

## Daniel and the Disappearing Spaniel

by Jules de Jongh  
Season 3 Episode 2

[opening theme music and strapline]

Nanny Bea: What perfect timing, I have my tea in hand and my neighbour Jules will be here with a story any...

[knock sfx]

Nanny Bea: minute now.

Nanny Bea: Oh, is that a minute now, already? Hello, who is it?

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

Nanny Bea: Delightful! We were hoping it was you. Come in.

Jules: It is and I've got another tale for you and our listening friends. Are you ready for a story?

Nanny Bea: Oh, yes please.

Jules: Okay then, **Daniel and the Disappearing Spaniel**, adapted for radio

Some days are grey days not just on the outside but on the in, deep down to your very core. And sometimes those grey days seem to go on forever, you forget when they started and can't imagine when they'll end. Well this was the case for Daniel ever since he lost his best friend, his thrill seeking, secret keeping, adventure making friend. Everyone said Daniel would see him again someday, but someday wasn't today so today was very grey, but only for the part of the day.

Daniel was sitting where he and his best friend used to sit for lunch, on the bench, under the tree, near the farthest edge of the playground. But today he was sitting all alone when he started to feel a 'whish, whash, wish, whash, wish, whash' gently sweep across his legs. Before Daniel could even bend down to see what was 'whish, whashing,' the bell rang, and not the 'time to start walking back,' bell no this was the double bell, the 'time to run like the wind' bell. Daniel ran, more like a breeze but phew, he made it. Luckily his class was the nearest class to the entrance and his seat was the nearest to the door.

From his seat by the door Daniel could see Ms. Thesbie and still see outside the window. Ms. Thesbie liked to have her class seated in the round so she could perform like Shakespeare in the middle and although her British accent wasn't anything like a British accent, it did make everyone laugh and probably pay more attention. Unless behind Ms.

Thesbie just outside the window was a curly coated fur ball bouncing juuuuuust into view, then back out again. Daniel tried to keep his eyes on Ms. Thesbie especially as she was getting to the balcony scene, that was the best bit with Ms. Thesbie popping up to be Juliet and scrunching down to be Romeo. Up, down, up, down like a jack in the box with a bad British accent. Daniel got caught up in her performance once again and didn't end up taking his eyes off her to see what was bouncing in the background.

The rest of the day went quickly, it usually does with Ms. Thesbie as your teacher. Daniel gathered up his things, slipped into his coat and wrapped his extra long scarf around an extra long time. He with a mass of other children poured out of the exit/entrance depending on which way you were heading, and into the playground, through the gates and onto the lane where arms were waiting to give hugs, grab things or guide the particularly chatty ones into the car. This ceremony, although complicated, was over in a few blinks leaving just the walkers, walking home. The walkers lived close to the school on the whole. Daniel didn't. But he did have parents who wanted children who walked, 'good for the body, good for the soul!' Daniel reminded himself of that as he walked beyond the students who lived closer and off into the distance, all alone. Eventually that extra long scarf he'd wrapped around an extra long time unravelled and began to drag along behind him like toilet roll stuck to your shoe or the tail of a kite before it heads for the sky. Daniel didn't notice or didn't care. He walked on until he was 'ungk' pulled to a halt. Someone had grabbed a hold of his scarf and was pulling in the opposite direction. Daniel grabbed the scarf and pulled against the unknown puller, unknown as he was deep in the bushes along with the other end of Daniel's scarf. Back and forth, the a wriggle and a jiggle, forth and back another wriggle and a jiggle they went, neither puller willing to let go. Daniel couldn't let go, this scarf was the first scarf his mother made when she started to knit, but didn't know when to quit. This scarf was a lasso when you needed one, a makeshift goal post, an, an ad hoc jump rope. This scarf was the scarf Daniel was wearing the day he said goodbye to best friend. Daniel would never let go of this scarf so the puller on the other end did.

'Hooo, huh, hoo,' Daniel caught his breath. The bushes went on forever so that unknown puller could be anywhere and Daniel couldn't be, he had to be home and he was already late. By the time Daniel got there the drive was packed, with Dad's car, Mom's car and...Uncle Martin's car! Uncle Martin's car on the drive means there must be an uncle Martin waiting for him inside. Huh! And there was. Oh Uncle Martin, from what seemed the other side of the world. If only he lived closer, if only Daniel could come home every day to Uncle Martin. But that wasn't an option, however Uncle Martin had a little friend he wanted to leave behind, a thrill seeking, secret keeping, adventure making friend but, he seems to have disappeared.

Apparently shortly after Uncle Martin's arrival, his friend of the puppy variety, a spaniel who answered to the name of Sprout, had disappeared. Mom, Dad and Uncle Martin searched and searched but couldn't find him anywhere. But now Daniel was home, he got to thinking and asked if this puppy had a whishy whashing tail and a curly coat and a desire to pull and wriggle, jiggle then pull again. Yes! That's Sprout, Uncle Martin confirmed. With that the entire family followed Daniel back towards the school to the bush where an unknown puller pulled and wriggled. 'Sprout, Sprout!' they all shouted out, but no puppy replied. So Daniel took them to just outside his classroom, to the window where the curly coated fur ball bounced up and down. 'Sprout, Sprout!' they all shouted out but still no puppy replied. Oh!

How about the bench, under the tree, near the farthest edge of the playground. 'Sprout, Sprout!' they once again shouted but once again no puppy replied. Daniel's excitement from Uncle Martin's arrival had now faded back to grey at the disappointment of losing another friend and this time one he'd never even gotten to know.

Uncle Martin said he'd make it better, he'd get another puppy, an even better puppy. Daniel didn't want another puppy. He just wanted to walk silently home. Once there they all had dinner and Daniel tried to enjoy Uncle Martin's company. They played games, read a book then said goodbye. Uncle Martin always has to say goodbye. So Daniel was alone again in his bedroom trying to fall asleep when in the bottom of his covers he felt a warm flurry lump at his feet, without even turning on the lights Daniel whizzed around head to his foot end and felt a curly coated future friend. They spent the rest of the night, sleeping upside down dreaming of all the adventures they'd find, the secrets they'd keep and the thrills they'd have together.

In the morning Daniel woke and there was no puppy in his bed, he'd disappeared, again or maybe he was just a dream. Daniel got dressed then went to the kitchen for his breakfast to find Sprout who forgot all about his food and scampered back to Daniel. It's hard to pinpoint exactly when but sometime soon the grey days were gone and Daniel could enjoy his new puppy friend and remember the best of the best friend he lost.

The End

Nanny Bea: Why thank you Jules. I know a puppy cannot replace a person but they certainly give it a go. My puppy who isn't a puppy any more, found me in a ditch.

Jules: Ew, that couldn't have been fun.

Nanny Bea: You wouldn't think so would you, but actually it was in that ditch where I discovered my youth tonic.

Jules: A mud mask.

Nanny Bea: No, a moisturizer from L'Oreal, I found it online while waiting for the emergency services to extract me.

Jules: Good thing you had your phone. If you're ever stuck again, you can always listen to a story.

Thomas: Go to [NannyBea.com](http://NannyBea.com)

Jules: Go there to find out about all our stories. 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](http://NannyBea.com).