

Piddle, Paddle and Tattle: Polliwog Adventures

by Jules de Jongh
Season 2 Episode 32

[opening theme music and strapline]

Nanny Bea: Is that one of our listening friends, why yes it is! Welcome, your timing is ideal. The tea is brewed and my neighbour Jules will bring us a story any...

[knock sfx]

Nanny Bea: minute now.

Nanny Bea: Oh, it seems we have another guest? Who ever could that be?

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

Nanny Bea: What a coincidence, we were just speaking of you.

Jules: I've brought you a tale with lots of tails today. We'll head down to the pond and where three little polliwogs do more than other polliwogs do. Are you ready for a story?

Nanny Bea: Oh, yes please.

Jules: Okay then, **Piddle, Paddle and Tattle; Polliwog Adventures**, adapted for radio

The life of a polliwog might seem rather dull, just floating around until your legs pop out, bobbing along until your arms come through, but life is what you make it and these three little polliwogs had adventures galore. Now I've gotta stop right there, polliwogs or tadpoles as some of you might know them as, can be all different kinds of different frogs and toads. Our little chappies and chappets are toads, not the Natterjack nor the spiny, not the yellow bellied nor the midwife, our guys are just plain 'ole common toads. You probably haven't seen much of them about, they like to hide in the day and hunt at night for slugs and spiders, and worms, oh my. They sneak up on prey and use their sticky tongues to catch it. But not yet. Piddle, Paddle and Tattle have a lot of growing to do.

They were born in a favourite pond where all respectable toads meet to make tadtoads. You might find polliwogs in a pond near you. After papa toad latches onto momma toad with his big sticky pads he grew just for this occasion, Piddle, Paddle and Tattle were three of 1,403 little black eggs laid in a long jelly string. It got pretty cramped in there as the eggs grew into little black blobs with a wiggly tail. Day 10 they all burst out into the pond. The other polliwogs didn't say much, they didn't do much except munch on the remaining jelly from their string and chomp down any passing algae. But our little trio were made for more. One day Piddle turned around to find she had a leg, just one on the back. It must've appeared when she wasn't looking. She kicked that one leg, spinning round and round in one direction.

Paddle and Tattle looked on in wonder, mostly wondering when they'd get a leg and then they took a peek and realised they did. All three with one back leg on the left side. That's when they created the Polliwog Portal. They sold tickets to their more adventurous siblings. For a sprig of algae they would enter the portal and be spun to the destination of their choice. Tattle, although one of the portal drivers, liked to take trips himself to the tropics. There's just something about those pineapple lined waters. The trio would take turns spinning. Paddle had to limit her turns as she was prone to puke, just a bit.

It was after one of Paddle's puking pauses that she looked down to find a second leg had sprouted. She was so excited she pumped and pushed those new legs propelling herself around like a rocket. Piddle and Tattle saw her new found direction and what do you know, they too had sprouted a second leg. Woo hoo, yee hee! They hollard as they zoomed around the pond, Paddle leading the way. They went on explorations under the lily pads, into the reeds. There was so much more than they'd seen before. On their quests they unearthed all kinds of treasure. That's what led them to opening the Muddy Museum, right on the bank of the pond. Visitors came for miles around, frogs and toads, toads and frogs, all to see the collection of artifacts our trio found. The Muddy Museum included one pocket watch, three coins and several fishing lures. The allure of those lures was unmatched by any other pond side attraction. It actually became quite riotous when the spiny toads met the yellow bellied toads and the common toads protested. No one was quite sure why, something about, 'You ate my woodlice when I was eating your beetles...' It was hard to decipher. Needless to say, our polliwog trio just wanted to get back to the middle of the pond, where the toads and frogs don't live before they started squirting out poison from their warts, which aren't really warts.

Tattle was the most eager and he just set off in a kind of sideways breaststroke, moving him faster than ever. The other two got in on the act. It wasn't until they reached the safety of the middle pond that they looked at each other and all said at once, 'You've got a front leg!' And so they did. All three had a front leg just when they needed it. And that swimming style was epic. Tattle had an idea. What if they take that style and gather all the other polliwogs to make the very first Tadpole Triathlon which in years to come grew into a full blown, mid pond Olympic games but that's for another story. The Tadpole Triathlon was a competition with polliwogs at all different stages, they had the fastest spinning round for those with one leg, the rocket sprint for those with two and of course the three legged race using Tattles new sideways breaststroke. Our trio could not have predicted the popularity of these games. All those other polliwogs just bobbing around had found an outlet, their true calling. So many wanted to join in they had to start with qualifiers to reduce the numbers. Piddle, Paddle and Tattle thought about charging to participate but it just didn't feel right, this time they were giving something back to their community.

Our three polliwogs were so distracted by all the triathlon preparations that none of them noticed a change until one of the participants asked for a fourth event. 'Fourth in a Triathlon! That's outrageous. Whatever for?' the trio declared one by one. 'So I can leap with my fourth leg,' said the now a bit timid athlete. 'The fourth what!' the trio said in unison only to realise, they too had four legs, four legs a head and a tail. They hadn't seen any grown up common toads with a tail, did they chop them off? Did they shrivel them in shrink wrap? Did they melt them like a candle? It was all so very confusing.

It wasn't long before all of the athletes had four legs and wanted to leap frog or toad or whatever is in their way. The Tadpole Triathlon just petered out as each of 1,403 polliwog siblings started to grow up. Piddle, Paddle and Tattle were nowhere near done adventuring, but as toadlets on their way to toads they favoured the solitary life on land. Little by little the pond emptied out. Piddle, Paddle and Tattle were the last to leave but they'd be back someday, after they'd absorbed (and I still don't know how) their legs and once they'd grown to the size of a grapefruit. They'd come back like all the other toads do, back to this very pond to make their own polliwogs for more adventures.

The End

Nanny Bea: Oh thank you Jules. You know I have a love of all things toad. Like my dear friend Mr Toad who lives by the riverbank.

Jules: I know a poem about him,
*The world has held great heroes, As history books have showed;
But never a name went down to fame Compared with that of Toad!
The clever men at Oxford Know all there is to be knowed.
But none of them know half as much As intelligent Mr. Toad!*

Nanny Bea: That is one of his favourite poems. He does so enjoy public admiration does Toad. The poem I think of when he comes to mind is, *Never be on the road, with a driver as reckless as Toad. Just a little safety tip for you.*

Jules: And I will remember that whenever I see a toad on the road. You know listening friends, you can hear more about Mr Toad in a previous episode of Tales and Tea.

Thomas: Go to NannyBea.com

Jules: Go there to find out about all our stories including The Wind in the Willows with Mr Toad. And make sure to like or follow us on iTunes or Spotify to get a reminder. See you next week for more Tales and Tea.

[Be on the Show jingle]

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