

The Knitting Grannies and the Pirate ship in the birdbath

Episode 6

Once the knitting bags had been packed away (and in Marigolds case, her needles popped back in the bib of her dungarees). Gertie sorted the piles of knitting ready to be packed into the backpacks that Bluebell had fetched from the under stair cupboard. The gold and silver coins were popped into Midnight's hat and the pink knitting carefully pushed into one bag with a piece of pink yarn tied on the strap so it could be identified later. Most of the green and red feathered knitting was divided between two more of the bags, all that is, except one piece which was slightly larger than the rest. This, Gertie handed to Bluebell who popped it in her pocket. Gertie had taken Bluebell to one side earlier and explained the part she wanted the blue haired Granny to play.

Finally, the bags were ready and Petunia and Gertie popped upstairs to rummage in the large oak chest in Gertie's bedroom. This was where they kept various costumes. People would assume they were dressing up clothes or perhaps costumes from an amateur dramatic production, (I think Mrs Connery has a similar one in her room!) but they would be wrong. These were clothes that proved useful in their various adventures. Satisfied, the two Grannies quickly changed and reappeared in the kitchen dressed as members of a pirate ships crew. Gertie had a bandanna in her hand which she gave to Marigold. Dressed in dungarees and a stripy T shirt, Marigold was already on the way to looking like a pirate and the bandanna completed the look!

"Where is your pirate costume Bluebell?" Marigold asked confused.

"Ah, all will be revealed!" replied Gertie "Bella doesn't need one, now, is everyone clear on the part they are playing? Seeing the three nods of agreement, she bent down and picked up the portable knitting needle.

"Yes Sir!" responded Bluebell smartly with a very determined look on her face.

"Let me at 'em!" snarled Marigold, getting into character and scowling around at everyone.

"I'm ready" answered Petunia "but there is just one more thing, here Gertie, fasten this on your T shirt." She handed Gertie a red button with a very sturdy triple locking pin to ensure it would never fall off once pinned.

"Just press the button when you get to the right moment" instructed Petunia. "One good firm push should do the trick!"

"Thank you Petunia" said Gertie, who then launched into a final pep talk!

"Now ladies, the time has come to rescue our little Midnight from the clutches of that scoundrel! What is it the children of Hamsey say? Be an acorn (or something like that!) To make our acorn we must find aspiration! Rescuing Midnight and winning this fight is the goal we have set ourselves and, once we have done that we will all be **Aspirational!** To make the C of our acorn we will work as a team and **Collaborate!** **Optimism** is a must going into this fight, we must believe in ourselves, think we can do it and **Resilience**.....this is not the time for a fit of the vapours, for running away when we are scared, we must acknowledge the fear and fight it, feel the fear and do it anyway! Finally, the N.....that is **Nurturing**. Marigold has already done that with Bluebell, but I hope we all can nurture young Midnight when we get him home! Lots of cuddles, treats and love. We must look after each other and help anyone who weakens and if we do all that, we will have made our acorn! Those children at Hamsey know a thing or two that is for sure! They are exceptional girls and boys! Now, best foot forward but make them quiet ones until we reach the bird bath!"

Picking up their allotted back pack (all except Bluebell who didn't have one but she patted her pocket just to make sure that what was in there hadn't fallen out and was safe) they all followed Gertie through the back door and tip toed down the garden until they were standing around the birdbath looking down at the innocent looking Yappy dog. With a final look at the others, Gertie held the Portable knitting needle aloft and said softly

"We solemnly promise we have done our best,
and now we must put ourselves to the test,
Queen Pin please help us to board the ship,
we are too big to make the trip!"

As she spoke she wafted the needle at everyone and immediately they all began to shrink (including me watching in the shadows! Oh, bother here I go again!) The world seemed to spin round like the clothes in a washing machine and when it finally slowed down and stopped (which felt like minutes but in fact was only a few seconds) we were standing on the deck of the Yappy Dog (me in the shadows unnoticed) but the worst thing was.....there, stood standing right there.....in front of the Grannies was.....BLACK-EYED JACK, in all his grubby smelliness! Boy was he stinky! He had looked massive in the pictures but in reality, well, never mind looking like the size of a bear, think mountain!

Before he could react to them suddenly appearing, Gertie boldly stepped forward.

"Raiding party returning Captain!" she shouted in her best pirate voice. "We got the hat, it was left just where you told them to leave it (she threw it down onto the deck in front of him and it clinked as it fell). Black-Eyed Jack's one sludgy green eye gleamed at the sound. "And.....we managed to capture this specimen!" Gertie dragged Bluebell forward. "They do tell in the village that she is the cat lady, the cat whisperer! If anyone can sort your cat problems out 'tis her! Mind you, she doesn't look much does she? Cat whisperer indeed! More like a scaredy cat!" Gertie rustled up a rather impressive nasty laugh, acting her part well and gave Bluebell a great big shove that propelled her forward so hard she stumbled and fell onto the floor right by Black-Eyed Jack's smelly boots! Whimpering in fear she shuffled backwards away from the nasty pong and got back up on her feet to stand shivering and shaking with fear.

Black-Eyed Jack eyed her up and down, sneering as he took in the fluffy soft blue hair, the sensible Granny blouse and skirt and even more sensible lace up shoes. He walked right round her and then stood in front of her, leaned forward and laughed nastily right into poor Bluebell's face! This released such a strong blast of his bad breath that the smell knocked Bluebell backwards and she was only saved from falling by Gertie catching her!

"Well I hopes for her sake she can bring that devil cat to heel! He has shredded up five of my best eye patches and seven pairs of underpants! And if she can't then she AND that cat will walk the plank and pay a visit to Davy Jones's locker! Take her below, the cats in the forward hold!"

Striding over to the hat he emptied the coins into his hands and turned to walk to his cabin tripping over the sausage dog that had wandered onto the deck to see what was going on. Jack aimed a kick at the dog and said a few rude words that, quite frankly dear reader would shock you too much for me to repeat them here! The dog curled its lip and snarled back at him.

"and maybe I'll be throwing YOU in as shark bait! Should have listened to Stinky Sam back along and got rid of you when we had the chance! Why I ever liked you I don't know!" and stomping angrily, he disappeared into his cabin. The dog whimpered and slunk behind a wooden barrel where he curled up, hiding his nose in his tail but with one eye on the cabin door waiting for Jack to return planning to then pee on his leg!

Not being too sure of the dog and not wanting him to give the game away, Gertie stayed in character and grabbed Bluebell by the arm.

"Come on, you heard what the captain said, there's a cat waiting you meet you!" They walked towards the hatchway that would take them below decks.

"The rest of you, start pulling down the sails, Get mending the holes until I get back!" Step lively now!"

To be continued.....