

Toys in the Attic
by Jules de Jongh
Season 2 Episode 46

[opening theme music and strapline]

Nanny Bea: Tea for two thousand and two thousand for tea, it's that time again, my neighbour Jules will be here with a story any...

[knock sfx]

Nanny Bea: minute now.

Nanny Bea: Oh, it seems someone is knocking at my door. Who could that be? Hello, who is it?

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

Nanny Bea: Yes it is you and you've come in the nick of time, our listening friends have just arrived and the tea is ready..

Jules: Well that's good news because I've always got a tale for you and today it's all about some toys that were forgotten. Are you ready for a story?

Nanny Bea: Oh, yes please.

Jules: Okay then, **Toys in the Attic**, adapted for radio

Under the layers of dust laced with cobwebs there was a box, a plain cardboard box with top flaps folded over each other, one over, one under and so on until it buckled shut. It was tucked neatly away into the eaves where the roof meets the wall easily forgotten in the full time shadows.

Being forgotten wouldn't be so bad if it were full of last decades bills or moth eaten clothes but this box was filled with irreplaceable memories, laughter and cuddles. It said so in not so many words along the longest sides, 'Treasured Toys' written in blue ink that had faded to grey.

One nearly winter's day, when the Peterson family was moving it's life from California to Tennessee, Mother Peterson offered to be in charge of packing. That made sense as whenever an item was lost, even though not by her, she was the one to find it, as if the missing item sent out a secret distress signal only mother could somehow hear over the echoing 'Mom, where's my (insert object here)' down the halls. This super power combined with her desire to have a place for everything and everything in its place, made her the perfect packing chief. Although none of the other Petersons were converts to her passion,

one by one the children grew up and grew out of their California home, to start their futures in the big wide world. With each relocation the Peterson home grew tidier and tidier and packing became easier and easier.

Mother saved every delivery box over the next few months and made a habit of picking up sturdy subjects each time she did the weekly shop. 'No point buying what's freely available,' she would say when father teased her about her box hoarding habit. But really he was pleased she was so resourceful.

Mother Peterson wrapped every breakable in newspaper and stuffed stuff between the fragile items. She was fully aware of the attic and it's box collection already packed up and ready to be moved on moving day. The movers were instructed to 'Clear the attic,' which they thought they did but clearly didn't as the box marked 'treasured toys' in faded ink remained.

The old Peterson house remained empty for a few months until finally the Othersons moved in. Mr Otherson had plans for the attic. He would convert it into a studio for his photography hobby that he wanted to grow into his work. He personally inspected every nook and cranny in the attic and of course came across the 'treasured toys' box. He wiped away the cobwebs and dusted off the dust, then unbuckled the top flaps to reveal the memories, laughter and cuddles left inside, but all he saw was a round golden bear and a solid plastic dinosaur with a collection of trinkets, he considered rubbish. He was about to throw it all away when he thought he heard a small voice begging, 'Please play with us.' He looked back inside the box but this time he lifted out that round golden bear and really saw her, she had fur that curled on the ends and beautiful button brown eyes. Her smile was full of mischief and her arms extended outwards ready for a hug or a cartwheel, he couldn't be sure of which. Around her neck she had a necklace with a charm engraved with the name 'Charlotte'. And around her leg was the tail of a dinosaur, solid and full of colour. He was roaring and never seemed to tire of it. From the look of him, he'd played long and hard. His paint was worn off in places but on the underside of this foot you could just make out the name Oscar etched across it. Mr Otherson could no longer bring himself to dispose of Charlotte and Oscar, instead he gently placed them back inside and left the box where he'd found it.

Charlotte and Oscar waited in that box, wide awake after theory dust covered sleep. 'Look what I can do!' Charlotte said to the dinosaur as she tried to entertain him. She was a musical theatre bear so she could sing, she could dance and as a bonus she could do the splits without splitting. Oscar got so excited he'd run to her for a cuddle and nearly knock her to the ground. He had a lot to say, even if you couldn't quite make out what, it's not always easy to speak clearly when you're a little dinosaur.

With all that running around Oscar became very hungry. He dreamed of heart shaped cheerios and otter pops. They had neither but Charlotte had wisely stuffed a few carmel filled chocolates in her pockets which she kindly shared with Oscar.

After what felt like forever and a day, Mr Otherson opened the box again, this time with stuff to start stuffing all around them, like he was tucking them safely into bed. They hadn't had a sleepy time snuggle in so long they couldn't help but drift quickly off to...(snore).

When Charlotte and Oscar woke up, it was obvious they weren't in California any more, the mountains knelt down to hills, the babbling brooks sprawled out into rambling rivers. Their box had been opened again but this time by a familiar face, Mother Peterson who was overjoyed when she saw Charlotte and Oscar, 'I thought you were lost forever!' Mother cried and she literally cried. Tears like raindrops rolled down her cheeks but they fell off a happy face not a sad one. Charlotte and Oscar were confused.

Just then Mother's eldest son entered the room holding what Charlotte and Oscar discovered was his eldest son, Benjamin. Now Benjamin was confused. He looked at Charlotte the bear ready to do a cartwheel, he looked at Oscar the dinosaur and his mighty roar. He couldn't choose between them.

'They're both yours,' said Grandmother Peterson or Oma as her grandchild called her. Benjamin scooped Charlotte and Oscar up in one sweep and hung onto them until he went to sleep for this night and the next and the next, all through his little years. Together they gathered more memories, more laughter and more cuddles until Charlotte and Oscar were overflowing.

The End

Nanny Bea: Why thank you Jules. I must look into my attic again, once upon a time there was an entire bear village up there. They were very private though so I left them to it.

Jules: Bears can make a lot of noise.

Nanny Bea: Oh not nearly as much as the dinosaurs living in my cellar.

Jules: You have dinosaurs in your cellar!

Nanny Bea: Shhhh, only little ones but they are very shy, we don't want to scare them off.

Jules: Of course not. Well I will be back next week for more Tales and Tea.

Thomas: Go to NannyBea.com

Jules: Go there to find out about all our stories and how to be on the show with a story seed or a wonder word. And do tell your friends about us. 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.