

The Diary of a Dormouse Detective
by Jules de Jongh
Season 2 Episode16

[opening theme music and strapline]

Nanny Bea: You have arrived, the kettle has boiled and my neighbour Jules will be here with a story any...

[knock sfx]

Nanny Bea: minute now.

Nanny Bea: Why who could that be? Hello, who is it?

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

Nanny Bea: Oh it is? What a pleasant surprise!

Jules: And I have more surprises, today we have a story about Mousissippi where the rat pack rule until the Mousecapades come to town. What do you think? Are you ready for a story?

Nanny Bea: Oh, yes please

Jules: Okay then, The Diary of a Dormouse Detective, adapted for radio

It's 4:00 on a lazy Friday afternoon, Miss Penny Wenny has taken the the day off as I man the shop before the long holiday weekend. It's been a slow week, a slow month and if I'm to be honest, a slow year. It's not that the people of Moussissippi have stopped lying, cheating and stealing, it's just that they don't ask questions anymore, now that Rolando and his rat pack have moved into town. All of Moussissippi is living in fear. They pay the ratty gang a 'security deposit' as the rats call it, and the citizens can be certain if they don't pay that deposit, they most certainly won't be secure.

It's a story we've all heard before, gangsters running the town with their bats at the ready, ready to smack down any honest mouse that stands up to them. Normally I wouldn't care, live and let live I say but that was until a little harvest mouse came through my door.

It wasn't always this way. I remember the glory days when Miss Penny Wenny and I set up shop. The place was hopping. Why in one day alone you could have a case of the messy mouse pad, the case of the third mousketeer, and the case of the missing Micky. That was one for the books. A little mouse in a dotty red dress and a bow the size of her head walked through these doors. It was love at first sight. She was a little goofy and sometimes daffy, I

mean dappy but she was a doll you see, with shoes of gold and feet the size of cheese chunks. The kind of cheese that makes a mouseman's heart beat faster. She didn't have a dime to her name but a doll like that don't need dimes, she's got charms and she charmed the boutineer right off me. She knew what she was doing and when I found her missing Micky, I was history, just a means to an end. That was the day I changed my tune from 'You've Got a Friend in Me' to 'Live and Let Die'. Miss Penny Wenny objected and we settled on 'Live and Let Live' but the sentiment remains the same. Detective Donny Dormouse don't stick his neck out for any one, dames included, even the ones with feet the size of cheese chunks, especially the ones with feet the size of cheese chunks.

That was until the Mousecapades came to town. At 4pm on this lazy Friday afternoon, a little harvest mouse knocked on my door.

[knock]

I ignore him of course but he's a persistent little harvest mouse and pokes his head around the corner

'Is this the office of Detective Donny Dormouse, a friend for every mouse, a hero who's on your side?'

'It used to be kid, now it's just Donny, a detective for every mouse with a bulging pocket book, a hero only if he has to be.'

'Well, if it's money you need, I can pay you handsomely,' *then he rolls out this wad of dosh bigger than his body. I've never seen so many cheese strings in one place and this harvest mouse is speaking my language.*

'So what can I do for you, Mr...'

'Ignatius Ignacio the third.'

'So Iggy it is.'

'No it's Igantius...'

'Yeah, yeah I heard you kid but I don't have the time or the inclination to get my tongue around that whole song and dance each time I refer to you.'

'Oh, okay Mr Donny, you can call me Iggy, just so long as you call me!' *he says with a smile, hoping to break down my cold exterior. No joy. I stare blankly.*

'Right, so I guess I'd better tell you about my case, why I need a detective.'

'That's the usual protocol, continue Iggy.'

'Well I am the only child of the Mousecapade empire. My father, Ignatius Igna...'

'Yeah, yeah I get where you're going, so your dad, big Iggy owns the Mousecapades, the biggest mouse on ice extravaganza ever to be seen.'

'Yes that's us, well that's him and it was going to be us as soon as I was old enough and he was too old but the night he told me that I was ready to take over, something he only ever talked to me about, he went missing.'

'A missing Master of the Mousecapades, you've got my interest,' *Actually he had me with the cheese strings.*

'It was only a few days ago, we'd just finished our first show in Moussissippi when he called me into his office. "Son" he said, he talks kind of like that so he said, "Son, the time has come. You know we've often spoke of you standing in my shoes, taking over as the Master of the Mousecapades, well the time has come." Or something like that. I was so excited I hugged him until he made me stop. He likes hugs, he's just not used to them, his father never hugged him you see and he's not all together familiar with hugging protocol, but he likes hugs for sure.'

'Hug liking or not, was that the last time you saw him?'

'Not the very last time. Later that night when I was heading off to bed he stuck his head, just his head around my door and said the strangest thing...'

[awkward pause]

'Which was?'

'Oh yes, which was, "Sweet big yellow bus dreams my little fat rabbit."'

'Sweet big yellow bus dreams is not your usual sign off and little fat rabbit is just plain odd, I mean you are little but even I wouldn't call you such a rude name as a...rabbit, or fat in the presence of a mousette.'

'That's just it, my father is the kindest mouse ever and he never says goodnight that way, usually he comes right up to my bed, kisses his paw then passes it onto my forehead, he usually doesn't say much at all, he just looks at me with a gushy smile.'

