

The Wolf That Didn't Cry Boy

by Jules de Jongh

Season 2 Episode 37

[opening theme music and strapline]

Nanny Bea: Coo eee, I'm over here, in the cupboard. It seems I have run out of tea and my neighbour Jules will be here with a story any...

[knock sfx]

Nanny Bea: minute now.

Nanny Bea: That must be her? Maybe I can delay her long enough to find emergency tea stash. Hello, who is it?

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

Nanny Bea: My Major Rules from a lorry? Oh where is that, Emergency Tea!

Jules: No it's...

Nanny Bea: My neighbour Jules with a story! Of course it is, come in dear.

Jules: Hello Nanny Bea, you might want to put the kettle on 'cause I've brought for you a tale of the unexpected. Are you ready for a story?

Nanny Bea: Oh, yes please.

Jules: Okay then, **The Wolf That Didn't Cry Boy**, adapted for radio

It was back to school for all the wolf cubs in the village. And not a minute too soon if you ask their parents. This summer had been a tricky one, a sticky one in fact with so much humidity, you could wring out your pants to water your plants. Not that Niyah did that. Niyah wouldn't dream of giving plants anything but the freshest first hand water. She was always thinking like that. She looked after everyone and everything that came across her path. Most of the other cubs thought she was odd, lots of the other cubs avoided her if they could and a few of the other cubs actively sought Niyah out to tease and torture her. They'd fill her lunchbox with sand, sharpen all her pencils to stumps, and pelt her with paper darts when the teacher wasn't looking. Niyah tried telling on them but the teachers did nothing and it just made things worse. So after a while, she just ignored it or pretended like she did. I mean how could you ignore someone super gluing your paws to the floor.

Niyah spent recesses on her own and sat at the back of the class. With no one behind her, sneak attacks were reduced. One day Mr Mancuna was teaching them the wolf cub code, the moral compass for all good cubs. 'So class, who can tell me one rule from the cub code?' Niyah knew but said nothing. One of the cubs at the front popped her hand up and said, 'Always stay with the pack.' Of course they all knew that but Niyah found the pack an unpleasant place so she ignored that one. 'Very good Tsee Tsee.' That must've been the 20th 'very good Tsee Tsee' today and it was only 10 o'clock!

'Anyone know another part of the cub code?' Togo blurted out without waiting to be called on 'cause that's the kind of wolf cub he is, 'Keep your coat clean!' Ironic he should say that as he wasn't the cleanest of cubs but at least he wasn't as dirty as Niyah. Niyah walked to school alone instead of taking the bus with the others and that meant she walked right through a pig sty, an actual pig ridden sty. She would arrive coated in mud that would dry and flake off during the day leaving a dusty trail behind her. That trail made tracking her oh so easy for those who fancied a tease.

Mr Mancuna continued, 'And what is the most important rule of all?' he said expecting the whole class to respond together and they did, 'Never, ever go near a human!' all but Niyah shouted at once. This was yet again another rule Niyah couldn't or wouldn't keep. Mr Mancuna went on to explain, 'There is a long history between wolf and man, a long and tortured history. Once upon a time we roamed this region hunting as and when we needed, where we needed but then man arrived and did not roam. Instead they consumed the place, putting up fences and tearing down forests. They left no room for us to roam. With our hunting ground taken away we started to get closer to the humans, going beyond their fences and hunting animals they saw as their own, as if you can own animals. The humans became angry and started hunting us and we started hating them. The feud remains to this day. The humans cannot be trusted. Stay as far away from them as you can.'

Niyah's problem with that most important rule started on the first Friday of the first week back to school, Niyah was heading into school as she usually did, through the pig sty when she was so distracted by her own thoughts that she didn't notice what she was soon to bump right into, not a pig, but a boy, a human boy at that. Niyah was startled by the 'BUMP', as was the boy who turned to look Niyah in the eyes. Niyah didn't move, she finally knew what scared stiff meant. The boy, Deon was taught in school to 'Never, ever go near a wolf.' He'd heard many stories including the one about a boy who cried, 'Wolf, wolf!' frightening the entire town only for the villagers to realise he was joking. That boy did that several times until one day he wasn't joking but no one believed him and he has not been seen since.

