

Space Cat and the Falling Star
by Jules de Jongh
Season 2 Episode 42

[opening theme music and strapline]

Nanny Bea: Hello there! The tea is ready, are you? My neighbour Jules will be here with a story any...

[knock sfx]

Nanny Bea: minute now.

Nanny Bea: Is that my door? Is someone there?

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

Nanny Bea: Now that is perfect timing, we were expecting you.

Jules: Why thank you Nanny Bea. I've got both hands full this week, one with a tale and the other with a wonder word.

[insert wonder word jingle]

Amelia: Hi, I'm Amelia Nanny Bea and I've got a wonder word,

[insert drum roll]

Amelia: Flibbertigibbet. A flibbertigibbet is a silly person who chitter chatters a lot. I chitter chatter a lot, but I'm not silly all the time. Thank you Nanny Bea. Bye.

[insert chimes]

Jules: Thank you Amelia, we sure will look out for flibbertigibbet, a word like that won't be able to hide. Are you ready for a story?

Nanny Bea: Oh, yes please.

Jules: Okay then, **Space Cat and the Falling Star**, adapted for radio

When stars fall, they fall fast so catching one takes special skills, diligent dedication, commanding commitment and a very long pole with a huge hooky bit on one end. And that is

according to the only possibly qualified, self certified star catcher in the galaxy, one Albert B. Botherboodle, his enemies call him Al, his friends never call.

So Albert, the space cat, travels the universe in search of stars ripe and ready to fall, he has a knack for knowing just when. Then he positions himself, a safe distance away, don't want to get burned, and hooks them out of the sky. There's a big market for second hand stars right now, it's actually more trendy to have a well worn one than one brand spanking new, vintage is all the rage.

But Albert doesn't trade with just any space cat, no. He's got, well you couldn't exactly call them standards, more like limits. He won't sell to any cat that wants to misuse or abuse a star, fallen or otherwise. Albert's interpretation of misuse is where it gets a bit dodgy. In his opinion all stars are here to serve; to give light, guide space travellers, mark the passing of time, all pretty standard but, then there's the catch, Albert's catch. He believes, and tells others he believes, that stars can never touch the ground, once they do they lose all their staryness, according to him. Now some of his colleagues have dropped stars and picked them back up and they will argue that those stars are as sparkly as the next but Albert won't have any of it. If you want to buy one of his stars, it must never touch the ground.

Business was booming for Albert, for all the space cats since the earth people decided to join them out beyond the stratosphere. The earth people came up and out just to have a peek, then liked it so much they came back for more, built outrageous resorts and now vacation in outer space. A very sore subject for all space cats is that their earthly counterparts have never been invited.

Probably for the best, earth cats have the burden of ruling their earthly empire. They need to be stroked on command, fed on demand and allowed to wander all about without a word of reprimand. The balance of power must remain intact.

Space cats on the other hand have to pay their own boarding, supply their own grooming and find a way to keep the bowl full for their daily feeding. It's tricky business. That's why Albert's 'never on the ground' rule got him into a space load of trouble.

It was a cold, dark day as it always is in space and Albert went to meet some new client, who wanted a fallen star to brighten her living room decor.

'Where would you be displaying this star?' Albert asked.

'Why on the ceiling of course,' Catrina replied.

Now I don't know if he was distracted or deluded or just plain worn out but Albert didn't do his usual vetting of Catrina. She had a reputation of being a flibbertigibbet, full of words that are full of fluff, and puff and stuff. Why you wouldn't sell her a bottle of pop without checking her credentials first. She was nonsense all wrapped up in a furry coat of white. Albert sold her this fallen star, KND-4079 she was called, not being big enough to attract one of the fancy names like Taurus or Orion. But she was a star all the same, sheer hydrogen and

helium mixing it up to create light. KND may not have been the biggest, most popular star but she was a real gem and she'd seen a lot in her time. When Albert handed her over to Catrina, he had no idea what would become of KND, he had no idea of what he'd have to do to save her.

Catrina was just a ball of fluff, she was also a ball of fluff with friends in bad places. Now I don't know how a space cat like Catrina ends up alongside the space dogs but she did and that's what KND was delivered into. The first few days weren't too bad, KND was left in her box on the top shelf, it was quiet but KND had lots of history to think about so didn't mind too much.

Then the big dog returned from a trip doing who knows what, really, does anyone know, the galaxy police have been asking? The big dog who liked to be called just that, Big Dog burst through Catrina's door ready for some shady business.

'You got that star?' he barked at Catrina.

'Sure do,' she purred back.

Then she gave the box with KND over to Big Dog. He had plans for her, plans for her to bounce across a skywalk, to glimmer from the stage and to, and this is where Big Dog crossed the line, to roll around the dance floor which, not surprisingly was...on the ground!

Word soon got out that a fallen star of Albert's was lighting up Big Dog's club, entertaining the guests in the sky and on the floor. Albert dropped everything, no really everything, his chocolate milkshake, his hamburger with all the trimmings and his copy of *The Cat and The Hat*, one of his all time favorites! He jumped in his limo, oh did I not say, Albert is a very successful space cat. So he jumped in his limo and whizzed off to Catrina's where he last saw KND. Catrina was still a flibbertigibbet and Albert kicked himself for not noticing that before. (Kicking yourself is no easy task, not even with four legs.) Catrina tried fluttering her eye lashes but Albert took no notice.

