musical instruments mastered by your kids.

INT. CONCERT HALL - A BIT LATER

MRS. WU (60) the wizened piano teacher steps to a microphone.

MRS. WU
 It gives me great pleasure to welcome back my protégé who I wish all of you could be more like in **every** single way...PAULINE TAN!

The audience erupts in applause.

MRS. WU (CONT'D)
 She'll be playing Paganini's impossible piece Grandes Etudes.

The audience murmurs. Pauline takes a seat at the piano bench. Susie looks like she might burst with pride.

PAULINE
 Hi I'm not going to play Paganini today. I've actually been working on something else.

Pauline dramatically rips her dress off, revealing Janet Jackson's Rhythm Nation outfit beneath.

SUSIE
I can fix that!

Pauline kicks off her heels and from her purse, pulls out her black combat boots. Black baseball cap.

SUSIE (CONT'D)
Is this a joke?

A few teenagers hoot and holler. Pauline puts a black gloved hand up a la Janet Jackson, and counts down.

PAULINE
Five, four, three, two, one.

Pauline launches into a piano version of Rhythm Nation.

PAULINE (CONT'D)
*Yeah yeah yeah yeah, yeah yeah yeah
Bass bass, bass, bass...*

PETER
Awesome.

SUSIE
No, play the Paganini.

Mrs. Lee and Sarah smirk at Susie. Pauline jumps off the piano bench mid-song and starts dancing as she sings.

PAULINE
*To break the color lines
Let's work together...*

Susie runs up to the edge of the stage, waves frantically.

SUSIE
What are you doing? Are you
allergic to the dress?

Pauline ignores her, continues dancing.

SUSIE (CONT'D)
Play the Paganini. Don't make me
come up there.

Susie climbs onto the stage, tries to grab Pauline. Pauline does a nifty spin move, doesn't break rhythm and dances away.

SUSIE (CONT'D)
Spin move? This isn't football and
you're not Barry Sanders!

Pauline defiantly continues. Susie chases Pauline. Grabs her shirt...and RIP. Pauline covers up. The audience GASPS.

PAULINE
Look what you did!

SUSIE
Cheap stitching! We're kidding,
everyone this was all a joke.

PAULINE
It's not a joke!

Pauline races off the stage. Mrs. Lee and Sarah smugly smirk.

PETER
NICE! Now I won't have to perform!
Thank you Jesus!

EXT. TAN HOME - SIDEWALK - DAY

Peter opens. Before he can serve his first customer, a sedan roars up. EMILY CAMPBELL (50) jumps out, flashes her badge.

EMILY
Health Department! Show's over
folks. I'm shutting this down.

From their lemonade stand, James and Josh smirk.

PETER	EMILY (CONT'D)
Can I have a word, Miss...	It's Inspector Campbell.
PETER	EMILY (CONT'D)
(palms her a dollar)	TRYING TO BRIBE A CITY
Inspector Campbell I was	OFFICIAL? I'm shutting the
wondering if you've met my	grass jelly down, the
friend...George...Washington?	dumplings down and the salon.

PETER
Do you know my friend --

EMILY
Put it away!

PETER
Please don't do this. I just need
enough money to buy a new bike.

At their lemonade stand, James and Josh high-five.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREEINT. TAN KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY

Peter sheepishly sits at the kitchen table. Susie anxiously stirs grass jelly in a large bowl.

SUSIE

This is bad. With the health department onto us, I can't make any money.

PETER

What if we took our operations on the road?

SUSIE

Meaning...

PETER

You cut hair and sell dumplings from the van.

SUSIE

We could probably get away with it for a little while. But hairy dumplings aren't what we want to be known for.

PETER

What if we just paid the fines and got you a business license?

SUSIE

We don't have that kind of money.

Peter puts his head in his hands.

PETER

I really messed things up.

SUSIE

Come on, have some grass jelly.

Pauline enters the kitchen.

PAULINE

I'll have some.

SUSIE

I don't think so. Not after your re-enactment of Tiananmen Square.

PAULINE
I was expressing myself as an
artist.

SUSIE (CONT'D)
That was NOT art. I paid
thousands of dollars for you
to take piano lesson.

PAULINE
Which I never asked for.

