

The Boy Who Got Stuck in the Jar

by Jules de Jongh
Season 2 Episode 31

[opening theme music and strapline]

Nanny Bea: Hello, what a delight, do make yourself comfortable, it's nearly time for our tale. The kettle is whistling and my neighbour Jules will be here with a story any...

[knock sfx]

Nanny Bea: minute now.

Nanny Bea: Who ever could that be? Hello? Who is it?

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

Nanny Bea: Yes it is, isn't it! Come in dear.

Jules: Why thank you Nanny Bea. I have got quite a story for you today. Our faithful fan Tiggy has given us a story seed to grow into a full sized tale. She sent us the title as inspiration and you won't believe what it's grown into. Are you ready for a story?

Nanny Bea: Oh, yes please.

Jules: Okay then, **The Boy Who Got Stuck in the Jar**, adapted for radio

The Tulare County Fair takes place every summer whether summer likes it or not. And you really don't want to get on the bad side of summer in the San Joaquin Valley, has she got a mean temper, we're talking 110 degrees plus and there's a disturbing shortage of trees under which you can hide.

No shortage of people though, people sweating in the summer, fighting the fog in the winter. The towns don't get too big generally speaking, if we don't speak of Fresno, but who would. Instead there's lots of little towns with funny little names like Badger, Earlimart and Pixley. And they all gather together in what to the untrained eye could be described as a dusty field, but not once it's transformed into the Tulare County Fair with it's ballistic swings and bumper cars lit up in neon splendor. You can see the ferris wheel for miles, teasing you while you're stuck in a stack of cars edging to get in. It has it's own sound as well, a kind of organ techno mix blurring together from each ride. That is until the main stage kicks off with The Red Hot Chilli Pipers or The Rolling Clones. They used to have big country music bands, the original ones when country music wasn't popular.

Now if rides get your tummy rumbling, there's always the animal shows, rabbits and poultry and livestock. Dead stock is available at the food stands, they've got all the dogs, hot, corn

and of course my favourite, chilli. There's cotton candy, cotton quilts, cotton pickers. A parade where participants are told not to fire or throw anything at the spectators. Family fun for everyone.

Including the Fistolera family. They didn't have to wait with the other cars as they lived right across the road and just walked on by adding to the tension of those trapped inside their stacked up cars.

Freddy Fistolera with his early bird ticket and two weeks allowance, knew exactly where he was headed, the candy stall. They had buttertoes and sneakers, red veins and gob slobbers, every kind of candy you could dream of all on display in giant glass jars. While Freddy was making up his mind, and this could take a good 10 maybe even 15 minutes, he caught sight of a sign on a giant jar of jelly beans. Guess the number of beans and get the whole jar, \$2 a guess. If he guessed right, he could have a lifetime supply of jelly beans, so many beans he might even share, but not with his sister of course. Not even if he won 10 giant jars. But was it worth the gamble, his entire saved up allowance spent with possibly nothing to show for it. Freddy pondered and he wondered, he thought and he thunk until he came to the conclusion that one must risk sometimes for the greatest rewards and then the counting started. He used the skills provided by the houdini of mathematics Mr Obradoravich. He meticulously counted in rows across, rows down, in the depth and the breadth of the giant jar. This took him well beyond his usual 15 minutes but the rest of the family was distracted on the gravity defying, Spin Cycle where their belongings clung to the side as they were spun dry. A wobbly woman staggered towards Freddy, hardly recognizable as mom just after he guessed his guess of 36,101 jelly beans. Mom was about to shout at Freddy for being so reckless but quickly put a cork in it as she thought of her son and all the candy he didn't eat. And the lesson about the foolishness of gambling that this wild exploit was going to teach him.

Throughout the rest of the evening, Freddy would pass the giant jar, and ask when they would reveal the winner. 'It is still at 10pm when the fairground closes,' the bored attendant would say each time. 10pm was pretty late but as they lived across the road, they stayed to the very end.

By 10pm the Fistolera family was finished, they'd ridden every ride, looked at all the livestock and bopped to each tribute band. Everyone was ready to go, 'but not without checking out the giant jar!' Freddy insisted. 'Of course,' thought Mom ready to see the disappointment teach Freddy a most valuable lesson. It did not. Instead Freddy arrived to find his 36,101 figure plastered across the jar and a big red bow taped on top. Freddy dived into his pocket and presented his tattered and torn but still winning ticket. Mom was excited until she thought about her jelly belly fueled Freddy for the rest of his childhood.

