

Duck Out of Water

by Jules de Jongh
Season 3 Episode 5

[opening theme music and strapline]

Nanny Bea: Hello to you, your timing is impeccable. My tea is fresh off the boil so I'll let it cool a bit while we wait for my neighbour Jules who'll bring us a story any...

[knock sfx]

Nanny Bea: minute now.

Nanny Bea: Oh and my tea is still hot! Hello, who might you be?

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

Nanny Bea: Well then do come in, we were expecting you.

Jules: Thank you Nanny Bea, and I've come with a tale about a duck out of water then in, then out, shake it all about. Oh, it's like the hokey pokey.

Nanny Bea: If that also means the hokey cokey, then I agree. But before you ask if I'm ready for a story, we have a Wonder Word.

[insert wonder word jingle]

Rose: Hi this is Rose Nanny Bea and I've got Wonder Word...

[insert drum roll]

Rose: Humdinger. When something is a humdinger it is very impressive, exciting or enjoyable. I got a humdinger of a gift from my grandparents this year, an electric scooter to take me to school and back. Thank you Nanny Bea, bye.

[insert chimes]

Jules: Thank you Rose, humdinger is in our tale today but you'll have to listen really carefully. Now are you ready for a story?

Nanny Bea: Oh, yes please.

Jules: Okay then, **Duck Out of Water**, adapted for radio

Edwin lived in a cast iron bath in the city of Bath it just so happens. Good thing Edwin was a duck. Edwin had a charmed life of bobbing in bubbles until he didn't.

And that change came about so quickly, it's hard to pinpoint when exactly but if I were to hazard a guess and I'd say it was when the flusher on the toilet was flushed. Edwin didn't mean to be in the toilet at that time, he didn't want to be in the toilet at that time but he was and as I said, it was flushed.

Fortunately for him he was alone in this flushing, that would've been messy business. I dread to think. But no, that was not Edwin's fate. He, all by his lonesome, set upon a journey he'd never before seen as possible. It started with a massive vacuum sucking him down the vast drain. He had often wondered where that drain led to and now he was finding out. After the shicane of the toilet itself, 'woah, woah, woah,' he made it only to plummet, like a waterfall from the second floor, 'Ahhhhhhhh. '

Edwin fortunately could hold his breath forever because his journey had only just begun. He travelled through a series of underground tunnels and now he was no longer sailing solo, everything one flushes, ew, joined him along with soapy water, bits of scraped off food, and hairballs, so many hairballs, who knew. It was a rocky ride, full of some stinky memories. To this day Edwin won't say a word about it.

All these travelling companions made their way to the treatment plant and by treatment I mean filtering out the big bits and chemically cleaning the rest. This would've meant the end for Edwin. He and his fellow travellers had just popped up out of the underground tunnels and into a massive tank where hordes and hordes of other tunnels poured into it. Edwin could hear the pumps thudding away and cogs creaking urging him on to the first and what would be his last filter. All the big bits, the wrong bits, the wouldn't break down bits were caught in this giant net, hoisted high in the sky and then dumped onto a pile of other bits as they waited to be buried alive.

Edwin was so frightened he could even scream for help but, at the precise moment he was dumped, an owl was soaring past. Edwin and his bright yellow coat caught his eye. 'Mmm, mmm, dinner time!' said Mr Owl then he swooped down and extracted Edwin before the next pile was piled on top.

Mr Owl flew with Edwin in his talons for what seemed miles. Edwin could see below him grass and trees spread and dotted across the landscape. It was too beautiful for words. Edwin just looked in awe and completely forgot about whose talons were holding him and for what purpose. Mr Owl was feeling rather peckish so decided to take a peck at his pry, Edwin that is and for some reason unknown to Edwin, Mr Owl did not like the taste of him. Could've been his sewage travelling companions thought Edwin or maybe Mr Owl lacked a fondness for yellow ducks, either way it was to Edwin's benefit as at once Mr Owl released his rejected dinner right as they passed over a pond.

Edwin landed with a splash, scaring off any other residents, well only for a little while. Once the water settled and Edwin got his bearings, the residents started to return. Edwin was most grateful that his fall and subsequent splash landing, had washed away any embarrassing sewage debris before he was to meet his new neighbours.

The first to approach him was a perky little toad, Toady to all his friends, and he had a great many. What a chatty toad he was. He had seen Edwin's great descent and rushed up to tell him all about it from a little toad's perspective.

'I was just hopping around minding my own business when whoosh I heard you falling from the sky, like a rocket coming in to land, or maybe more of a comet but then you'd be extinguished by the water so let's stick with rocket. So this rocket, that is you I'm talking about,' he assured Edwin who listened patiently. 'You hit the water and it, it rippled and splashed, kaboom, what a humdinger of a landing! I thought you'd be broken into bits but you're not, or are you, maybe you didn't always look like that, maybe you used to have horns or great big ears.'

Toady went on with his story which seemed to have no end. Edwin was so patient and attentive. Toady ended when his tummy rumbled, 'Better go get me some grub, nice talking to you,' he said and hippity, hoppity'd off to follow a fly.

Edwin was quite content with his own company bobbling in this new bath even though the bubbles were limited. His smile seemed to widen when he saw some for the first time, not enough to get lost in like he used to, but they were bubbles all the same. They led to a fish, called Francis. Francis was a shy fish and was frightened off by most of the other pond residents. When she saw Edwin it was from a distance. He was just bobbing around until he turned her way. Francis froze fearful he might do something, anything to scare her off. But he didn't, Edwin just looked at her and smiled. Francis was too shy to smile back but that didn't deter Edwin, he just kept right on smiling. After a while, a longer while than other residents would've stuck around, Francis started to feel safe. She inched closer to Edwin and he just kept on smiling. He never squealed or squealed or said a word that would put off a shy fish. By the time the sun sunk into the distance, Francis was right alongside Edwin, both quietly smiling, enjoying each other's company.

When morning came, Edwin was on his own again until a noisy gaggle of geese arrived. They were full of opinions, this time about the state of the weather and whether it was changing. The loudest one said, 'Back in the day, summers were hot and dry, now I can't seem to keep my feathers from getting soaked!'

Another disputed, 'Nonsense, it's as wet now as it ever was. You just want something to complain about.'

'Well if we're complaining then what about the morning fog, I can barely see through it,' an elder geese added.

'That just because you need glasses,' his younger flockmate teased him and the rest laughed and laughed and laughed but Edwin didn't. He remained composed and kind.

The youngest goose noticed and asked, 'So yellow ducky, what do you think of the weather these days?'

Edwin didn't say a word. It was awkward at first but then the elder goose got it, 'Wise words my ducky friend, the wisest words are usually those never spoken.'

The other geese agreed and spent a good two maybe three minutes not arguing, that was until they kicked off about what was the best kind of sushi. Edwin let them get on with it and bobbed off in the other direction.

That evening, Edwin looked around his new surrounds. He thought about the chatty little toad, the shyest of fish and the ever arguing geese. This new bath was nothing like his old one but Edwin always found a reason to smile and kept on doing the same.

The End

Nanny Bea: Why thank you Jules. Have I ever told you of my trip to the sewage works?

Jules: No.

Nanny Bea: Good. And I never shall. Suffice it to say, it was a sticky situation.

Jules: I'm kind of glad you didn't tell me.

Nanny Bea: Will you be back next week?

Jules: Yes I will.

Thomas: Go to NannyBea.com

Jules: Go there to find out about all our episodes and learn how you can leave a message like the lovely Rose. 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.