

Untitled [Redacted]: Episode 4

By Nicholas Tran

Muffled arguing, lasts at least a minute.

MURIEL

Halfway through the arguing.

Heavy Breathing.

A series of thuds.

More muffled speech.

Beat.

A loud thud.

Beat.

Fatigued and out of it. All lines should be unclear about whether MURIEL is literally speaking, or she is speaking the lines in her mind. Fragments are separated by a Beat and can be re-arranged. The time between fragments can range from a stream of consciousness to an Uncomfortable Beat. Some Fragments can be, and should be, repeated. Grandma grunts and lip smacks punctuate lines and silences periodically.

Was that Benji? Benji! It's not nice to cause a ruckus! Come to spend time with Meemaw instead! Let me tell you a story of when your Daddy was little!

Beat.

Hmmm?

Beat.

When is Jackie coming back from the fields? He shouldn't work himself so hard. Poor Jo, he's such a workaholic. I wish we weren't so hard on him growing up Tim, he works himself too hard.

Beat.

What time is it? Does Jo need help with dinner?

Beat.

I wonder what's for dinner.

Beat.

When is Alexis getting married? She grew up so pretty.

Beat.

Benji! Benji! Come spend time with your Meemaw! I get lonely without you!

Beat.

It's getting cold. I should knit some new blankets for the kids. They don't need to suffer anymore.

Beat.

The sky is so pretty tonight, come take a walk with me Tim!

Beat.

Oh baby Alexis, come to Meemaw! You're going to grow up to such a beautiful woman.

Beat.

Benji, baby, you should eat more. You need to grow up to be just as strong as your Daddy!

Beat.

Oh, is someone at the door? I wonder if Jo can hear that, I can't seem to reach.

Beat.

Who's that? I can't seem to make him out without my glasses.

Beat.

I'm scared, I hope Jackie comes home soon.

Beat.

I'm not ready. I still want to see my baby Benji grow up.

Beat.

I'm so hungry. When is dinner?

Beat.

I'm so thirsty...

The air is so dry here.

Beat.

I'm so thirsty...

Beat.

Jo is so busy with the kids. I wish I could help her more.

Beat.

It's so quiet, I wish Tim would come home soon.

Beat.

Jo's so pretty, Jackie is a lucky boy. He should spend more time with her. I wish Tim wouldn't pressure him so much.

Beat.

Tim? Is that you? You shouldn't sneak up on me like that! You know my heart isn't what it used to be!

Beat.

Jo! You should rest! Let me take care of the cooking and the kids.

Beat.

Jackie, my baby, I know your father is hard on you, but he only wants the best from you.

Beat.

Tim!

Tim!

TIM!

Please don't leave me. I'm not ready to go yet.

Beat.

Alexis has been awfully quiet recently; I hope she's getting time to study. She's at an important age right now.

Beat.

Jo is such a kind girl. If I had a daughter, would she grow up to be like her?

Beat.

Jackie! You don't need to worry so much. Come spend time with your family while you can!

Beat.

What time is it? Is dinner soon?

Beat.

Jooooo!

Jooooo!

Do you need help?

Beat.

Come sit on Meemaw's lap, Alexis. Let me tell you the story of how your Mommy and Daddy met.

Beat.

Ah, where are my glasses? Sorry baby, Meemaw's eyes aren't as good as they used to be.

Beat.

Incoherent grumbling.

Beat.

Benji, it's not nice to play pranks on your Mommy. She works very hard.

Beat.

Benji! Come help me cook dinner for your Mommy!

Beat.

Jackie! Come help me cook dinner for your Daddy!

Beat.

They've been fighting for a while. I hope they make up soon, it's not good to fight in front of the children.

Beat.

Where's Benji?

Beat.

Yes Benji, Meemaw can see Mr. Biggs. How do you do Mr. Biggs?

Beat.

I wonder if Benji needs more friends. Imaginary friends aren't healthy for him.

Beat.

It's so lonely when the house is quiet. When are the kids coming home?

Beat.

Who's there? Did come to take me away? Did you take my Benji too?

Beat.

Jo! Where's Benji? I feel like I haven't seen his smile in a while.

Beat.

Jo? Why are you crying baby? Did Jackie do something? Should I talk to him for you?

Beat.

Don't cry baby, it's going to be alright. Meemaw's here to keep you safe.

Beat.

Don't cry baby, it's going to be alright. Mommy's here to keep you safe.

Beat.

You don't have to grow up to be a farmer baby. It's okay, you can grow up to be anything you want.

Beat.

Tim, I'm so glad our baby met Jo. They're going to make each other so happy.

Beat.

Tim, we did it. We raised a strong boy; you can relax now.

Beat.

Tim, dear, can you bring me some warm milk?

Beat.

Jo, dear, can you bring me some warm milk?

Beat.

Alexis, baby, would you like some warm milk? It always makes me feel better.

Beat.

Alexis, baby, why are you crying? You can tell Meemaw.

Beat.

It's okay Alexis, baby, you can grow up and be whoever you want to be. I know your parents can have high expectations, but no matter what, they love you. We all love you.

Beat.

I miss you Tim. It's so lonely without you.

Beat.

I'm so lonely.

Beat.

Huh? What is that creaking? This house feels like it'll break at any moment.

Beat.

Jo, you should look into getting the stairs repaired, someone's going to hurt themselves someday.

Beat.

Benji! Be careful! Don't go to a place we can't see you!

Beat.

Benji! Where are you hiding? Meemaw can't find you!

Beat.

Tim, you're not going to come visit with me? You and Jackie need to make up already.

Beat.

My throat is so parched. Where is the water again?

Beat.

Water...

Beat.

I can't move. It's so hard to breathe.

Beat.

Benji! Slow down! Baby, Meemaw can't move as well as you can.

Beat.

It's so hard to get up.

Beat.

It's so hard to open my eyes.

Beat.

Just a quick nap.

Beat.

I'm just going to get some sleep.

Beat.

Everything will be better when I wake up.

Beat.

Benji! Come nap with Meemaw!

Beat.

I'm so tired.

Beat.

Jo will wake me up when dinner's ready.

Static.

An uncomfortable beat.

DISTORTED VOICE (Mr. Biggs)

Backwards.

I paid her a nice, slow visit.