

The Knitting Grannies – Chapter 4

"Come in quickly now dears, there is no time to lose, such a lot to do" twittered Bluebell as she practically pulled us through the door that evening!

We followed her into the sitting room where Gertie was already standing in her familiar "I am in charge" pose, ready to issue her orders!

"Tonight, it is crucial that we split into two teams, Mrs Bullock you will be on team Knitting with Petunia, Bluebell and Midnight whilst myself, Frankie and you dear" she said wafting one of her hands in my direction "will be on team Sainsburys! Petunia has restocked the wool so knitters, you are all set to go; although you will of course have to wait until we return for the final "Queen pin" moment!"

"Huh? What on earth is that when it is at home?" I asked confused!

"You know dear, when we fetch the Queen needle, hold hands and say our little poem!" replied Petunia. "It needs all three of us.....oh yes, and Midnight too!"

"Enough chatter now" ordered Gertie, you ladies can begin, but I need to instruct my team on our task, follow me out into the drive please!"

Frankie and myself did as we had been told and found the drive.....empty! Now what?! Our answer arrived in the shape of Gertie pushing a shopping trolley!

"This", she announced with a flourish of her hands, "this is our secret weapon, well, this, these (she produced two pairs of roller skates) and him" she ended pointing dramatically to Frankie!

"Good grief, this gets stranger by the minute!" I muttered under my breath, "can't wait to see how this is going to work!"

I must have spoken a little louder than I intended for she whirled round from where she had been fixing a harness on Frankie and fixed me with a hard stare from her beady eye!

"If you haven't learnt yet, we have ways and means! Now start loading the toilet rolls into the trolley and be quick about it!"

Now, you know the size of a shopping trolley, don't you? How many rolls of toilet paper do you think you can get in one? Hmm, good guessing but you are all wrong! The whole of the mountain of rolls somehow fitted into the one trolley! Gertie looked at me, "Extra squashy rolls dear!" she chortled!

Once the rolls were stashed into the trolley, she ordered me to put the skates on whilst she did the same and then she clipped Frankie to some long leather straps at the front of the trolley. "Oh, it's been such a long time since I was up in Alaska and went dog mushing! Such happy days! Come on now dear, you and I will hold the handle and push from behind as we skate along and Frankie can pull from the front! Ready? C'mon Frank boy, let's see how fast you can run! Wagons, or should I say trolleys roll!!

Never in all my days did I ever think I would be skating up the Limpsfield Road with a green haired Granny pushing a shopping trolley full of multicoloured toilet rolls which is being pulled by a black Labrador! I only hoped that there were no Police cars around, or, come to think of it, ANYONE around!

In no time at all, Sainsbury's loomed into sight and Gertie guided Frankie and the trolley into a dark corner well away from any CCTV cameras.

"Good boy Frankie, good job! Now, you two stay here whilst I get us in! I might be a few minutes, it's a while since I used my entering skills!" With that Gertie disappeared into the gloom. Despite straining my eyes and ears I couldn't make out what she was up to. I thought I could see a faint green glow but nothing else and I jumped out of my skin when she suddenly materialized beside us, grabbed the handle of the trolley and ordered us forward. We seemed to be heading towards that green glow I told you about but the next minute we were inside the supermarket, don't ask me how, but it was all very strange! Smartly, Gertie manoeuvred our small procession towards the empty toilet roll shelves. Once there, she unhooked Frankie from the straps and ordered us to start filling the shelves with the toilet rolls. Well, all I can say is that it gave meaning to the saying "get your skates on!" Working like demons, we filled the shelves with our multicoloured rolls, even Frankie helped carrying them in his mouth and earning praise from Gertie for never spoiling any with dog drool or his sharp teeth. Once all the rolls were safely in their designated place, Gertie skated up and down muttering under her breath! What on earth was she doing now?

"I am just making sure that we don't have to come and make another delivery dear," she explained, "the toilet rolls don't run out you see, either when they are in people's lavatories or here on the shelves. Every time someone takes one off, it is replaced, try it!" So, I did! She was quite right! The

moment I took a roll off the shelf, another pushed forward as others seem to shuffle into the space behind. Incredible!

"Don't dilly dally dear, the portal.....oh, I mean we only have a few minutes to get out and back to the others come on!" I noticed that she had strapped Frankie to the trolley and was already on her way to the exit.

Did she just let slip the word Portal? No time to think about it further, I followed her and as before, one minute we were in the store and the next outside on the pavement but I had no memory of how we did it! I did notice there was no green glow now though!

"Now for a bit of fun" Gertie said smiling at me. "Climb into the trolley dear! No dear, no, you have to take the skates off first and budge up I am coming in too!" Oh, my giddy Aunt! If I thought skating up the Limpsfield Road, pushing a trolley being pulled by a Labrador was weird, it was nothing to being squashed into the said trolley with a green haired Granny on my lap shouting "Mush! Mush" and urging Frankie to run even faster! Still you know what they say, anything can happen in a story!

Back at the house all that remained was for the, what was it they called it oh yes, the "Queen Pin" moment. Can you remember the little rhyme they said?

"We solemnly promise that we have done our best,
We have knitted all night and now we must rest.
Here is our work, it took us all night,
Please can you now make what is wrong, right."

"A good night's work" declared Gertie, "Well done ladies all, oh and you Midnight and definitely Frankie who was the hero of the night! Petunia dear, could you get him an extra-large carrot, he deserves it! Two more nights ladies should do it.

Gertie was right; at the end of the following two nights, all the local supermarkets had shelves bulging with toilet rolls of the multicoloured variety! We had done it! Mind you, I would love to have seen the store managers faces when they opened their shops the morning after our visits!

The end of the Great Toilet Roll shortage.....well, nearly.....

to be continued.....