

The Truth Fairy
by Jules de Jongh
Season 2 Episode 2

[opening theme music and strapline]

Nanny Bea: Greetings my listening friends. I'm so pleased you arrived just in time to hear a story. My kettle has just boiled and my neighbour Jules will be here any...

[knock sfx]

Nanny Bea: minute now.

Nanny Bea: Hello, who is it?

Jules: It's your neighbour Jules Nanny Bea and I've brought you a story?

Nanny Bea: Oh you have, how delightful! Come in my dear, and let me make you a cup of tea.

Jules: Why thank you Nanny Bea. I have a special story for you today all about the little known Truth Fairy.

Nanny Bea: The Tooth Fairy?

Jules: No, no, The Truth Fairy. I'll tell you all about it, are you ready for a story?

Nanny Bea: Yes please

Jules: Okay then, The Truth Fairy, adapted for radio

There has been many a fevered argument over whether the Tooth Fairy is born or made, by that I mean are they born a tooth fairy or did they have to train to be a tooth fairy. Well this tale will settle that argument once and for all and it started the day Penelope Poppadopolis was born.

Penelope was a very big baby, the size of a whole pea and not those fancy petite ones. For a fairy that was quite a load to carry. No surprise that when she was born, her mother took one look at her beautiful girl and fell fast asleep. Her father didn't mind as it gave him more time to admire every bit of her, her toes still all scrunched up, her eyes getting used to the light and her tummy,..wait a minute, what's that on her tummy, thought her father. On closer inspection he could see a strawberry birthmark to the left of her belly button, but looking nothing like a strawberry and everything like a perfectly formed heart. Father was so excited, he asked the midwife to confirm his view. 'Yes sir, that most certainly is a heart, many congratulations,' she replied because although to us birthmarks mean nothing, to fairies they mean everything. Penelope's father was born with another kind of birthmark, a stork bite on

the back of his left knee which meant he was automatically accepted into the Fairland School of Performing Arts to train as a Kosak dancer but as he was neither a Kosak nor a dancer he opted for to train as a plumber, still using his gifted knees a great deal but he doesn't have to worry about keeping in time to the music. Penelope's heart meant she was also automatically accepted but not just to a school, she was automatically accepted into the highly esteemed Tooth Fairy Order. This was an extraordinary honour and only available for the favoured few. At just the thought of it Father was even more excited, he almost woke Mother to tell her but he satisfied himself with a silent happy dance, which resembled that of those Kosak Dancer I mentioned that you are now tempted to pause this story and look up on youtube.

You're back, or you never left, either way...Father's silent dancing did in fact wake Mother and of course he couldn't wait to tell her. 'Heart, Penelope, baby, has!' Mother smiled and said calmly, 'Yes, she has a heart to beat and lungs to breath.' Father was overcome and couldn't get the words out so he placed Penelope in her mother's arms and pointed to her other heart.

This changed everything, as a member of the Tooth Fairy Order, Penelope was given the finest education, in all facets of fairy life but in particular those required of a tooth fairy. She was schooled in flying through closing windows, tip-toeing under pillows and lifting nuggets of gold pressed into all currencies. It was arduous work but Penelope was a committed pupil, always wanting to do her best and make the world around her even better.

One frosty day in January, Fairingdon Academy had only just reconvened and Penelope along with her peers was still a bit restless. The school bell rang right in the middle of a snowball fight with each side refusing to walk away and therefore admit defeat. A flurry of snowballs collided in the air as both parties continued to throw and run into school at the same time. No one knows who won, they all lost as Mrs MacDoodle stood arms folded and lips pursed at her classroom door.

'What is the reason for such tardiness?' she bellowed. Prissy Snyderington piped up, 'We are ever so sorry Miss, George fell on the ice and we were just helping him up.' 'All of you?' Mrs MacDoodle queried. Prissy smiled and nodded and remarkably their excuse was accepted. Prissy was pleased with herself, Penelope was not. Something in her tummy twisted inside, she tried to ignore it but it kept twisting and turning for the rest of the lesson. When the bell rang for lunch Penelope approached Mrs MacDoodle, 'Yes, what is it?' Penelope hesitated, 'Well, you see Miss, we, I mean I wasn't helping George.' 'Helping George do what exactly.' And then all those nerves just drained out of Penelope, she stood up tall and said, 'I was late to class because I was playing and did not want to stop, I let you think I was helping George after a fall but I was not. I'm sorry Mrs MacDoodle,' she finished and felt lighter somehow, even the twisting tummy stopped. 'Very well Penelope, and thank you,' her teacher added.

Such a small thing, you'd hardly think anything of it. But so often it is the small things that leads us to the bigger ones.

A few days later the school was preparing for their annual open house . It was the occasion in which the school invited prospective parents and pupils to tour the facilities. Everyone was told to iron their uniforms and polish their wings. 'We must show them our best and nothing

less,' the headmistress informed them. Much was to be done, classrooms decorated, playgrounds pruned and groomed. The committee gathered, teachers and parents alike, to make arrangements. 'Of course, as tradition demands, we must begin the event with our speakers, myself, our esteemed head of governors and a model pupil, one who embodies all that we are, and all we shall continue to be,' headmistress added, 'any suggestions?' All eyes turned to Mrs MacDoodle as she was the most highly respected and long standing member of staff. There wasn't a student she hadn't studied, there wasn't a child she hadn't chided. Mrs Mac Doodle paused to form a considered opinion, and in the silence one name whispered in her ears...'Penelope, Penelope Poppadopolis is a fine pupil, hard working and honest.'

That was a proud day for Penelope and her parents, to think she of all those pupils was singled out to represent the school. What an honour! The rest of her final year at Fairingdon Academy was full of such honours and full of honesty. Penelope just couldn't live any other way that is why when the time came to choose her career path (and Tooth Fairy wasn't just offered, it was expected). Penelope chose another. Her peers were shocked, her parents were surprised but Mrs Mac Doodle was pleased. There is a little known fairy career, one that requires more heart and less attention. Penelope chose a life in the shadows as a Truth Fairy. Oh very little is known of the Truth Fairy, none have ever been seen although there are many around the world. For every time someone tells a lie, a truth fairy will tap dance on their tummy making it twist and turn inside, and every time someone tells the truth, a truth fairy will whisper their name in the ear of those who know them. Not everyone notices the tap dancing fairy, if they make a habit of lying they can learn to ignore it but as Mrs Mac Doodle would say, 'What a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive.' But rest assured that every time you tell the truth, others will take note, it's hard to ignore a whispering fairy.

The End

Nanny Bea: Oh Jules, thank you. What a treat to hear of the Truth Fairy. And here I was thinking my fairy days were done since all my teeth that were to fall out, have and I take great care of my remaining teeth.

Jules: As your healthy smile reveals.

Nanny Bea: Well ever since I was a young girl, I understood the need for good dental hygiene. My poor uncle Tom lost all his teeth and carved his replacements out of an old ash tree that fell in the garden. They looked the part well enough but every now and then he'd get a splinter and no one was spared from his rantings.

Jules: Wow, I guess I better keep on flossing.

Nanny Bea: Oh yes, keep flossing and keep coming back with more of your stories please.

Jules: Of course, I'll be back next week for more tales and tea.

Thomas: Go to NannyBea.com

Jules: Go there to find out about all our episodes. On NannyBea.com there's our entire collection of stories to listen to and to read along. As well as details about how you can be part of the show.

[Be on the Show jingle]

Mr Announcer: This has been a Toad in the Hole production for NannyBea.com.