SUSIE (CONT'D)
I did all this, so you could
have an amazing career with
full benefits. My teeth are
killing me, I'd love to have
benefits. What exactly are
you rebelling against?
Healthy teeth?

PAULINE
I'm not rebelling. I just want to
be me. And piano isn't the only
thing that defines me as a human
being. Which is why I dropped out
of Juilliard!

Susie slumps to the ground, clutching her chest.

SUSIE
Oh...oh...oh.

PAULINE
Mom, are you okay!

SUSIE
I think I'm having a heart attack.
Or a stroke. I can't breathe.

Susie closes her eyes.

PAULINE
Mom I'm sorry! I'll do anything you
want, just don't die.

Susie weakly mumbles.

SUSIE
Re-enroll at Juilliard. And promise
me you'll graduate.

PAULINE
I promise I'll graduate!

Susie opens her eyes. Sits UP. Peter offers her a can...

PETER
Ginger ale?

Susie takes a sip of ginger ale and smiles.

SUSIE

So that's settled. I'm happy you're back in school. This dance thing is just a short phase you're going through. Like America's appetite for Splenda, George Bush and burning fossil fuel.

Pauline storms away and slams the front door. Susie sighs.

SUSIE (CONT'D)

I bet Kristi Yamaguchi never slammed doors at home.

(to Peter)

C'mon we have work to do.

INT. TAN KITCHEN - NIGHT

Peter chops ground pork. Nancy cuts bok choy on a cutting board, next to Susie who furiously chops cabbage.

SUSIE

We need to change that health inspector's mind.

PETER

You really think fighting the health department with dumplings is the way to go?

SUSIE

A dumpling trap is the only weapon I have left.

Peter washes his hands, then opens the fridge door. SOMETHING inside a plastic bag MOVES in the fridge.

PETER

JESUS MOM! WHAT IS THAT!?

SUSIE

What?

PETER

There's something moving in the fridge.

SUSIE

Is there? Oh right, crab and lobster. For the dumplings.

PETER

Mom, you gotta warn us when you put live animals in the fridge.

SUSIE

Okay Jane Goodall. I'm going to get more Napa cabbage from the garden. Nancy, be careful with the bok choy, it's very slippery.

NANCY

I know Mom, I don't need a lecture.

INT. TAN KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The knife slips. SLICES through Nancy's index finger.

NANCY

FUUUUUUUUUJUDGE.

Susie races back into the kitchen. Grabs a dish towel and wraps it around Nancy's stub.

SUSIE

Apply pressure. Where's your finger?

NANCY (CONT'D)

I DON'T KNOWWWW.

Pauline, Janet and Amy poke their heads into the kitchen.

SUSIE

Pauline, find Nancy's finger and pack it in ice. Janet, find my keys to the van. Amy, stop slouching honey.

Amy straightens up.

SUSIE (CONT'D)

Better. EVERYONE IN THE VAN NOW!
We're going to the ER.

Nancy holds up her bloody finger stump.

NANCY

HURRY BEFORE THEY HAVE TO AMPUTATE!

SUSIE

Isn't amputate when you cut it off?

AMY

Yeah, it's basically already amputated.

JANET

She needs like a reverse amputation.

Nancy holds up her bloody stump which spurts blood.

NANCY
ALL OF YOU -- SHUT UP! HOSPITAL!

PETER
Ooh yikes. Ginger ale ain't gonna
fix that.

INT. TAN KITCHEN - THE NEXT DAY

Peter dials a number on the phone. Susie looks on.

PETER
Hello, this is Mr. James Underwood
for Inspector Emily Campbell.

EMILY (O.S.)
Speaking.

PETER
Inspector, I saw that sneaky Asian
family on my block acting funny
again. Could you do another site
visit today? Just to make sure
they're up to code.

EMILY (O.S.)
I'll be right out there.

PETER
Fantastic, I think if you hurry you
might be able to catch them red-
handed. Or yellow-handed in this
case.

EMILY (O.S.)
That's just lazy and racist Mr.
Underwood. But I will be out there
shortly to investigate.

PETER
Uh, quite right. Very good.

Peter hangs up, looks at Susie.

PETER (CONT'D)
Operation Dumpling Trap is a go.

INT. / EXT. TAN PORCH - LATER - DAY

DING DONG. Peter, dressed as a maitre d' in a suit answers the door. Emily flashes her badge.