But life has a way of teaching lessons even when it doesn't seem so at first. Consequences are constant as Freddy found out, in the most unfortunate way.

This unending supply of jelly power sent Freddy zinging all over the house until Mom could take no more. 'Okay Freddy, I'm cutting you off, no more jelly beans until the weekend and even then you will be limited to 10 on Saturday and 10 on Sunday!' Mom was harsh but fair. Freddy found the weekend slipped further and further away. He woke up dreaming of jelly

beans, went to sleep dreaming of jelly beans and sat in class dreaming of jelly beans. His teacher pulled Freddy aside. 'What's going on Freddy, usually you're the first to raise your hand?' 'Sorry Mr Obradoravich, I've got a lot on my mind.'

And that was clearly the case. His mind was entirely focused on a belly full of jelly beans. Each one an explosion of flavour, watermelly-on, strawbelly and every jelly your belly could swim in them. Ohhhh. Huh! The school bell rang, the weekend was here. Freddy ran home and stood in the kitchen drooling over the giant jar. The radio was entertaining Mom as she ironed in the laundry room next door. 'It's Freedom Friday Folks, the official beginning of your weekend, sit back and ...' Freddy heard no more, 'Beginning of my weekend? That means the jelly bean ban is banished,' he said knowing deep down this was not Mom's intention. He went to the jar. He started with one but they are so tasty and only tiny, who would notice two. And two is nearly four and four's not that far from ten and ten's, uh oh, ten is Mom's limit...on Saturday and Sunday! She said nothing about a limit on Friday although deep down Freddy knew this was not Mom's intention. Freddy dove head first into the giant jar, he ate and ate and ate letting his teeth run wild through the rainbow of jellytastic treats. Surely this is what heaven tastes like he thought and he ravaged his way down deeper and deeper and deeper until he reached the last of the jelly beans. Now it wasn't completely full when he started but it was completely empty when he finished and found himself upside down, head to the ground, inside the giant jar. Most people would shout for assistance at this stage. Freddy did not. Mom would not be pleased. He tried to squidge and squirm his way out, but a belly full of jelly beans, tens of thousands in fact, was not to be budged. The rest of the afternoon, family came in and out of the kitchen, no one noticing Freddy on his heady stuck deep inside the empty jar of former jelly beans.

It wasn't until 6pm when his sister Fiona arrived to start making dinner that someone finally noticed or did she. Freddy was certain that she looked right at him then smirked and looked away. Freddy waited as Fiona carried on with her dinner prep and then yelled for her attention, 'Help me, I'm stuck!' which sounded more like, 'Mmm mmm, mm mm!' maybe that's why Fiona carried on with her cooking? She called out to the rest of the family, which was only Mom tonight as Finn and Forrest were having a lock in at the Scout Hut. An odd thing Freddy thought for a group that camps out to want be locked in.

Freddy once again, cried out, 'Mmm mmm, mm mm!' Mom and Fiona exchanged glances and smiled then carried on with their chit and chatting. Freddy started to panic, what if they never saw him, how could he play baseball or climb a tree, how could he eat pizza or make a pillow fort? What if he was the boy stuck in the jar, forever. Just then his belly full of jelly started to moan, then it groaned and finally it offered up full blown all the colours of the rainbow. Watermelly-on, strawbelly and every jelly his belly could not keep in him. The force of the belly explosion propelled Freddy out of the jar and onto the floor, head up, bottom down. Then Mom turned calmly to Freddy and said, 'Oh, hello dear, would you like some dinner?' knowing full well he wouldn't, that he actually couldn't as his belly had taught him the lesson of eating too many jellies.

The End

Nanny Bea: Oh thank you Jules. And thank you Tiggy for that story seed. That Freddy was such a silly boy.

Jules: Yeah but those jelly beans are hard to resist.

Nanny Bea: Yes but no, his silliness was in eating them all and not even planting one.

Jules: Ah, we had a jelly bean stalk story a while back.

Nanny Bea: A story to some, a reality to others. Why my very own cousin Jack made quite a name for himself once his stalk grew. The climate in the clouds is much better for growing bubble gum.

Jules: You can grow bubble gum.

Nanny Bea: Well not without a jellybean stalk you can't!

Jules: Who knew?

Nanny Bea: I did and now you and all our listening friends.

Jules: Who can find that jelly beanstalk story on our website.

Thomas: Go to NannyBea.com

Jules: Go there to find out about all our stories and how you can send in a story seed like the fabulous Tiggy. Make sure to like or follow us on iTunes or Spotify to get a reminder and come back 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.