

The Knitting Grannies and "Operation bring the colour back!" Episode 3

The knitting needles were soon flying in the hands of the Knitting Grannies! Their fingers were just a blur of motion (mine not so much, more like a plodding snail!). As I finished the first ball of wool and attached the second, I glanced at the growing pile of knitting on the floor worriedly. Just a pile of beige! This wasn't 'operation beige' for goodness sake!

"Don't worry dear, trust in the wool to do the job for you!" said Petunia reassuringly.

"I think we need to take a short break" said Bluebell putting her knitting down. "I need the lavatory!"

"All that tea dear!" laughed Petunia, but Gertie only gave her a black look and snapped "Honestly Bella, I did say when we started did anyone need the toilet!"

"I know dear and I didn't then, but look at the clock, that was four hours ago!"

Gertie looked contrite "Oh.....so sorry Bella dear! Yes, lets break for a while, my fingers are getting a bit stiff!" She flexed them and rubbed them, trying to ignore the aches and pains that were starting in her fingertips.

She looked at the pile on the floor too. "We have done very well, even you dear (she said looking at me, cheek!) but we need to do better. At a push we have enough for Hamsey but still need to get all the way round Warlingham and the Green will take quite a bit to do! I reckon on maybe another one- or two-nights hard knitting!"

"Why do you only knit at night?" I asked, "you could knit in the day time too and get it done quicker!"

"Oh, listen to the expert there!" snapped back Gertie "You know it all do you?"

"Gertie!" admonished Bluebell quite shocked. "She is here helping and doesn't know all our ways!"

She turned to me. "Don't take any notice of Gertie, she always gets shirty when her fingers ache. We mostly knit at night because that is when our magic.....I mean our knitting seems stronger and faster". Bluebell blushed under Gertie's icy stare. "It's no good Gertie, she needs to be told more of our background one day!"

Bluebell was saved from either a tongue lashing from Gertie or having to reveal more than she should by Petunia interrupting.

"While you have been bickering, I have been thinking and I think we need another pair of knitting needles on the go and at this rate, it needs to be a champion I reckon.....oh! that gives me an idea! Just give me a minute, will you?" She left the room.

"Where is she going, another one for the toilet? said Gertie grumpily.

"No, I expect she has gone to check her computer" said Bluebell calmly. She then sat without speaking for a while, frowning in concentration. "Champion knitter maybe not, but we do have someone who is very capable of welding a pair of knitting needles with great speed. Don't you remember Gertie, I spent quite a while teaching him just in case we ever needed extra help!"

Just as Gertie was about to answer, Petunia burst through the door! "I've only gone and done it! I've managed to contact her and she is on her way, should arrive any minute now!" Just as she said this there was a knock on the door and she flew to answer it! Reappearing moments later followed by a short dumpling of a lady, who was as broad as she was tall, big colourful glasses perched on her nose and her silver hair caught up into a bun on the very top of her head. It looked just like a cottage loaf! She had dimpled rosy red cheeks and was wreathed in smiles which seem to bounce around the room like sunbeams! She was dressed (most unusually for her age, height and shape!) in a white t-shirt and blue paint splattered dungarees!

"Ladies, the answer to our prayers! The one and only Marigold Pengelly, champion speed knitter of South Devon and my third cousin once removed! A split-second later Marigold disappeared under a bundle of arms and legs as the other Grannies lunged forward to embrace her. Obviously, she was well loved by them, even Midnight got caught up in the moment as he tried to greet her too. Frankie, who had no idea who she was ran around them all wagging his tail and barking in excitement!

"Let a person breathe!" laughed Marigold, "so pleased to see you all my maids, but ooooh, I can't breathe!" She surfaced, glasses askew but smiling like a Cheshire cat, her two big dimples dancing on her rosy cheeks. "'Tis a long time since we saw each other that is for certain and you haven't changed a bit!" Her eyes danced from one Granny to the next and then on to Midnight. "Still wearing the hat, I see Midnight.....and who have we here?" She turned her gaze to Frankie and then to me. "What a handsome lad you are," she said to Frankie stroking him and then turned to me "Hello maid, you lending a hand are you?"

Petunia made the introductions as I moved chairs to allow Marigold to sit in mine as it was the more comfortable one. Gertie bought her up to date on the situation.

"ah, I see the need for speed now, but remind me, what boxes are you using?"

Boxes 222, 444 and 888" answered Bluebell.

"888? not 666?"

"No, we thought that 888 would give the children an extra element of fun" replied Gertie.

"Ah yes, they need fun for sure. The little dumplings down in Devon are lucky, they have green fields, beaches and even moors to get exercise in, your little nippers aren't so lucky."

"No and the new Boris rules say exercise from home, they can't even get out in their cars and drive to the countryside" said Bluebell sadly.

Frankie put his nose on Bluebell's lap. "I know lad, you can't either, " she continued. "It's hard for everyone."

"Right then, Marigold, have you got your needles?" asked Gertie. Marigold produced them out of the bib of her dungarees. "Right then we better get at it. Usual thing Marigold, a ball of wool from each box, knit until the ball is finished and then change to the next. Make sure you knit until all three balls have been used. Cast on 100 stitches to begin."

"Just a minute Gertie, I want to ask Bluebell something" I quickly put in. "Just before Petunia bought Marigold in, you were saying we had another knitter in the room. Who is it?"

Bluebell smiled, "can't you guess dear, why it's Midnight of course!"

To be continued.....