

## The Knitting Grannies and "Operation bring the colour back!" Episode 2

Teacups rattling in their saucers announced the arrival of Bluebell with a fresh supply of tea. (Honestly, I will look like a teabag soon!) After she had poured and handed round the tea she peered mischievously at us all and, with a flourish, produced an extra-large pack of Jammie Dodgers! "I keep a pack for emergencies, I thought they might help us think of a plan!" she explained. Gertie's eyes lit up! "Bella! you absolute treasure!" she trilled. Bluebell flushed with delight at such praise but she was still firm with how many Dodgers Gertie could take! "Just two each!" she said firmly removing the packet from reach! A comfortable silence fell whilst everyone tried to eat all the biscuit bit of the Dodger and leave the best ring of jam in the middle! (Gertie won!) Once the biscuits had been eaten and the last drop of tea drunk, Gertie called the meeting to order. "I'm remembering when we first moved here" she started "We found the area very quiet, drab and dull after the bright lights and noise of New York City! (she looked across at me as I gasped, what were the Grannies doing in New York City? A question for another time I think!) "so, ladies, what did we do?" I was the first to jump in with the answer! " I remember! I opened the curtains one morning to find the street covered in knitting! Lamp posts, cars, bikes, vans, signs, hedges, trees anything that didn't move.....well not the houses though!" "Yes dear, that is right!" said Gertie. "And can you remember how you felt when you saw it?" "Well, puzzled at first, but then I just couldn't stop laughing, I thought it was so funny especially when the neighbours came out to look, they had such bemused expressions on their faces it made it even funnier!" "Exactly!" said Gertie triumphantly. "You felt happy!" "Yarn bombing.....that's what it is called" smiled Bluebell fondly. "It's such fun but such hard work too!" "I think though, we need some sort of theme with it this time, not just random colours" mused Gertie. "I just remembered something" joined in Petunia, "when I was out on the scooter the other day, I scooted past Hamsey Green School and on the front gate were lots of pictures of rainbows, it looked so nice and I also passed houses with rainbows in the windows." "It's become quite a symbol during the Corona Virus. They make people smile and they are also a message of hope" I offered. "Then I think perhaps we have a plan" declared Gertie. "We will yarn bomb the residential roads of the area with rainbows!" "Yarn bomb rainbows, oh what fun!" trilled Bluebell, who was much more comfortable with this sort of thing than locking horns with Eunice Parker! "There are lots of roads to be covered in Hamsey and Warlingham which will mean a lot of work" said Petunia seriously. We might need to call in some reinforcements, such as Mrs Bullock, although she can't come here of course!" "All taken care of, Frankie can deliver the resources to her and pick them up when she has finished knitting. You phone her dear and explain the plan and tell her to look out for Frankie shortly." Leaving me to explain all of that to Mrs Bullock, Gertie looked at the other Grannies and said "Ladies it is time for .....the KEY!" All three then produced a metal object from their pockets, Bluebell handed hers to Petunia who pushed them together until there was a faint click and then passed both of them on to Gertie. She had the biggest piece and she finished the jigsaw of pieces with a louder Click! The pieces began to glow and pulsate in her hand and, as the glow faded slowly away, there lay a very ornate key. Gertie passed the key to Petunia who moved to the corner of the room where a door had appeared and inserted the key and turned it. A loud clunking noise followed and the door swung open. "By my reckoning we will need Box 222, 444 and oh dear, what was the other one? I've gone blank!" sighed Bluebell all of a twitter! "Ordinarily I would say 666 but, on this occasion, why not make it more interesting and go for 888!" said Gertie. "888! are you sure dear?" said Petunia in surprise. "Absolutely sure!" said Gertie with a smile, "we want the children to have fun, don't we?" "Right you are dear" said Bluebell, setting off through the door down to the basement where I knew that a very strange room lay. Chandeliers lighting the darkness and the four walls covered floor to ceiling with boxes.

Whilst she was away, Petunia went to get the Grannies knitting bags and, of course a box of needles for me.

It wasn't long before Bluebell returned but she only had two boxes in her hands. "Box 888 is being very tricky" she said, "playing a game of now you see me, now you don't! Most annoying!"

"I'll go!" said Gertie sternly stomping to the door.

"Last saw it in the top right-hand corner, hiding behind a big cobweb" shouted Bluebell.

We all sat and waited, straining our ears to catch what was happening downstairs! There were several bangs and a bit of clatter, then a cry of "ouch!" followed by (I am afraid to tell you) a very rude word! Finally, a triumphant "Got you!" and moments later Gertie reappeared with the box clamped firmly under her arm and wearing most of that very big cobweb that Bluebell mentioned.

"Little devil! Slipped past me several times and I stubbed my toe on the stone step as it tried to nip behind the door! Still, can't blame it really, after all it's only reflecting what's inside! Now enough!" she addressed the box as she put it down on the table and lifted the catch to open it. I'm not sure if it was my imagination or not but I thought I heard the box whimper in submission!

Petunia stepped up and unlatched the other boxes, taking ordinary beige looking wool from all three and a pair of knitting needles from the spare box. These she put in a basket with some scribbled instructions, gave the basket to Frankie who grasped the handle in his teeth and headed out the door.

"Leave the back door open for him when he returns please Bluebell" ordered Gertie and, as Bluebell returned from that little task, Gertie turned to us all.

"Now, take a ball of wool from each box, and knit one whole ball at a time. Don't worry, the wool will do the job for you, all you have to do is cast on 100 stitches and knit, you'll see!"

Well I hoped I would, for having taken a ball of wool from each box, I was staring down at three identical beige coloured bundles! Where was the rainbow we had agreed on?

Gertie's voice cut into my thoughts "Now, needles, wool, glasses, anyone need the toilet before we start? No? well OK, then let's get started, ready, steady, KNIT!"

*To be continued.....*