

## The Knitting Grannies – Chapter 2

"Petunia, Bluebell, it is time for....." "The Key" said Gertie in the most dramatic fashion! As I watched in astonishment, all three of them produced a metal object from their pockets. Bluebell gave hers to Petunia who pushed them together until there was a faint click; she then passed it along to Gertie, who I noticed had the biggest piece, she too pushed the pieces together until there was a much louder click. The moment the pieces fused together a bright glow began to pulsate from her hand and when she opened her fingers, there was the most ornate key I had ever seen!

Now I was about to find out (as you are!) something I had no idea about! Gertie glanced at me and then moved to the corner of the room where there was a door that I am sure wasn't there before! She inserted the key into the lock and turned it. A loud 'clunk' followed and the door swung open. Now this house is exactly the same as mine next door and I know for a fact that I do *NOT* have a door like that!

"So, close your mouth dear" said Bluebell kindly, "it is rude to stare as well you know!" (I hadn't realised I was staring open mouthed until then!) "now come with us, you might as well find out a bit more about us, but remember, not a word to anyone!"

Following Bluebell and the others, we went through the door and down some stone steps and found ourselves in a basement (now *I KNOW* I don't have one of those in my house!) which was filled from floor to ceiling on each of its four walls with shelves of small numbered boxes, similar to what you would find in a bank vault or even a wizard's wand shop! Gertie went over to a small desk in the middle of the room on which there was a very old, tatty looking book. Opening a drawer, she took out a white pair of cotton gloves and put them on. Looking at the book I nodded my head in agreement with such precaution, for it looked very dusty and dirty! As if she could read my mind, Petunia whispered to me "oh no dear, it's not because of any dust, it's because it is a very special book!" Very carefully, Gertie opened the book and began to search through its yellowing fragile pages until she found what she was looking for. I sneaked a peek over her shoulder, curious to know what the pages said but was disappointed for it appeared to be just a list of numbers and letters. Running her finger slowly down the page, Gertie stopped at a number near the bottom;

"here we are, Box number 310, section P" she instructed the others. It was just as well the room was well lit by the central light (was that really a small chandelier, in a basement?!) because Petunia and Bluebell began scurrying to and fro until Petunia suddenly stopped and shouted out "Found it!".

"Oh, these boxes are such saucy things!" twittered Bluebell, "they are never in the same place twice!"

"Look in section P and bring up what you find please Petunia!" instructed Gertie "whilst we all go back and set agent Frankie on his way!" You can imagine, this announcement rather startled me!

"What do you mean, send Frankie on his way?"

By this time Gertie, Bluebell and myself had returned upstairs. "Look dear, quite honestly, we all have a long night knitting ahead of us and whilst us three are extraordinarily speedy knitters, the same can't be said for you! The truth is, we need reinforcements and there is only one woman we know that is up to the task in hand! Frankie needs to go and get her!"

I was just about to splutter out more questions when she put up a silencing hand. Going across to Frankie she whispered in his ear and then patting him reassuringly, she let him out the door and into the night. Petunia arrived at that moment with a very large and heavy box, and, at the same time Bluebell returned with three knitting bags plus an extra small box full of knitting needles.

"Ladies, these are yours" she trilled as she handed the bags to the Grannies "and here dear, these will be what you need" she handed me some knitting needles and put some more on the spare chair. Whilst she was doing this, Bluebell removed balls of wool from the box and began to share them out as well.

I was saved the bother of interrupting to ask about Frankie when there was a knock at the door, Bluebell opened it to reveal, standing on the doorstep was Frankie and to my utter amazement Mrs Bullock!

"You are doing it again dear" Bluebell whispered as she gently pushed my chin up! "That open-mouthed stare is not attractive at all!"

Gertie took control once more. "Don't just stand there dear, come in! Well done Frankie, Petunia will get you a carrot from the kitchen, go with her!" At the mention of the word carrot, Frankie was off like a rocket, his feet skidding on the wooden floor!

"Now Mrs Bullock dear, you must be completely confused as to what is going on as you don't know anything about us, but this is an emergency and you have to trust us! We must set to work straight away and as we work I will fill you in with what is going on. It is all top secret I am afraid, what goes on in this house tonight must remain in the house, you must NEVER tell anyone! Do I have your word?" Bemused and looking quite shell shocked at all the goings on, Mrs Bullock nodded her head. "Right then ladies, to the chairs, sorry Midnight, your chair is needed, you will have to sit somewhere else now". Midnight gave a most annoyed meow, jumped down from the chair and stalked indignantly out of the room. We all sat and waited for Gertie to continue. "The pattern is quite simple, just normal stocking stitch should do it. The tricky bit is the line of perforation, so give me a shout when you get to that bit and I will tell you what to do. It really doesn't matter what colour we use, I know people prefer white but hey, its colour or prickly leaves so what choice do they have!" she looked round at us all, pleased at her own joke! "Now ladies, pick up you needles, cast on your stitches and knit like you have never knitted before! The bottoms of Warlingham and Hamsey Green depend on you!"

*to be continued.....*