

SINGLE AND COUNTING

Episode 101 - "Pilot"

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ACT ONE

INT. VILLAGE HOME - FAMILY ROOM - DAY

This room has a 65" Smart TV, DVD Player, desktop computer, a myriad of movies, sofa, loveseat, two recliners, coffee table, two writing desks, a Baldwin Piano, train set, children's toys, and an electronics charging station.

DANIELLE SHELBY (35), stout woman with short, natural black hair, rests in the recliner and cradles JAE HOGAN (5), sweet and funny little girl. The other children relax and watch a movie.

DANIELLE (V.O.)

"History will judge us by the difference we make in the everyday lives of children." - Nelson Mandela

Danielle looks down at Jae as she clutches Danielle's face.

DANIELLE

Whoa little one. Too tight. What's wrong?

JAE

Read to me Tee-Tee. I want to read the bunny book today.

DANIELLE

Just let me close my eyes for a few minutes, please.

Jae BLINKS at Danielle.

JAE

Tee-Tee, please? Let's read the book before the twins wake from their nap.

KEITH NELSON (62), slender man with back-length dreads, wears jeans and t-shirt, NICOLE BROWN (50), medium build woman with neck-length hair, wears a green dress, and CELESTE HOGAN (35), stout woman with hazel eyes and freckles enter. The three huddle and watch as Danielle and Jae read the book, and observe their other children, some engage in the movie, and the others engage in the story.

NICOLE

It's amazing how quickly she gets their attention, and how they want nothing to do with the rest of us.

Keith and Celeste nod in agreement.

KEITH

Well girls, it's almost feeding time. Who's night is it?

NICOLE

It's the avid reader's night. By the way, Celeste, you're home early today. What's the occasion?

CELESTE

Oh, I hear the twins. Come with me Nikki, and I'll tell you.

Keith moves across the room, kisses Danielle's forehead and taps his watch.

DANIELLE

Hey you, how long have you been home?

KEITH

Hey yourself. Long enough to catch you engaging the children, as always.

Danielle smiles and Keith winks.

KEITH (CONT'D)

So, when you gon read to me? Can I sit in your lap when you do it?

JAE

Noooooo, you can't sit in Tee-Tee's lap Uncle Keith! You're too big. My lap, not yours Uncle Keith.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. VILLAGE HOME - DINING ROOM - EVENING

Danielle calls out to everyone.

DANIELLE

Dinner's ready in ten minutes!
Y'all wash up now. Come on. Let's
get it. Lena! Duke! Maddie! Andy!
Come here, please.

LENA CAMERON (11), DUANE (Duke) BROWN (11), MADISON (Maddie)
COLEMAN (10), and ANDREW (Andy) COLEMAN (12) all run into the
dining room to meet Danielle.

They stand there, smile and play while Danielle rushes with
dishes in hand.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

Okay my lovelies, don't just stand
there gawking at me; how about some
help? Who's night to set the
tables, and gather the children?

The four of them look at each and then at Danielle. Then they
all run off to check the Chore Chart.

LENA

Tee-Tee, I need your help with my
homework.

DANIELLE

Sweet girl, after dinner. But now,
Tee-Tee needs your help in
gathering the others. Five minutes
everyone!

MADDIE

Tee-Tee, tables set and high-chairs
in place. And, why do I have to
still sit at the kids' table?

KEITH

Because you're still a kid, my
girl.

MADDIE

Hi poppy. It's not fair. I'm old
enough to sit at the adult table.

KEITH

Madison, we're not having this discussion. Have a seat, now!

Maddie storms off and Keith attempts to storm after her.

DANIELLE

Tsk. Tsk. Keith? I'll talk to her later. Celeste! Nicole! Dianne! Dinner's ready.

KEITH

Dianne's not here. I believe she's working. Can we please eat?!

KYLE HOGAN (7), DEON FRAY (6), SARAH BROWN (7), TYGER BROWN (5), PETE BROWN (4), DANIEL and ELLA SHELBY (2) race into the dining room.

CELESTE

Y'ALL STOP RUNNING IN THIS HOUSE!
LENA, KYLE AND JAE, Y'ALL BETTER NOT BE RUNNING! Daniel? Ella? Where are you? Where are they?

PAUL SHELBY (38), muscular-tone man with mahogany-skin enters, and wears camel khaki slacks and a purple polo shirt. He holds a vase of blue and white roses in one hand and a large bag in the other.

