

**The Knitting Grannies and Operation bring the colour back.****Episode 5**

I looked at Gertie expectantly, but nothing seemed to happen for a few minutes and then Bluebell got up and headed down into the basement, returning moments later with the Giant Knitting Needle I had seen previously when we knitted the toilet paper. Do you remember?

She handed it to Gertie and then clasped hands with Petunia and Marigold. Midnight put a paw on Marigold's free hand and Petunia completed the circle by holding Gertie's free hand.

Gertie began to speak

"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 make what is beige turn bright!"

Gertie pointed the sharp end of the needle at the piles of beige knitting on the floor. The needle began to glow and white stars began to sprinkle from the end, falling into the beige knitting, dimming and disappearing into its woolly depths. Imperceptibly at first, the beige colour began to wash away and colour, pale at first but growing stronger and stronger as the minutes ticked by began to creep over the knitting, like sunrise washing the early morning sky. And then suddenly, there it was! A confusing profusion of the most magnificent vibrant colours, reds, oranges and yellows, greens, blues, indigo and violets spread at my feet. Then the strangest thing, all the knitting, all the colour and the wool, just disappeared, just like that!

"Yes!" shouted Gertie, punching the air in delight! "It works!"

"Box 888!" laughed Bluebell! "Well worth all that fuss and bother trying to corner and catch it!"

Petunia, seeing the confused look on my face, took pity on me. "Remember when we went to fetch the box, Bluebell and Gertie both said it kept coming and going? Well that's what the wool from the box does. Children and adults will see the rainbows and then they will look as if they have disappeared even though they are really still there! Then they will reappear but only the children will be able to see them and grown-ups who still have a functioning imagination! Then they will disappear again and when they reappear they will be somewhere else in the road and so it goes on! It's such fun!"

"Just like when you were trying to catch the box!" I said understanding at last!

"Yes, now, here is the test for you dear, look at the floor and what do you see?"

"I looked down and at first there was nothing, but then suddenly the splashes of colour gradually began to appear, at first just like spring flowers popping up willy nilly, but then all around me, growing more and more until the floor was once again covered in colourful rainbows!

"Not much wrong with her imagination I would say!" smiled Marigold warmly!

"Now that is all sorted let's go and finish this!" said Gertie, bringing us sharply back to the point!

"Bluebell, Marigold and you dear, you will take Hamsey Green and Petunia and myself with Midnight and Frankie will take Warlingham. When you get to a new street just grab a handful of rainbows and throw them up into the air, the wool will do the rest. If you meet anyone and you shouldn't as it's still so early, just say you are out on your daily exercise so try to keep two metres apart to follow the rules."

With that, we divided up as directed and headed out each carrying as many rainbows as we could stuff into our bags and even our pockets! Using google maps, so as not to miss one single road in Hamsey, we distributed the rainbows as directed, flinging handfuls of them in the air where they floated for a moment, swelling and growing, dancing and swirling until finally arching and arranging themselves where they wanted to be. Some arched over the roads, some covered trees and cars, some stretching as wide as they could, to arch over rows of houses. It was wonderful! Just flinging those rainbows into the air made a bubble of laughter form inside my chest and I wanted to explode with happiness as I watched them. Oh, how I wished I could see the children's faces when they opened the curtains! Finally, with our bags and pockets empty, we headed for home, weary but very happy with our nights work.

The others came in about 15 minutes later, Gertie explained that they would have been back earlier but the green at Warlingham and All Saints Church took longer than anticipated. Bluebell headed into the kitchen.....oh no, not more tea surely, I thought!

"No dear, Bluebell twinkled at me just as if she could read my mind! "Big mugs of hot chocolate with marshmallows and I think just to be indulgent, a big chocolate brownie each. Midnight, you deserve a big fish breakfast and Frankie, you can have the biggest carrot in the bag! Put the brownies on this plate dear and take it through to the others."

When plates and mugs were finally empty and mouths delicately wiped (the hot chocolate and marshmallows always leave a sticky milky moustache doesn't it?) Gertie peered round at us all warmly.

"A very good nights work I think ladies and gentlemen (she smiled at Midnight and Frankie!) Operation bring the colour back is at an end and a complete success, as long as the children use their imaginations which I am confident that they will!"

"Marigold, are you staying for a few days?" asked Petunia hopefully.

"Ah, sorry my lovely, but no, I have to get back. Percy and Davy will be round to mine later today, I promised to make them a big pasty each for when they go out to check their crab pots later on today. I can't let them down."

Getting out of her chair, she gave each of the Grannies a big hug and kiss, then picked up Midnight and gave him the biggest cuddle. "You are a superstar my handsome!" she told him. Then turning to Frankie, she got down on her knees and gave him a big cuddle as well. "I've only just met you Frankie boy, but I think you are the kindest and cleverest dog I have met for a while and you and your Mum are welcome to come to my house for a holiday anytime you want. Just ask the Grannies and they will show you how." Her last hug was for me, "never doubt the Grannies," she said.

With that, she gave a cheery wave and disappeared out of the door.

"How is she going to get home and, come to think of it, how did she get here so quickly in the first place?" I asked.

"The Devonian expressway!" The Grannies said in unison and that is all they would say as they packed Frankie and me off back to our own house and shut their door gently behind me.

As I walked back up their garden to the knitted gate in the fence, I looked up and smiled at the rainbows that arched above me and then disappeared only to reappear draped in the trees and wrapping themselves around the bird bath.

"Oh, please let the children love it just as much as I do!" I sighed.

Frankie lead the way and we headed in and closed the door. The rainbows danced and arched in the sky, full of bright colour and hope waiting for the children to see them.

Here the story ends dear reader.....well there is one little footnote to come.....