

Frederick the Most Fickle of Pickles

by Jules de Jongh
Season 2 Episode 48

[opening theme music and strapline]

Nanny Bea: Hello ey doe! You're timing is impeccable, my neighbour Jules will be here with a story any...

[knock sfx]

Nanny Bea: minute now.

Nanny Bea: Seems someone else would like to join us. Hello, who is it

Jules: It's me Nanny Bea, your neighbour Jules with a story.

Nanny Bea: Oh do come in, a tale is precisely what we' re after. Hello Jules.

Jules: Hello Nanny Bea. Well you will be pleased because a tale is precisely what I've brought. Are you ready for a story?

Nanny Bea: Oh, yes please.

Jules: Okay then, **Frederick the Most Fickle of Pickles**, adapted for radio

Nobody knew at first but Frederick was a fickle pickle, even before he was born. In his mother's womb he flipped and he flopped, never able to settle on any one position.

'Maybe if my leg is there, no, no there, yeah and I'm upside down, backwards even or how 'bout a star jump, I can throw all my limbs out like this.'

'Ooo', his mommy said at the star jump inside her belly. She had no idea he was doing all those acrobatics just because he was changing his mind, she hadn't a clue of his fickleness. She thought he was a future athlete or a dance choreographer. Mommy and Daddy would spend hours imagining their baby's future.

'We'll paint little athletes alternating with tiny dancers all around his room!' she declared and they did, as though the cast of the Nutcracker had been shaken up and spread all about his walls.

Frederick came out a fickle pickle and carried on being one with no one the wiser. He'd wake in his cot after a speckled night's sleep and shout out, 'Mom-my, I mean Dad-dy or Grandad, he's a good cuddler, but so is Auntie Elena, and Uncle Os and Papa Mark and...', He carried

on babbling but all anyone could hear was, 'me, me, gdee, dgee, oh...' as Frederick did not speak human yet.

Suspicions of his fickle ways began to grow, in one person at a time. First it was his baby sitter, one of the Haxton girls from next door, it didn't matter which, they were interchangeable, both exceedingly kind and sweet and patient, that said, Frederick did push it to the limit. When on his play mat he would point at the plastic keys, be content for abooooout 3 seconds, then he'd point at the rattle, then the stuffed rabbit, the coloured rings, the silken cloth, the blocks, the ball, the bear. Both Haxton girls caught onto his ways and soon were conveniently unavailable when sitting was required.

His Granny started to suspect fickledom when she began feeding Frederick. She'd give him some porridge, he would smile then spit it out. She'd give some peas, he'd seemed pleased then squeeze them through his lips. She'd give him avocado which he would start to chew then wipe right off his tongue. Granny was the first to say it outloud, 'Frederick is a most fickle pickle!' His mommy and daddy would laugh, 'A connoisseur,' Daddy would say, 'A future chef!' Mommy would add. That is why Frederick's entire wardrobe became food themed, a brussel sprout hat, his noodle scarf, and his pumpkin sweater, actually that one was quite cute.

When Frederick made his way to preschool it wasn't long before they clocked his fickleness pickleness. 'Frederick is a busy boy, full of ideas, one after another,' his parents were so proud. 'But there is one issue we are having,' his parents were horrified, something wrong with their treasure, how is that possible but then the teacher gave an example, 'Like when it is activity station time, Frederick can't seem to decide which one he prefers and jumps from the playdough which he gets under his nails then mixes those chunks in the finger paint before moving onto the glitter and glue, ending with the dressing up box. Have you ever tried to get glittery painty playdough out of a Picachu onsie?' his parents were astounded, 'We have ourselves a little artist. What is he? Neo classical? Renaissance perhaps or Impressionist?'

'Messiest, definitely messiest,' the preschool teacher replied. 'A messiest! Wow, he's created his own art movement!' Daddy beamed. 'Yeah, that's what he did,' his teacher replied but I don't think she meant it.

Teachers just know about these things. When Frederick entered big school. The whole family was excited. At last his genius would be recognized. And his kindergarten teacher was just the one to do that. Mr Crayon, heir to the crayon empire, had been around. He could see a fickle pickle a mile off. Wise as he was, Mr Crayon put a caveat on his ice breaker game the very first day of school. 'Okay class, let's get to know each other with a game I like to call 'When I Grow Up'. We will go around the room and one at a time answer the question, 'What would you like to be when you grow up?' This is a very important life skill for all children as it is the question adults will pose to you again and again when they can't think of anything else to say. But you must remember the golden rule, you may say anything, but only one thing.'

Way to go Mr Crayon, now Frederick would have to offer just one answer, no matter how fickled his brain was. And Frederick really was a good boy so he would answer that question

with one answer. On his first day of big school he replied, 'I want to be an astronaut when I grow up.' Mommy and Daddy were over the moon when they heard this news and signed him up for junior space camp 7 years in advance.

As Mr Crayon had rightly warned his pupils, this question would echo through their childhood along with the comment, 'My how you've grown.' And Frederick stuck to the golden rule, in spite of being a ficklefied pickle, only providing one answer each time someone asked, 'What would you like to be when you grow up?' One answer per question asked, changing with each additional asking.

In the end Frederick became the one and only ice sculpting, train driving, fire fighting, chocolate trying, game designer stationed on the moon— but he never actually grew up.

The End

Nanny Bea: Why thank you Jules but I must beg to differ.

Jules: Oh, why is that?

Nanny Bea: Well I actually have known yet another ice sculpting, train driving, fire fighting, chocolate trying, game designer stationed on the moon. Her name is Gertrude and she plays a challenging game of bridge, every third Friday at the recreation center.

Jules: That is a long way from the moon.

Nanny Bea: Oh she doesn't mind the commute.

Jules: Okay we'll she'll have plenty of time to catch our next episode of Nanny Bea.

Thomas: Go to NannyBea.com

Jules: Go there to find out about all our stories including some very special Christmas ones. Then like us, recommend us but most importantly join us 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.