

### The Knitting Grannies phone a friend Chapter 3

"An infestation?" cried Bluebell nervously casting glances around the room.

"Yes" Gertie replied. "You know dear like when one child in a class gets nits and the next thing you know; the whole class and their teachers are infested with head lice!"

"I do know what infestation means Gertie but what do you think we are infested with and what has that got to do with all the weirdness that is going on?"

"I do wish you hadn't mentioned nits Gertie!" said Petunia who was scratching her head vigorously "Why is it when someone mentions nits or head lice everyone's own head suddenly starts itching?" (Bet you want to scratch your head now dear readers, don't you?)

"Auto suggestion!" laughed Gertie joining in with the scratching! We were all at it now! "Sorry everyone, it was the first thing that came into my head. Now be patient just a little longer, once my friend arrives all will be revealed and then it will all make sense."

"We might as well get on and make some more face masks whilst we wait then" Petunia suggested.

"NO!" Gertie bellowed "Sorry for shouting but there must be absolutely no knitting!"

"But it's what we do!" cried Bluebell "we are the Knitting Grannies, we Knit!"

"Yes and we will again dear very soon but for now, access to the box depository is denied and the device we use to gain entry must not, under any circumstances be either used or seen. Now, I can't say any more and I am sorry that I can't speak plainly but I think you get what I am saying!"

An uneasy silence filled the kitchen as we all sat working out Gertie's coded message. (The basement door can't be opened and the Key must not be seen)

Petunia sighed, "we all need a distraction whilst we wait. Gertie, tell us about this mysterious friend of yours."

Gertie pushed a cushion more comfortably behind her back, pausing to remove the shoe that had somehow hidden itself in the chair as well.

"We got to know each other at school and ended up going right through from infants to senior school together. We both went on to different universities and sadly lost touch after a few years. You all know how it is, life gets in the way. Well, purely by accident I bumped into her again oh, it must have been five or six years ago now and we have kept in touch ever since."

"Where did you bump into her?" I asked.

"I had decided to take a few days in one of the seaside towns down in Cornwall and, on this particular day I was walking along the beach watching the surfers ride the waves and do their tricks. They were amazing! Anyhow, after a while I realised I had been standing watching for too long and was getting cold in the wind and had started walking up towards one of the beach cafes in search of some warmth and a nice cup of coffee, when I heard someone shouting my name. I turned around to see who it was and there running up the beach, waving madly was one of the surfers. Well, I still couldn't work out who it was, as all the surfers look the same to me in their wet suits, but then I recognised her ears and saw that it was my friend!"

"Recognised her ears?" asked Petunia

"Yes, she has the most striking ears, you'll see. Anyway, seems she had caught a glimpse of my green hair as she was riding in on a wave! Well, she popped off to get changed and I went on in to the cafe to order coffees for us both and we had a lovely catch up. Seems after university she moved to Cornwall for her research and also took a part time job as a surfing instructor! She was always an exceptional swimmer at school so I am not surprised."

"What research was she doing?" asked Bluebell, but just at that moment there was a loud knock on the front door and Gertie found herself in a race to get to it before Frankie! (she lost!) Moments later she returned, smiling broadly.

"Ladies, cats and dogs, please meet my very dear friend..... Sylvia Stinkwort!"

Emerging from behind Gertie, a slim, athletically built lady of medium height smiled around at us all. She certainly didn't look the same age as Gertie (remember they were at school together) and didn't dress in typical Granny style either for she was wearing cut off denim shorts and a faded rather crumpled blue T shirt. She wore ancient looking trainers and her wrists were both covered in a colourful collection of friendship bracelets (which she told us later were presents from her students at the surfing school, they always gave her one when they graduated as a thank you). Her face was weather beaten to a nutty brown from all the hours she spent surfing and served to enhance her sea green eyes.....or were they blue.....seemed to change colour every time I looked at her. Her white hair was cropped short to her head but it was her ears that drew the attention. Gertie was

correct, they were quite remarkable. The same as yours or mine but with one difference, I can only describe them as elfin or pixie like for they were delicately pointed at the top. In one ear she had a big diamond stud which seemed to send sparkles flying around the room as it caught the light.

"Hello everyone, terrible name isn't it? Can't stand it myself, used to get called Stinky Sylvia at school, hated it. Children can be so cruel, can't they? Thank goodness for Gertie here, she sorted them out for me!" She finished with a little laugh, beaming around at us all. Her voice was so musical, it was almost as if she was singing her words to us. She caught sight of Midnight and his hat. "Oh my! How precious are you?" she trilled going over to stroke him. "A magnificent hat if I might say so, I am guessing you are a cold ear cat? Might I suggest that a green hat would go with your beautiful eyes!" Midnight was like putty in her hands, rolling over for a tummy scratch.

"He has a green one which he much prefers" Bluebell told her, "but someone put it in Frankie's water bowl and it's drying on the line. That one is a spare. In fact, it should be dry by now, I shall go and get it, I'm Bluebell by the way, pleased to meet you."

With that Bluebell headed off to fetch the hat and Gertie continued with the introductions. Very soon we had all been soundly greeted with a hug and with Midnight back in his green hat and Sylvia settled in a chair.

Bluebell handed her a cup of tea.

"Thank you so much, just what I need! It's been a bit of a rush to get here, but here I am and very pleased to be too! Now Gertie tells me you have a bit of a problem and I think I might be able to help. Can you bear to repeat the whole story again please Gertie, it was a bit garbled on the phone."

*To be continued.....*