'Maybe your old man wasn't alone, maybe he was speaking in code, a secret message of sorts. We'll start from the very beginning, I'm told it's a very good place to start.'

'And what beginning would you like Mr Donny, the beginning of the Mousecapades, the beginning of me, the beginning of my father although I'm not too sure about...'

'No, no Iggy just take me back to the day you arrived in Moussissippi,' *the kid was a bit rusty but soon got the hang of it.*

Travelling from place to place meant his life was a bit of a blurr. But they had a routine when they'd arrive in a new destination and that's what he locked onto.

The very first thing we do when we arrive is knock on every neighbour's door with free tickets. We thank them and we let them know they can call anytime if they have any issues.'

'Sounds to me like you're asking for trouble. People love to complain and giving them an invitation seems kinda nutty. And you thank them as well, thank them for what, buying a house near an ice skating rink, living in a town you were invited to come to?'

'My father always says, 'it's easier to shake the hand of friendship than the fist of conflict.'

'Sounds like mumbo jumbo to me kid but keep going, what did you do next?'

'Well we go to the hospitals and set up live video links, then we go to the orphanage and...'

'Let me guess, more free tickets.'

'Exactly! Father says, 'a small step of kindness is a big leap towards friendship.'

'Your pop's has a lot to say.'

'He does. On our way to the orphanage he was telling me all about his very first Mousecapade when his star performer, Lady Rara left the bag with her skates on a big yellow bus number 42. He thought that was funny as her very first ice dance was to a song called 42nd street, get it, bus 42 and 42nd street?'

'I get more than that Iggy, what was it your pop said when he wished you goodnight, Sweet big yellow bus dreams?'

'Yes sir.'

'I think we're on to something kid, tell me more about your day.'

'Well we stopped for lunch at Mimi's dinner. Father had her tuna salad special and I had my favorite, macaroni and cheese. I know their powdered, strangely orange cheese is an illusion but boy it sure tickles my whiskers.'

The kid goes on telling me how his pop tipped Mimi generously, something about being generous today is a cheap price to pay for a friendship tomorrow.

'Any more stories from your old man?'

'Uh, I don't think so. After lunch we got the props unloaded from the truck and took an inventory of the costumes, then had the team talk, that's all.'

'Team talk huh, I suspect your pop had some more of his sayings to throw around?'

'Oh no, he's pretty quiet in team talk. That's when the cast and crew talk about how they're feeling, what's on their mind.'

'A good moan session, I imagine.'

'Actually they spend a lot of time praising each other, oh there was a funny story, Pico the stage hand was talking about what a quick thinker Lady Rara is. How when Pico gave her marshmallows when she needed snowballs for her big, I Can Build a Snowman finale.' *The kid went on to explain how Lady Rara made them into a mini snowman then got the crowd to their feet singing the last line as a chubby bunny with her cheeks filled with marshmallows, a game I know well. Lady Rara had earned my respect but we were no closer to solving our case until...*

'When I was little I couldn't say chubby bunny so I called the game fat rabbit.'

'The Chubby Bunny!'

'Okay, I'm not stuck on fat rabbit, I mean most people call it chubby bunny so I'll...'

'I think you've done it kid,' I say with no further explanation. I run to my scooter, the kid follows. I have a hunch and need some lunch so what better destination than The Chubby Bunny on...you guessed it 42nd Street. Rumor has it Rolando and his rat pack use it as their hang out. No respectable citizen of Moussissippi would go in there. Lucky I'm not a respectable citizen.

We arrive to find the door locked and a note, out to lunch, peculiar time for an eating establishment to close but it's a peculiar place. A respectable citizen would leave it at that and walk away, I go around the back. There are voices, angry ones and a muffled sound.

'Boss, can't you stop him!' one of the rat pack whines. 'Stop what, he's gagged you fool,' Rolando spouts. 'Yeah, but he keeps trying to extend a hand of friendship, see, see there, his little paw stretched out,' the rats right, even in peril, Iggy Sr is reaching out, trying to make friends with his enemies. Something in me snaps, it breaks me, my eyes start leaking. Iggy assures me this is natural, they are called tears apparently.

The thugs continue, 'All you had to do was pay the security deposit, that's how we do business here in Moussissippi!'

I find myself jumping in the middle of them, and then even worse shouting out, 'Not any more Rat bait.' In all honesty, things get a bit fuzzy, I find an inner strength I didn't know I had, the mini ninja within gets out and makes ratatouille of the entire gang. Before I know it, the coppers arrive, they finally catch the rat pack in the act and take them away to a very bad place, for a very long time.

Meanwhile little Iggy is huggin on big Iggy and he seems to understand hugging protocol just fine.

I guess I otta go see their show, considering they just gave me free tickets and all. Apparently it's titled, You've Gotta Friend in Me...figures.

This is Detective Donny Dormouse signing off for now.

The End

Nanny Bea: Oh, thank you Jules. You know I saw that version of the Mousecapades and it was simply riveting.

Jules: How do you get invited to a show like that.

Nanny Bea: I know creatures who know creatures.

Jules: And why doesn't that surprise me, I can't wait to chat with you again next week when I return for more Tales and Tea.

Thomas: Go to NannyBea.com

Jules: Go there to find out about all our episodes. You can like and follow us on iTunes or Spotify and get in touch if you'd like to be on the show.

[Be on the Show jingle]

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