

Ribbert Croakermyer

by Jules de Jongh

Season 2 Episode 38

[opening theme music and strapline]

Nanny Bea: Hello, I'm so pleased you found your way and in good time too, the kettle has boiled and my neighbour Jules will be here with a story any...

[knock sfx]

Nanny Bea: minute now.

Nanny Bea: Oh, it seems we have a visitor. Hello?

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

Nanny Bea: It is? What a delight! We were hoping you'd come soon.

Jules: Well here I am and with a ribbiting tale too. Are you ready for a story?

Nanny Bea: Oh, yes please.

Jules: Okay then, **Ribbert Croakermyer**, adapted for radio

Ribbert Croakermyer didn't know he was a Croakermyer, he didn't know he was 'an anything', except a frog out of water. For as long as he could remember he'd been hopping from one pond to another, never quite feeling right, never feeling at home. Ribbert couldn't remember if he ever had a home or anything before the hoping actually.

On one of his hopping adventures he found himself at the wish pond in the Brokemore castle grounds. Princess Willamoana was at the edge of the pond in her tiara and ball gown. There wasn't a ball, she just liked to wear them so everyone would know she was a princess. It wasn't the most practical attire. I mean imagine sitting next to her and the movie theatre, she took up an entire row unless you were happy to sit in tons of tulle and layers of lace. She wore them at the grocery store and often got caught in the revolving doors, dress squished up against the glass, princess scrambling like a hamster on his wheel going round and round until she finally rolled out. But it was probably the most inappropriate when she wore them to school, she could barely fit in her desk, her p.e. locker would never shut and she'd inevitably end up tripping when she was meant to be skipping rope.

Ribbert heard her swishing gown announcing her arrival, then he saw the water ripple as her eyes leaked giant raindrops.

Ribbet was understandably concerned, he sat quietly in the reeds as she kept on leaking then started speaking to no one in particular, 'Oh Daddy is such a bore, how am I meant to choose a prince from that sorry lot he's put before me. What is a beautiful princess such as I, supposed to do?' She said as she pulled her blue satin purse out and clicked the clasp open. She took out one golden coin and tossed it into the pond declaring really more than wishing that, 'Sir Cashalot would get off his high horse! Or...' she added with another coin, 'Lord Brian would stop speaking in rhyme! Or...' she went on adding another coin to each subsequent wish, 'Prince formerly known as squiggle would stop playing the bagpipes, Or...'

Ribbert had to agree with her on that one. Even the best of the bagpipes sounds like the worst of a cat chorus shrieking out in the night. But Willamoana's complaints kept coming, one for each of the dozen suitors her father had brought forth and a coin of course to follow.

When she finally reached the last one, Colonel Flanders and his habit of finger licking instead of using a napkin, Ribbert had lost the will to listen and leaned with the full weight of sleep on his nearest reed which of course snapped in two and left Ribbert in full view.

'Gribbet!' he couldn't help but exclaim, drawing Willamoana's eye his way. 'Well what do we have here? Another more suitable suitor perhaps?' she said as she reached towards Ribbert. Ribbert wiggled and slipped from her grip. Hoping his hopping would get him to safety. It wasn't until he reached a pond, far, far away that he exhaled, 'Phew, imagine spending my entire life in her clutches.'

Ribbert was so worn out he lounged across a lily pad in the pond and floated aimlessly.

That was until he heard the most wretched screech, in unison!

'Ouch, oo, eek ah!' the sisters cried out as they walked seemingly in pain with bare feet, blistered and bruised.

'You owe me a prince Mother,'

'I want a prince of my own!' the other sister squaked.

'And I want a condo in Florida with a cabana boy to rub my feet, but lifes not fair, get used to it,' their mother snarled back at them.

The sisters grunted. Mother continued, 'I gave you your chance. If you'd just squeezed a little harder your trotters for feet would've fit in that shoe, you just didn't want it badly enough! So not another word until you have another plan for catching a prince.'

The sisters soaked their aching feet in the lily pond. Ribbert froze as if a hungry lion was poised to pounce. What a silly Ribbert, there was no hungry lion...there were two! And both of them flopped into the pond and grabbed a hold of their future prince. The sisters collided and Ribbert decided to spring into action and out of that pond, that village, that county.

What an exhausting day! Ribbert was used to a bit of attention but today was the limit. When he got to the village pond just past the county line he was very careful to hide himself in a hollowed out log nearby . Lucky for him as it wasn't long before another young lady arrived, distressed, again!

'Hello my favourite place,' she said to the pond and its inhabitants. 'I always feel so comfortable here. Feels like home which is funny because my actual home is far from comfortable, not since the Crown Prince chose me as his future queen. Why me? There are so many more talented, kind, beautiful girls to choose from. My mother says it's a great honour, that I should be pleased. But he doesn't even know me, why I don't even know me. I feel like I'm in the wrong life, the wrong skin.' Then the village girl began to leak like, the ones before but different at the same time. Ribbert felt his heart sink at her sadness. He crept out of the log and hopped alongside her.

'Well hello you,' the village girl said, 'I haven't seen you here before, I'm Frogetta and it's a pleasure to make your acquaintance.'

Frogetta and Ribbert sat side by side for the rest of the afternoon. She forgot all about the crown prince and told him stories of the pond, the creatures she's seen, how it changes with each season. Ribbert was never happier than by her side. Finally he felt like he belonged. Soon the sun was setting and Frogetta had to return home.

'I really must leave now but have enjoyed your company more than you could know,' at that she reached down and kissed Ribbert on the head. Ribbert didn't hop away, he stayed right by her side until suddenly things started to change, green skin, four legs and little bumps all over were now... all over Frogetta! 'Ahhhh!' she shouted. Ribbert was confused, he'd always kind of thought maybe he was something else but he wasn't and she was. 'I'm me again!' Frogetta shouted with glee.

Frogetta and Ribbert spent a lot of time together, she established herself as an independent frog of means, he got pond hopping out of his system and they found their way to happily ever after.

The End

Nanny Bea: Why thank you Jules. I must show you their wedding photos, I was Frogetta's bridesmaid and what a bride she made.

Jules: Did you have to crouch down for the whole ceremony?

Nanny Bea: I've been doing yoga for years and I can crouch for at least that long. Like this, look! I could do this until you return.

Jules: Next week? For more tales and tea?

Thomas: Go to NannyBea.com

Jules: Go there to find out about all our stories. If you like the show, please say so on iTunes or Spotify or even better, tell a friend. 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.