

Time Keeps on Slipping into the Future

by Jules de Jongh  
Season 2 Episode 26

[opening theme music and strapline]

Nanny Bea: Hello and welcome to my cottage. Your timing is perfection. I have cup of tea in my hand and my neighbour Jules will be bringing us a story any...

[knock sfx]

Nanny Bea: minute now.

Nanny Bea: Who do you think that is? Hello?

Jules: Hello Nanny Bea, it's your neighbour Jules with a story.

Nanny Bea: You are who I thought you'd be!

Jules: So are you Nanny Bea! I don't want to waste any 'time' so are you ready for a story?

Nanny Bea: Oh, yes please.

Jules: Okay then, Time Keeps on Slipping into the Future, adapted for radio

Time keeps on slipping, slipping, slipping into the future. And yes that is what it's supposed to do but not at an ever increasing rate. The change started slowly enough, almost imperceptible. The village rooster started missing his cue, music on the radio kept bumping into the news and Mr Myer missed his...well you'll find out in just a minute.

Mr Myer was a particular kind of man. He lived a life of activities done in good time, at the appointed time, all the time. He'd wake at 6:43 am, not 6:43 and 34 seconds, not 6:43 and 3 seconds, no, no, no he woke at 6:43 precisely, every morning. Then he rolled out of bed, slid into his slippers, walked to his kitchen where he would set his bread to toast for 1 minute and 52 seconds, as he scrambled his eggs. 1 minute and 52 seconds provided a golden toast and a moist scramble just as Mr Myer liked it. Consumption of said meal took an additional 4 minutes and 17 seconds allowing Mr Myer sufficient time to examine the daily weather report and confirm the exact configuration of clothing he should compile while avoiding the nuisance of indigestion. A shower was of course the cleansing regime of choice. All in, Mr Myer's routine would take him to 7:24 am exactly when he would step out of his door, cross the street, pass by four houses and catch the ever so timely 7:26 bus. There was no margin for error, Mr Myer had no need for such fluid planning. Time had a job to do and it did it well until the day it did not.

Mr Myer rose at his 6:43 am slot, toasted and scrambled in his 1 minute 52 second allocation, consumed, cleansed and clothed all in time to reach his 7:24 appointment of crossing his threshold. As Mr Myer stepped out of his door, crossed the street, passed by not four but only three houses, he saw his ever so timely 7:26 bus, drive away. Mr Myer was most confused, Mr Myer was most concerned. He referred to his time piece which did in fact reflect the time of 7:26 exactly. But how was this possible? How could this be? His routine was flawless, timed to perfection but yet his watch indicated otherwise. It was as though 30 seconds had disappeared, been removed from the hour.

The next day the most disturbed Mr Myer adjusted his alarm to call out at 6:42 and 30 seconds precisely, he toasted and scrambled, consumed and cleansed, then clothed of course before stepping out of his door, crossing the street, passing by four houses to catch the ever so timely 7:26 bus at 7:26, exactly! 'By jove!' exclaimed Mr Myer to the surprise of his fellow passengers who were used to the stoic, silent traveller he had been for the past decade, or maybe even two.

Mr Myer's concern bubbled up all day long so that when he arrived home, he was ready to take immediate action. At once, Mr Myer crafted an ardent letter to the town council exposing this change of speed in which time operated, completely out of line with the agreed speed. '30 seconds in fact!' he pointed out, repeatedly. With maximum urgency the letter was posted and with minimum patience Mr Myer waited for a reply. One day passed then another, and another and with each passing day another second was lost. Time was deteriorating, rapidly. If something wasn't done soon they could lose an entire minute! Just imagine one minute out of every hour, that's 24 minutes in every day. Think of all the cake baking, sandcastle making, dog walking, friendly talking you could've done in those 24 minutes?

I shudder at the thought of all you could not do. With even greater urgency than before, Mr Myer steeled himself for battle, he rallied all the gumption amongst him and... wrote another letter to the town council but with even more exclamations than the first. Surely this would not be ignored, but it was.

10 days and 10 lost seconds later, Mr Myer had to make a choice, remain the quiet, unassuming chap he had been all his 82 years or speak up and save the world. He opted to remain the quiet unassuming chap. The thought of saving the world just, just made him tired. 'How could I save the world, how could I save anything?' he thought. But then he thought so much he started to remember the time he stopped the traffic in both directions to save a young lad's ball from annihilation. He thought of how he saved the local park from litter, the village shop from closing and his neighbour Bob's bonsai tree from dying. Pile all the things in all his life up and in his own way Mr Myer was already saving the world just veeeeery slowly.

With his faith restored Mr Myer started upon his plan to save the world. He made posters for every bus stop, shop lot and school drop in town.

*'Stop Time Before It Runs Out!'*

He made up flyers to hand out on the bus, in the mall and around the town.

*'Make up for Lost Time!'*

People were starting to notice, people were starting to talk but not about time running out or losing time, they were talking about the odd old man ranting about growing old and he himself running out of time. They didn't understand at all.