PAUL

Celeste, they are down here; baby girl has that look in her eye, so come on down.

All the children look up and greet their Uncle Paul, while the twins run toward him.

Nicole and Celeste greet Paul, and each take a twin. Keith stand there in a daze until Danielle takes her seat.

DANIELLE

Keith, why don't you give the blessing, please.

PAUL

Hey baby, come here girl.

DANIELLE

Hi honey, you're weighed down. Let me help you.

PAUL

No dear, I'll do it. I see you've outdone yourself again.

Paul takes his seat next to Danielle, which upsets Keith. No one notices Keith's facial expressions. Multiple conversations ensue around the room.

KEITH

Let us pray. Dear Lord, thank you for this meal and the preparer; let it be nourishing to our bodies. Amen.

ALL

Amen.

NICOLE

So little ones, how was school today? What did we learn? What projects are due, and when?

DEON

Where's my mommy?

DANIELLE

Deon, that was rude? What have we told you about being rude?

DEON

Don't be rude. Give others the chance to talk.

DANIELLE

Deon, apologize, and then put your phone away. No electronics at the dinner table.

DEON

Aunt Nikki, I'm sorry for being rude to you.

NICOLE

Thank you Deon.

The children begin to share the events of their day with their parents, aunts and uncles. Laughter fills the room while food fills bellies.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. VILLAGE HOME - FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Celeste and Keith clean the dishes in the kitchen with the older children. Nicole corrects and checks homework. Danielle, Paul, and the smaller children sit in the family room.

JAE

Tee-Tee, can I stay with you tonight?

DANIELLE

Not tonight sweet girl. You have school tomorrow.

PAUL

Sweet girl, can I borrow Tee-Tee for tonight? I promise to give her back tomorrow night.

JAE

Nope, not gonna happen. My Tee-Tee.

Jae hugs Danielle and refuses to let go. Lena comes in and interrupts.

LENA

Tee-Tee! Are you going to help me with my homework now? You did say after dinner. I have a project due.

Danielle raises an eyebrow, hugs Jae, and questions Lena.

DANIELLE

When is the project due, Lena?

LENA

Tomorrow.

DANIELLE

TOMORROW! Dammit Lena, when did you get the assignment?

LENA

Tee-Tee, please don't curse at me. Two weeks ago.

PAUL

Lena, stop waiting until the last minute to ask for help on your projects!

LENA

I'm sorry Uncle Paul. I'm sorry Tee-Tee. Will you please help me this time?

PAUL

Danielle, don't take too long. You owe me some time too.

DANIELLE

Paul, I ...

Paul scoffs, walks away, and leaves Danielle and Lena in the family room.

CELESTE

Brother? Paul? What is it?

PAUL

Lena has a project due tomorrow, and just asked "Tee-Tee" for her help. And of course, it's "Tee-Tee" to the rescue!

CELESTE

She did what! I'm gon beat her ass. I keep telling her to stop waiting until the last minute with stuff.

PAUL

Good night Celeste, Nicole. Keith. Good night children.

CHILDREN

Good night Uncle Paul.

Danielle nods off. Keith walks Nicole and the children home, and then walks Maddie and Andy home. After they go inside, Keith returns to lock up.

CELESTE

Danielle, go home. You've done your part. I'll finish up here. Paul didn't look too happy.

Danielle looks at her watch and gasps. Keith clears his throat.

KEITH

Celeste, take the little ones home.
I'll walk you out. Danielle, come
on, you too.

LENA

But mom, I'm not finished yet.

CELESTE

That's your fault for waiting until
the last minute! I bet you won't
wait after tonight. Danielle, don't
say one word!

DANIELLE

For once Celeste, I wasn't. But
don't get too comfortable with my
silence. Lena, Tee-Tee loves you.

LENA

Love you Tee-Tee. Thank you for
helping me tonight.

CELESTE

Danielle, love you hun. Don't be
angry with me. I'll call you in the
morning.

Danielle carries Jae and Keith carries Kyle as the three
prepare to part ways. Celeste gathers everyone inside and
Keith stands and gazes at Danielle.

DANIELLE

Keith, stop staring at my ass and
tell me why all the pouting at
dinner tonight? You think I didn't
notice?

KEITH

I'm going take a cold shower since
you wouldn't read a book to me.
Good night Danielle.

END OF ACT THREE