EMILY
Health department --

Nervous, Peter inexplicably speaks with an Italian accent.

PETER
Ah, Ms. Campbell. Mama Mia it's
been-a too long-a!

Peter kisses both her cheeks.

PETER (CONT'D)
I have your table right this way-a!

EMILY
No, I'm here because we received a
complaint of possible health
violations.

SUSIE
Please come in. We got off on the
wrong foot. But since we're
neighbors, we wanted to break
dumplings with you.

Peter whispers.

PETER
Bread.

SUSIE
What?

PETER
Break bread. It's okay, keep going.

SUSIE
Neighbors should get to know one
another.

EMILY
That's nice. But I don't even live
anywhere near --

SUSIE
Even so. It's like the commercial.
Beef, it's what's for dinner.

EMILY

Right...well that is a good commercial. The music is catchy too.

SUSIE

Yes, I love the string instruments they use. Come on, take a seat.

INT. TAN DINING ROOM - A BIT LATER

Susie and Peter place bamboo steamer baskets in front of Emily. Susie removes the bamboo lids, releasing clouds of steam and unveiling a gorgeous buffet of soup dumplings.

SUSIE

These are pork xiao long bao, these are crab and these beauties...these are lobster.

EMILY

I can't eat any of these.

SUSIE

Look if it's because of a conflict of interest --

EMILY

It's not that. I just don't eat pork, crab or lobster.

Fuuudge. There goes Operation Dumpling Trap. Susie's shoulders slump.

PETER

Do you eat duck?

EMILY

Yes.

PETER

Don't go anywhere, be right back.

INT. TAN KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Peter grabs Peking duck off the counter, chops it up. Susie enters the kitchen, shakes her head.

SUSIE

Americans are allergic to everything.

(MORE)

SUSIE (CONT'D)

When I was a kid, the only thing we were allergic to was being hungry. That duck you're chopping was for our dinner -- I didn't have time to make any steamed buns to go with it yet.

PETER

It's going to be fine. I have an idea.

INT. TAN DINING ROOM - A BIT LATER

Peter serves Emily the duck. Emily inspects her plate.

EMILY

Are these tortillas?

PETER

That's right. Roasted duck, a salsa roja made from Chinese and Mexican chillies, cilantro-onion-lime relish, chili soy slaw, hoisin sauce -- all over two crisply toasted corn tortillas.

Emily lifts a taco to her mouth. Bites. Chews...

PETER (CONT'D)

Well...

EMILY

Is there cilantro in this? Oh God, I'm allergic to cilantro.

Peter's face falls.

PETER

I said it had cilantro! A cilantro allergy? How is that even a thing!?

Emily chuckles.

EMILY

I'm just messing with you.

Peter exhales. Emily takes another bite of the taco. She closes her eyes.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Mmmm...this is the tastiest thing I've ever eaten.

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)
You're like a goddamn taco
bodhisattva. I feel like I've been
reborn.

Peter and Susie grin.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Now that you've softened me up,
what do you really want?

SUSIE
We can't afford the fines. And we
can't afford a business license.

EMILY
I got you. As long as you keep
hooking me up with these tacos, you
won't have any problems. Deal?

Susie shakes Emily's hand. In his fake phone voice...

PETER
Deal Inspector. Thanks for keeping
those sneaky Chinese in line.

Emily chuckles.

INT. TAN KITCHEN - NIGHT

Susie and Peter prep dinner. Soup dumplings of course.

PETER
How did you pay for all that crab
and lobster?

SUSIE
I traded some persimmons at the
Chinese market. And I sold my Yo-Yo
Ma autographed picture to Mrs. Lee.

PETER
What? But you love Yo-Yo Ma!

SUSIE
Yes I do. What was I thinking? But
you know, I really gouged Mrs. Lee
on the price. So we might have
enough to get you a new bike.

PETER
Seriously?

SUSIE

Yes.

Peter hugs Susie. Nancy enters, opens the fridge. Peter returns to mixing dumpling filling, spots a red object in the bowl.

PETER

Nancy, what color are your nails?

NANCY

Red, why?

PETER

No reason.

NANCY

I can't believe we never
found my finger tip.

PETER (CONT'D)

I know, weird.

Peter drops the dumpling filling in the trash.

