

The Easter Basket
by Jules de Jongh
Season 2 Episode13

[opening theme music and strapline]

Nanny Bea: You've made it in the nick of time, the kettle has just boiled and my neighbour Jules will be here with a story any...

[knock sfx]

Nanny Bea: minute now.

Nanny Bea: Oh, someone's at the door. Hello, who is it?

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

Nanny Bea: Indeed it is, hello Jules, do come in.

Jules: Hello Nanny Bea. And what an elaborate bonnet you have on. What do you have in there? Is that a nest?

Nanny Bea: I'm just trying it out for our Easter parade. It's a cottage tradition and I don't want to let the squirrels down.

Jules: Of course and with that hat you certainly won't, wait is that a egg real, it looks like it's hatching in your hat?

Nanny Bea: Yes but pay it no mind, the baby robin is rather shy when unhatching. Carry on as if you never noticed.

Jules: Okay, I will not notice the egg hatching on your head. Uh, well I did bring you a special Easter tale. Would you like to hear a story?

Nanny Bea: Oh, yes please

Jules: Okay then, The Easter Basket, adapted for radio

In a land of valleys and deserts lived a family. A family that covered the entire region. (But they were actually strangers trying to make their way home.) Now it was the tradition in this land that every mistake, every bumble, every wrong choice, every stumble was yours for good. They literally had to carry them. And your wrong doings took the shape of stones. Tell a little lie and you'd probably be given a pebble, run over your neighbour's cat-you'd get a big rock, run over your neighbour-you'd get a giant boulder. For the record, I don't recommend running over anyone, boulder or not!

But that gives you the idea. And just imagine, even a lifetime of little lies adds up to a truck load of pebbles to hulk around with you.

And this journey home did last a lifetime, which was longer for some than others. It had only just begun for Myriam. Myriam was a curious and kind child. She practiced her reading and memorized her verses and she had only a handful of pebbles to carry around with her. That's probably why the neighbourhood rat picked her out to pick on. It started one day when she was walking back from the market, she had an armful of apricots and figs and melons all ripe and so fragrant in the hot sun. She could barely see the path in front of her so Mr Rat took this opportunity to scurry under her feet. Myriam stumbled forward, she wobbled back and then she fell flat, bunk, onto the solid ground where her armful of fruit crashed, and split, and smashed in the dirt. Myriam collected up the bits as best she could but there was little left worth collecting. When she arrived home, her mother was so disappointed but tried not to get angry as it could happen to anyone. It was an accident, and she had done nothing to bring it on so no stones were assigned, this time.

But Mr Rat began to enjoy tormenting Myriam and he started bragging to his friends. The very next week he saw Myriam again, this time on her way to market with dried fish to sell, her family business. They too were fragrant in the heat of the sun but not in a good way. They were wrapped in parcels of leaves, one on top of the other, on top of the other, on top of the other, stacked right up to her chin. She had to get them to the market stall urgently as they had just run out. Myriam was rushing but not recklessly when Mr Rat saw his opportunity and this time a couple of his friends joined him. They scurried under Myriam's feet, Myriam stumbled forward, she wobbled back and then she fell flat, blunk, onto the solid ground where her packets of dried fish unravelled and got covered in soil. The market seller saw her throw them in the air as she tumbled to the ground. 'Silly girl,' he thought. Then he recognized her and her parcels...His parcels, 'Foolish girl!' he shouted as he walked over to the fish freckled path. This time her mother wasn't quite so understanding but still, it was an accident so she had no stones to carry just a lot of guilt.

Mr Rat wasn't done with her though. He was enjoying watching her fall, again and again and again. He and his friend, seven in all now, started thinking of other ways they could drive her crazy. The rats thought it was hysterical, thought Myriam was hysterical. Myriam started to believe it was her fault and so did others. By the time she was a young woman, she was carrying around a sack full of stones while the rats were the real trouble makers but nobody saw that until one day. One day a man came to town, 'The Nazarene' they called him, who was unlike anyone they'd ever known, he didn't have a single stone, not even the tiniest pebble to carry. Well The Nazarene was just being himself when he came across Myriam just as those seven rats were messing with her again. In a commanding voice he startled the gang of rats telling them to leave Myriam forever. The rats were trouble makers, they were cocky and not scared of anything, except the Nazarene. With just a word they ran, terrified and never came back.

Myriam for the first time in a long time could walk with her head high, she was so calm and finally felt like she was walking on solid ground. She thought that would be enough, that was the most amazing gift but the Nazarene wasn't done. He then turned to her and said, 'Let me carry your load,' and held out a basket for her. He told her to put all her stones, not just the

ones she had now but every future stone into his basket and he would carry them for her. 'But it wasn't you who made all these mistakes,' Myriam protested. The Nazarene then took each stone, one by one from Myriam.

From that day forward you couldn't separate Myriam from the Nazarene, she supported him and followed him everywhere and whenever she'd do anything wrong, she'd apologize and turn to the Nazarene who would carry yet another stone for her but his basket always seemed so light.

'Who wouldn't love the Nazarene?' thought Myriam. I'll tell you who, everyone who liked things how they were. The teachers of the law were very good at making their own stones look small. They had positions of power in the community. People used to come to them for advice and now they were turning to this Nazarene. So some of the teachers of the law gathered together in secret, they made a plan to get him in trouble, beyond stones. The kind of trouble that would get a man killed.

Myriam knew nothing of this, neither did the Nazarene's friends well except for one. One friend, for nothing more than money offered to betray the Nazarene. And he did. The authorities captured the Nazarene based on the fear and lies from some of the teachers of the law. He was tortured but Myriam stayed near. He was hung up to die but Myriam never left his side. He left this life and Myriam cried. This man who came to carry all our wrongs, who never judged just loved, he was gone and Myriam couldn't stop crying. She cried all day, all night, all day, all night, all day and all night. She still wouldn't leave him. He was buried in a cave with a giant stone sealing him in but Myriam would come and stand outside trying to get as close to him as she could.

On the third day she arrived and that giant stone was rolled away. Myriam ran into the cave and couldn't see the Nazarene anywhere. 'How could they take his body? Didn't they do enough already?' and she cried. 'Who are you looking for?' she heard a stranger say. But how could she describe who he is, he is the way to follow, the light to guide you, he is all that love is and more than you can ever ask or imagine. Then the 'stranger' called her by her name, 'Myriam' and at once she realised it was him, the Nazarene, not dead but alive. He told her to go and tell their friends. They couldn't believe her until he came to them himself. The Nazarene is back! He's conquered death! He will be with us forever!

But he surprised them all. Yes he conquered the grave but he was going home, now. This was very confusing. Myriam and the others wanted him to stay but he did promise to return someday. 'I will always carry your stones and If I go I can send in my place the most wonderful counselor. He can be with everyone, in all the world, all the time until we are together again.'

Even though Myriam didn't fully understand, she trusted the Nazarene because he didn't just speak the truth, He is the truth.

The End

Nanny Bea: Thank you Jules.

Jules: Oh, Nanny Bea are you crying?

Nanny Bea: Just tears of joy my dear. Easter tears of joy.

Jules: Happy Easter to you and to all our listening friends.

Nanny Bea: Will we be seeing you next week?

Jules: Of course, next week I will return with more Tales and Tea.

Thomas: Go to NannyBea.com

Jules: Go there to find out about all our episodes and to find out how to get in touch if you have any questions or comments. We love to hear from you and you could end up on the show.

[Be on the Show jingle]

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