

The Knitting Grannies and Operation bring the colour back. Episode 4

"Oh my, you are doing that goldfish impression again dear!" remarked Petunia looking at me. "It really isn't a good look you know, close your mouth dear and don't you know it's quite rude to stare!" Yes, I admit it! I was sitting there with my mouth dropped open in amazement hearing that Midnight was the other knitter in the room! MIDNIGHT? Why hadn't he joined in the effort when we were knitting toilet rolls? The thought of a cat knitting was just bonkers! Once again as if she could read my mind, Bluebell said "He only joins in now and again when he really has to, he doesn't like doing it, hurts his paws a bit and anyway, he prefers crocheting!" What? he can crochet too? "Oh, come on now Bluebell!" I said "that is just too much! It's weird enough to say he can knit, which I haven't yet seen the evidence of, but now you expect to me to believe he can crochet as well?" She looked sadly at me. "Why is that so hard to believe? Crochet is easier than knitting as you only have one hook instead of two needles and anyway, this is a story and you and I both know that anything can happen in a story if you use your imagination! I am disappointed in you dear, I thought YOUR imagination was better than that!" She pursed her lips and refused to say anymore or even look at me! Oh dear!

Instead she let actions speak louder than words and I swear that I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes! Midnight jumped down from his cushion on the window sill and stalked imperiously past me, giving me a disapproving flick of his tail as if to show what he thought of me as well! Jumping up on the chair next to Bluebell he pushed his way in beside her. She proceeded to arrange him like you would a baby, supported with cushions all around him he sat just like you and I would, but with his back legs crossed in front of him, front paws ready for the knitting. Bluebell rummaged in her knitting bag and produced two cat sized knitting needles and proceeded to cast on the stitches for him. "You will have to be careful Midnight, the 100 stitches only just fit on your needle" she told him. "Now knit until you finish the ball and I will change to the next one for you!" She handed him the needles and once she was certain he had a proper hold on them left him to it. Carefully and very methodically, with his little pink tongue poking out between his whiskers in concentration, Midnight began to knit! Once he found his rhythm he became faster (almost faster than me!) and only stopped when he came to the end of the ball of wool.

Can you picture it dear reader? I was seeing it and I couldn't believe my eyes! Maybe my imagination needs a bit of re polishing! Hope yours doesn't, for I must admit, it was a pretty funny sight but don't tell Midnight I said so!

Realising that I was lagging behind the others (and that the knitting cat had almost caught up to me!) I picked up my own knitting and concentrated on trying to get faster myself. I tried not to look at Bluebell who was giving me the cold shoulder! I had really upset her not believing her about the cat!

Marigold proved to be as good as her reputation and was soon surrounded by mounds of knitting (yes still beige!) She also proved to be an entertaining knitter for she had the ability to chatter away nineteen to the dozen as her needles flew and yet she never dropped a stitch! She told us tales of all the goings on in her fishing village of Pebble Sands, her lovely Devonian burr floating on the air, evoking smells of salty air, the sound of the waves on the beach, fishing boat engines chugging and fishermen shouting to each other as they mended their nets.

"Oh, the worse one is that Percy Stone" she said fondly. "I remember him clear as day as a little tacker, running around, playing tricks on everyone. Once he and his friend Davy Jackson tied all our front door knobs together and then went along knocking on all the doors. Of course, we all tried to open our doors at the same and we couldn't! They both ran off before we managed to sort ourselves out! The more we pulled our doors the tighter the string got and the tighter the doors got! In the end Cyril at the end of the row went around from his back door and cut the string away. What young scamps they were then two!"

"What happened to them once you all got out?" I asked.

"Oh, their Mothers gave them what for right enough, they got sent to bed without their tea and in Pebble Sands that's not good as there is nothing in the children's bedrooms but a bed, chest of drawers and a desk. Bedrooms are for sleeping in, keeping your clothes in and doing your homework! Then the next day, they were made to come along the row and apologise to each of us and we gave them jobs to do! Kept those little pickles busy all week!"

She paused to change balls of wool and then continued. "Percy and Davy are all grown up now, own boats of their own and spend all their days out all weathers! Brave too, they both belong to the

R.N.L.I. I saw Percy the other day, he comes to dig my garden for me because I can't quite manage it anymore and I makes him a big pasty to take out on his boat with him. Do you know the next day he turned up with a lovely big mackerel for my tea! Said he had been sitting there enjoying my pasty and had thrown the end of the pastry in the water. There it was, floating on the top of the waves and this very fish jumped right out of the water and grabbed it in his mouth and landed in his boat it jumped so high! He loves his tall tales does Percy!"

Listening to Marigold, time whizzed by and as dawn broke we finally put down our knitting needles and surveyed our nights work.

"Do you know, I do believe we might have just done it!" Gertie said happily. "We still have Mrs Bullock's contribution to come.....Frankie dear, do pop off and get it please"

Frankie was up like a shot, glad to have something to do as his nose was rather put out by the knitting cat! Of course, Frankie couldn't knit..... that would be too silly! Off he went as directed by Gertie. Whilst he was away, Bluebell made us all hot buttered crumpets and of course that inevitable pot of tea! I noticed she had changed her normal teapot for a bigger rather lovely yellow one with white polka dots.

There was a saucer of tea for Midnight and Frankie, when he returned carrying a basket loaded with Mrs Bullocks knitting. Yes, that was beige too! Midnight licked the butter off the crumpet he had been given, but refused to eat the actual crumpet. Frankie helped out by scoffing his own and hoovering up Midnight's too!

I was in danger of being in the Grannies bad books again but I had to say it.....

"I am sorry but I have to mention it and I know you are going to be cross with me.....but look, all I can see is beige! one big pile of beige-ness! Where are the rainbows? Where is the colour?"

The three Grannies and Marigold looked sadly at me. "What have we said to you all night?" said Petunia. "Trust in the wool. My dear girl, you really should show more trust in us too!"

"Don't scold the lass," put in Marigold kindly "she must be a bit discombobulated about it all dear and, she obviously isn't in on all your secrets yet."

"Yes, you are right," sighed Gertie. She turned to me, "Just watch dear, just watch and learn!"

To be continued.