SUSIE

Oh Nancy, I talked to Dr. Chang.
And she thinks if you took up a
sport like karate, it could help
with your coordination.

PETER

WHAT!? NO! She doesn't even like
karate. I've been begging for
lessons for five years!

SUSIE

Don't be greedy, you have enough
coordination already. Nancy has
none.

INT. TAN FAMILY ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Nancy enters the living room, dressed in a karate uniform.

NANCY

How do I look?

Peter looks on, jealous.

PETER

You look like Jackie Chan, if he
had no muscles, athleticism or
basic motor skills.

NANCY
Screw you. I'm not going to
teach you any of the moves I
learn.

PETER (CONT'D)
Oh no, please I'm
sorry...NOT. I would never
accept you as my sensei
anyway!

INT. KARATE DOJO - LATER

Nancy steps onto the karate mat wearing sparring gear. She
faces off with a MALE KARATE STUDENT (17), twice her size.
Nancy pummels him with head kicks and lightning fast strikes.
She's a natural. Susie, Peter and the girls look on.

PETER
Mom do we have any relatives that
can teach me karate?

SUSIE
Nancy. If she teaches you, it's
like two lessons for the price of
one. That's a good deal.

Nancy waves and smiles at Peter. She mouths the words:

NANCY
I own you now. Bow to your master.

PETER
Fuuuuuuudge.

INT. / EXT. LOCAL BIKE SHOP - DAY

Peter admires new bikes. All the Tans are present.

SUSIE
I know it's not easy growing up in
a house full of woman. You want to
learn to be a good man. A real man?

PETER
Yeah.

SUSIE
Then we're going to teach you, the
best we can. First lesson. No
matter what, family first, got it?

Peter nods his head.

SUSIE (CONT'D)
Go. Pick out a bike made for a man.

AMY

I'm going to inherit the bike you pick today. Perhaps it doesn't have to be overly macho. Like more Bowie, less Schwarzenegger.

PETER

Shut up Amy, today is about me!

In the parking lot, Peter rides a shiny chrome Haro bmx bike.

SUSIE

What do you think?

PETER

I love it. It's so much lighter than Dianna's old banana bike.

A BIKE SALESMAN (20ish) wheels out a nearly identical bike.

BIKE SALESMAN

Here try this one out.

Peter hops on the bike and pedals around the parking lot.

PETER

What's the difference?

BIKE SALESMAN

This one has pressure treated hard plastic mag wheels. You'll never break a spoke on a jump, and your wheels will never rust.

Peter inspects the bike.

PETER

But the mag wheels are pink.

BIKE SALESMAN

Yeah man, they're hot pink. Gnarly.

Peter turns to Susie and the girls.

PETER

What do you guys think?

SUSIE

It's kind of girly.

JANET

Are you trying to be teased for the rest of your life?

AMY

Please, please, please get the pink wheels.

PETER

I don't know...

Peter looks at the desperation on Amy's face. Despite their rivalry, he loves his little sister.

PETER (CONT'D)
Okay, I'll take the mag wheels.

BIKE SALESMAN / SUSIE / JANET
Really?

PETER
Yeah.

AMY
Yes!

EXT. STREET - A BIT LATER

Peter cruises down the street on his new bike. His chest puffed out, he feels like a new man.

PETER
No more girly banana bike for me!

NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS surround Peter. He stops to show off.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #1
New bike?

PETER
Yeah, it's a Haro.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #1
Cool. Why are the wheels pink?

PETER (CONT'D)
They're indestructible
pressure treated hard
plastic.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #2
Yeah, but why are they pink?

PETER (CONT'D)
(sweating)
They're rust proof and real
solid.

A car of teenagers (from our opening) drives past.

TEENAGER #1
Hey girl!

TEENAGER #2
Nice bike sissy!

Peter is in a full-on panic now. He screams:

PETER
THEY'RE INDESTRUCTIBLE MAG WHEELS!

END OF ACT THREE

TAGINT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

Amy climbs into the shower. Happy as a clam, she hums the classic opera piece "Rigoletto La Dona e mobile". She turns the shower faucet, and the entire shower head EXPLODES in her face, raining down plaster and tile.

AMY

FUUUUUUUUJUDGE! PETER!

EXT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Peter grins outside the bathroom door.

PETER

Did you need a handy man? I'm
running a special promotion right
now...

END OF SHOW