'Where's KND, tell me now or I'll...' Albert growled.

'Or you'll what? Rub my belly, oh I do like my belly rubbed, or scratch under my collar, that's always a good one?'

'Oh yes what is with those collars, I mean fashion is one thing but these are the limit. What am I saying, you Catrina and your fluffy ways have foiled my plans again.'

'They have? Oh do tell me how, I've always wanted to foil someone rather than something like a leftover burrito or half a cheese sandwich.'

'Just tell me where I can find KND.'

'Oh the star, why didn't you just ask? She's at the Big Dog's and Hogs hideout, over on 11th.'

'Drive?'

'No I don't have a license.'

Albert raced out of there before the nonsense started to make sense. 11th Drive must be it, that's the rough part of galaxy full of meteors and space rubble. He found his way there too easily, like the dark side of life was drawing him in. They were gambling with sardines, watching men fish and drinking all the soured milk they could get their paws on. This was the lowest form of life in the universe. A place where a space cat could lose his way. Albert knew it, they all knew it, so he prepared himself. He had to limit his senses so as not to get distracted. Sardines...oh they call to you so on his nose he put a clothes peg, 'That's fine, I can breathe through my mouth.'

Then he put on swimming goggles, they made the fishermen all fuzzy at the sides, they made everything fuzzy at the sides meaning he could easily, 'Omph,' bump into things.

Finally, he put mittens on his paws, and everyone knows a kitten in mittens can't raise a shot glass to his mouth, not even for the most tempting of drinks, soured milk.

Albert entered the Big Dog's and Hogs hideout, trying to slip in unnoticed. 'Hey look at that cat in mittens with swimming goggles and a clothes peg on his nose!' They noticed but that didn't put Albert off his mission. KND must be here somewhere and that fallen star is in need of saving. No sooner did he think that then he felt a tap, tap, tap on his shoulder, 'How'd you like a spin on the dance floor?'

'Sorry ma'am, I'm here to...' he turned to see none other than KND, she blinked at him to let him know she knew what he knew that he was here to...'save a fallen star.' KND started to roll around the ground guiding Albert towards the back door. It cut Albert to the core, seeing a fallen star on the floor but with those goggles on he didn't get a very good view so he could pretend she was just hovering. Just as they made it to the door a paw reached out, 'Just where do you think you're going?' growled Big Dog himself.

(gulp)'To get some fresh air.' Big Dog ripped the peg from Albert's nose, 'How's that?'

'Oh, much better thank you,' Albert said, not all together sure what move to make next.

'Good customer service is our top priority, have a nice evening.'

Big Dog sounded so nice, maybe he isn't as scary as people make out. 'Oh, he is, he just likes to have good reviews on tripadvisor,' said KND but Albert didn't hear a word, his nose was already dragging him to the sardine table. KND could see where this was headed and without even thinking, scalded his nose with a flash of her flame. 'Ow, what'd you do that for, I can't smell a thing!'

'Precisely, now let's focus on what you came here for...'

'A good night out!' Albert said, looking at his phone.

'No! To rescue me from this degrading life.'

'Oh, oh, yeah, yeah, that, sorry I just got caught up in all those reviews, they really do rate highly on tripadvisor.' Albert looked at his phone again and the idea landed, plunk, in his head. 'Ow but ohhhh, I've got a plan.'

Albert went straight over to Big Dog himself and with a phone in one paw and KND at his side he said looking him straight in the eye, 'The star and I are leaving, and you won't do a thing or I'll leave a bad review and I'm prepared to do it.'

Big Dog could see Albert's paw poised over the single star review, his personal nightmare a paw press away.

'Okay, okay, you win this time Al,' using the name only his enemies call him.

Albert with the phone still ready incase anyone pulled a fast one, walked slowly out backwards to keep an eye on the thugs with KND at his side. He pushed the door open and it slammed closed in front of them, remember they are walking backwards, 'Phew, that was a close one,' Albert said pulling off his mittens. 'I forgot to take these off and everyone knows a kitten in mittens can't review a thing.' Everyone also knows a kitten in goggles can't drive a limo but Albert didn't work that out until he mistook a billboard for the freeway. Fortunately Limo's can take a bit of squishing and still be mighty comfortable, all the way home.

The end

Nanny Bea: Why thank you Jules. I'm so pleased you've told us a bit more about life in space, I'm travelling on Virgin Galactic soon and I can't for the life of me remember what my last flight was like.

Jules: But they are only just now going to space.

Nanny Bea: They may be new to space travel but I am not.

Jules: You've been to space.

Nanny Bea: Oh, only if you count the moon but I'm not allowed to talk about it. Did I say anything about the moon?

Jules: I, guess not. Will you be here next week for more tales and tea?

Nanny Bea: But of course.

Thomas: Go to NannyBea.com

Jules: Go there to find out about all our stories or if you'd like to be on the show like the stellar Amelia with a Wonder Word. 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.