By now they had lost one minute in every hour, nearly half an hour in every day, that's enough time to eat out or sleep in, to watch your show or see a friend. In that time you could ride your bike, fly a kite, run a race with all your might!

Mr Myer had to do something radical, he had to make an impact. 'They're right, I am running out of time but so are they and I won't spend the end of my life watching the end of theirs!'

Mr Myer made another sign, just the one and it read;

*'For Sale'*

And he meant it, he sold his hats and his shoes, his bed and his bookcase. He sold every picture, every possession in his home and then he sold his home itself. With nothing left but money and the clothes on his back Mr Myer set out to create a spectacle of such proportion, a beacon so blindingly bright that no one could ignore it.

It wasn't hard for Jenson and Associates, architects extraordinaire to accept Mr Myer's money, it was a bit of a challenge to accept his idea. 'You are to build this...' said Myer as he unrolled his plan. 'What exactly is 'this'?' the senior associate asked. 'This', answered Myer emphatically, 'this is my plan to save the world, to prove to everyone that time is slipping into the future, faster than before and we must take action before we have no time left at all.'

Jenson and the Associates, architects of great standing, nearly laughed but then didn't as they could see this man was entirely serious. They had no concern about how they could build 'this' only why? Why would a man of some years, spend the last of them building this? Mr Myer could see their reluctance so he looked Jenson himself in the eye and said, 'Humour me, son.'

Jenson conferred with the Associates, the Associates conferred with each other and they all agreed, if 'this' is what the client wants, 'this is what the client gets.' They got to building, at once.

Mr Myer arrived at the site each morning to observe his creation, in creation. It was 100 feet high and 20 feet wide with a pivot point in the middle. The structure was crafted from sheer glass sculpted out then in then out again and partially filled with golden sand of the finest quality. There was a scale the glass structure rested on with a little red cushion in between. The device was calibrated by precision engineers to turn after 24 hours as determined on the day it was filled. Alongside the 24 hour glass was a board, a giant billboard broadcasting the results of each day, that is, precisely what time the 24 hour glass turned.

This spectacle attracted a lot of attention at first but once again people did not understand. The billboard alongside included every day and how much time passed before the hour glass turned upside down. It began at the very beginning of the day it was calibrated at 24 hours, precisely. When day one ended the hour glass tipped upside down so the entire contents of sand could begin its journey back down again. On day one this process took 24 hours and 24 seconds. Day two took 24 hours and 44 seconds. As the days got shorter, the hour glass took longer to turn. Mr Myer faithfully stood by watching time slip away.

He became a bit of a tourist attraction, that old kook Myer and his glass folly. People would stop and ask him to pose in their selfies. Buses and cabs would divert to make sure they went past the landmark and it's owner. For nearly half a year Myer and his hour glass were the butt of many jokes, the source of much amusement. But as the numbers rose and the time in each day shrunk, people stopped laughing quite so much and started thinking. Why didn't they have time anymore to go roller coasting or marshmallow toasting. Why did they wake up tired and go to bed wide awake?

The engineers that calibrated the hour glass started to wonder, 'Maybe, just possibly, Myer was onto something.' Quietly and in their private labs they started tests of their own. They shared their findings, still very hush, hush with scientists and doctors and all the brains they could muster. Was in fact, time running away from us?

Nobody told Mr Myer that he might just possibly be on to something but they didn't have to. He could see from the hordes of white coats that arrived at the hour glass and never asked for him to pose. They actually said nothing to him at all. They spoke in hushed tones and nodded a lot. Then they would leave and another batch of white coats with different people in them would arrive and do the same.

It took nearly one year for everyone to finally understand what just one already knew. It took another half a year for anyone to figure out what to do about it. Mr Myer wasn't given credit when it was announced to the world that we were running out of time. Mr Myer wasn't even mentioned when they rebalanced the water levels in the sea to cause the earth to spin more slowly. Mr Myer was never told that he saved the world. But Mr Myer knows, he most definitely knows.

The End

Nanny Bea: Why thank you Jules. I have often wondered if time was running away from me, like my chicken Doris.

Jules: I know, I, I just keep getting busier and busier.

Nanny Bea: Well I don't know how to make time stand still but I can make myself stand still, like this.

Jules: Wow, what is that the crouching tiger pose?

Nanny Bea: No it's a squatting frog but that, that's a bit unfair as they have few other options.

Jules: Yes I see it now, a frog of course. Oh you've closed your eyes, are, are you, oh she is, asleep, squatting. I think I'll just leave her as she is but I'll be back next week for more tales and tea.

Thomas: Go to [NannyBea.com](http://NannyBea.com)

Jules: Go there to find out about all our episodes. You can like or follow us on iTunes or Spotify to get a reminder. And get in touch if you have a story seed we can grow into a full sized tale.

[Be on the Show jingle]

Mr Announcer: This has been a Toad in the Hole production for [NannyBea.com](http://NannyBea.com).