

**The Knitting Grannies phone a friend.
Chapter 2**

"Midnight! Midnight! Where are you?" Bluebell was in a bit of a state, throwing open her back door violently, eyes scanning and searching desperately until they alighted on the very small black cat hiding on top of the dresser!

"Ah! there you are my little man and thank goodness for that! I know why you are hiding and will fix it in a jiffy! Hold you on there for just a minute." She rummaged in one of the overstuffed dresser drawers until she found what she was looking for. Pulling out what I thought at first was a flowery tea cosy. "Come on now, let me fix this on for you, hold still whilst I get your ears just right.....now for the strap and buttonand done! There you are, ears all cosy again! Now don't look so cross, I know you don't like the flowery one but its only until your green one dries. We found it in Frankie's water bowl!"

"Ah, that's why you were in such a tizzy when you came in!" said Petunia, "you found his hat and thought he had been catnapped!"

"How did the hat get in the dogs bowl?" questioned Gertie. "Frankie? I won't be happy with you if I find you are playing tricks on my cat!" She looked severely at Frankie who dropped his tail and slunk behind me for protection.

"I don't think Frankie had anything to do with it!" said Bluebell, coming to the aid of her doggy friend.

"The bowl had been tipped over, the water all over the floor and the hat hidden underneath. Anyhow, Frankie loves Midnight and he knows about his cold ears so he wouldn't do that to him!"

"Hmm, if it wasn't him then who was it? One of us? Midnight himself?" scowled Gertie. "Here Bella, give me the wet hat, I'll peg it on the line. Now stop looking so cross Midnight, it will soon dry in this breeze and will be back on your head in a jiffy!" With that she popped into the garden with the pegs and the hat.

Petunia meanwhile had made and poured out the tea and was handing it round. Bluebell fetched some fishy treats for Midnight hoping to make him feel a little better and slipped a piece of carrot to Frankie who was now under the table.

"There is something very odd going on I must say" she stopped to concentrate on handing Gertie her tea as she came back from the garden. "And whatever it is, it's having a really bad effect on us all and I don't like it, I don't like it at all. It's got us all accusing each other of doing things, of saying nasty things and bickering the day away. Now that is not us at all and it will affect the knitting if we carry on. As you know we put a little bit of ourselves into everything we knit and I really don't think that the bit we are showing at the moment will be wanted by anyone!" She looked around the table. Everyone was looking a bit sheepish.

"Well, I'm going to start it off, Bella, I am so sorry that I accused you of touching my computer and tangling the wires up. I know that you would never touch it or do something so horrible and I am sorry I said you had."

Petunia then gave Gertie a little kick under the table. "Ah, err, yes.....well I am sorry to Bella" mumbled Gertie, (she wasn't very good at apologising!)

"Well I am sorry too, I shouldn't have gone off in a strop and said horrible things back to you" Bella replied meekly. "But my feelings were hurt and I lashed out. It really isn't us at all and I don't like it, and I don't like all the things that are happening, it's scary!"

"Well if you hadn't have gone off in a strop you wouldn't have found out that things were happening in Frankie's house as well." said Gertie "and if it's in our house and Frankie's, I wonder if it's happening in other houses in the road as well."

"Very soon we will have a street full of spiteful, bad tempered people who have all fallen out with each other if we aren't careful" observed Petunia thoughtfully.

Gertie continued to nibble absentmindedly on her biscuit. All of a sudden, she stopped nibbling and looked with some alarm at what she was holding in her hand. "What the devil.....?" The other Grannies looked as well (they hadn't dipped their hands into the biscuit tin like Gertie had!) and there in Gertie's hand was not a hobnob biscuit, not a digestive or even a rich tea.....nope, there in her hand was one of Frankie's special sardine flavoured dog biscuits!

"Oh YUCK!" Gertie spat out the mouthful of mush onto a piece of kitchen roll quickly supplied by Bluebell and took a generous mouthful of tea to wash the taste out of her mouth! "Disgusting! That is the absolutely the final straw! We must find out what on earth is going on and stop it!"

"First we must find out the extent of the problem" said Petunia

"Well done Petunia" Gertie said, taking on her usual role of leader. "You dear, ring your friend up the road, what's her name, Mrs Booker? See what's going on at her house." Gertie reached forward

towards the biscuit tin but then, remembering, pulled her hand back in disgust. Bluebell removed the offending tin saying she would sort it out and refill it with normal human biscuits!

Returning from the hall where I had popped to phone Mrs Booker, I reported to the Grannies that, indeed, strange things were happening up there as well. She had been getting washed and dressed this morning and sprayed Mr Sheen Polish under her arms instead of deodorant! She had been very cross with her family demanding to know who had switched the aerosol cans around, but no one owned up and they thought it was funny which made her even crosser! Other things as well, cakes in the washing machine, salt in the sugar pot, cat food in the sandwiches! It had got them all squabbling with each other. The final straw were the cats Ra Ra and Rosie getting their tails twisted together. How they managed that she was still trying to work out!"

"They didn'tmanage it I mean." said Gertie thoughtfully. "There is a mischief maker about of some description, I can feel it in my bones!"

"But who? How? Why and What?" asked Bluebell casting nervous glances all around and clutching fretfully at the neck of her blouse as she is wont to do when she is stressed.

"I am not sure yet Bella, but I have the glimmer of an idea" Gertie replied. "I just need to run my thoughts past someone and see what they say. Ha! What is that TV quiz you like Petunia, the one someone coughed through that time because they were cheating? Ah yes, Who Wants To Be A Millionaire! They have life lines, don't they? Well, no point in going 50/50 as I only have one possible answer in my head and I would need four! No good asking the audience because that is you lot around the table and you don't know and no one else follows what we do.....so I am going to use the other life line.....I am going to phone a friend and I know just the person to help us get to the bottom of this!"

"Who?" asked the other two Grannies in unison.

"Gloria the Giddy Aunt?"

"No"

"Marigold?"

"No, although she might come in handy later perhaps! Now, no more questions or we will be here till next week!" With that, Gertie strode purposefully out of the kitchen and very soon we could hear a mumbled conversation as she conducted her telephone call. It was a brief one and she was soon back in the kitchen looking quietly satisfied.

"She is on her way! Next departure slot on the Granny super highway is in 15 minutes which will give her just enough time to pack a few essentials. Bluebell, do we have marmite in the store cupboard?" Bluebell told her that they didn't but I did so was dispatched straight away to fetch it and any empty ice cream tubs I might have.

"If they are Cornish ice cream tubs all the better but any will do!" Gertie called after me. "We need as many as we can muster. Must get her to ask Mrs Booker if she has any and Mrs Bullock as well."

"But what for Gertie?" asked Bluebell confused.

"Because, dear Bella, I am pretty certain, and so is my friend, that we have an infestation!!!

To be continued.....