Deon should have been frightened, he should have cried out but he wasn't and he didn't. Face to face, eye to eye with a wolf and all Deon could do was smile at this stunning creature with vivid eyes and a silky coat. Niyah was almost embarrassed at the admiration. But then Deon showed his true colours. He reached into his bag and pulled out a giant stick to beat her, huh, oh, no, no I'm sorry, I mean to feed her. Deon loved his salami and would take an entire stick to school, ready to snack on any time he pleased. But nothing would please him more to share his salami with Niyah. He unraveled the skin and broke off a chunk for Niyah in the palm of his hand. Niyah knew this was her time to pounce, Deon was so vulnerable standing there all alone with his hand stretched out in front of him. Instead she ran, both scared and excited.

So when Mr Mancuna gave his lecture on why wolves should never, ever go near a human, once again Niyah thought otherwise. There were only three cub rules, stay with the pack, keep your coat clean and never, ever go near a human. Not agreeing with any one of them made Niyah feel even more disconnected from the other cubs.

The next day Niyah was actually looking forward to school, 'cause they were going on a field trip! And through a field Niyah knew quite well. Mr Mancuna reminded them all of the cub rules in the bus concluding with, 'And never, ever go near a....'.

'Human!' all except Niyah replied. She was too busy, too busy wondering whether she'd run into that human boy again, he was so kind offering his salami. Mr Mancuna didn't stop there, 'And if you find yourself in the presence of a human, let us say one of the boy variety, what should you do?'

'Shout Boy, boy!'

'I have trained you well young cubs,' the teacher replied, proud of his class.

The bus pulled away, across the parking lot, down the road, around the corner and they'd arrived. So much quicker by bus than Niyah's usual journey on paw. Before the cubs were allowed to go anywhere, they were divided into packs, and expected to stay in them of course. Niyah was the last to be chosen and got stuck in Togo's pack. The only reason Mr Mancuna selected Togo as a pack leader was to keep him out of trouble but trouble was found and not long after they set out. Togo's pack was to find fallen chestnuts which you'd think would be under the chestnut tree but no one could convince Togo of that. He was certain all the best chestnuts were at the farthest end of the field, precisely where the teacher instructed them not to go, straight into the pig sty. The same one the boy with the salami appeared in. Niyah would normally have skulked off away from the pack but the prospect of seeing the boy again was too exciting to ignore. Togo's pack sunk down low so as to hide in the long waving grass, out of sight from Mr Mancuna. They successfully arrived at the pig sty with no one the wiser. The pigs were not eating chestnuts to Togo's disappointment. They were not eating anything, that was until a giant bucket appeared from nowhere, surrounded by pigs and gushing with slop. Today's slop consisted of last night's lasagne and this morning's porridge. It looked revolting but the pigs didn't seem to mind. They sucked and slurped until all the slop was gone leaving an empty bucket and behind it something...well something the rest of the pack couldn't see as Niyah pounced right in front of him. Deon crouched behind her furry back. The pack was unimpressed and growled, 'Grrrr, you said we'd find the biggest chestnuts ever and all we've seen is a pile of pigs eating a bucket of goo!' The pigs were offended but that's no surprise as pigs are so easily offended. The wolf cub pack, skulked away in a huff, not even bothering to hide in the grass this time, well all of them except for Niyah.

'Thank you for saving me from those cubs.'

'Thank you for feeding me, well trying to, the other day, if you remember...' Niyah stumbled.

'It looked like your pack was ready to feed on me,' said Deon, only just relieved.

Niyah smiled, 'Oh, they wouldn't eat you, not cubs, but they would've cried out, 'boy, boy' and alerted our teacher. And I'm not totally sure, he wouldn't eat you.'

'I have some teachers like that,' Deon said as he pulled out yet another salami stick and broke it in two. This time Niyah took half and they sat quite happily eating together and not each other. Well that was the case with Deon and Niyah, but don't forget not every boy is Deon and not every wolf is Niyah.

The End

Nanny Bea: Why thank you Jules. Your story reminds me of the time I came face to face with a hairy terrifying creature, I did in fact cry out 'wolf, wolf!' only to find it was just my nephew Bernard who had gone a bit feral.

Jules: In desperate need of a shave and a haircut..

Nanny Bea: Yes.

Jules: Aw, I was expecting two bits.

Nanny Bea: Two bits of what

Jules: I think we need to practice and try again next week.

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.