

The Knitting Grannies phone a friend Chapter 7

"Seems luck has been well and truly on our side" Sylvia began, "we have somehow managed to capture the ringleader without realising it and boy is he a feisty little fellow! He certainly knows some very bad language!"

"Probably learnt it from the miners!" chuckled Gertie.

"Ha-ha, yes! Well at first, once I had wafted a bit of warm air over him and woken him up, he was so cross he refused to say anything at all! Just sat in the middle of my Marmite circle with his twiggy legs crossed and those long arms wrapped round and round his body, keeping them well away from touching the brown stuff! I was prepared though and had a tube of Smarties in my pocket (they absolutely love Smarties!) and he watched me open the tube and eat one and his little mouth started watering.....(a bit like Frankie's does I would imagine), drooling and dribbling all down his clothes! I put a Smartie down next to him but he twizzled round and turned his back on it! It was when I started to speak to him in his own language that he couldn't help himself and he soon twisted back round, unwound one arm and grabbed the smartie and, with the help of the rest of the tube, we were soon chatting away like old friends!"

"Jago (that's his name, and a good Cornish name it is too!) told me that he and his little gang moved up from Cornwall to try their luck in Devon mainly because they were hungry and bored. No visitors around to steal food from and play tricks on. They had heard of the ruined village and thought it sounded a good place for rich pickings which it proved to be at first. They lived in the ruins which, compared to the mines were more comfortable but still dark and gloomy and, when visitors came to look at the village they jumped unseen into their bags and pockets, taking the food and any trinkets they could find. They had even started to pay visits into Pebble Sands itself on a few occasions. They were no longer starving but, despite new victims to play tricks on, they were still bored. They are used to helping humans, warning of cave ins and danger and that side of them wasn't being used at all. Then the Corona Virus came along and with the lockdown, no one came to look at the ruins and even in the village it was so quiet. Doors were shut, streets empty, only the food shops were open. So, when they saw poor unsuspecting Petunia that day at the ruins, well, it was the chance they were looking for! Opportunity knocked!"

"How many are there in this gang?" asked a pale Petunia.

"Luck is on our side again, only Jago and three others. There were ten of them altogether living in the ruins but (use your number bonds children!) only four of them decided to use Petunia as a taxi. The others stayed in the ruins to wait for a signal from these guys and then would find a way to join them. (how many stayed behind?)

It shouldn't be too hard to round Jago's three friends up, not now we have Marigold's Cornish Pasty to tempt them!"

"And I do believe there are a few tubes of smarties in the pantry" put in Bluebell.

"Ah Gertie still got her sweet tooth, has she?" laughed Sylvia. Gertie gave her a grumpy look!

"So how do we catch them and what do we do with them when we have?" asked Petunia.

"And what about whichever ones were in my house playing tricks and in Mrs Booker's up the road as well?"

"Don't fret! This Pasty will tempt them wherever they are in the road, they have a keen sense of smell! We will set up a picnic table in your garden with the pasty right in the centre of things and let the aroma of all that delicious filling drift off in the air. But before then, I wonder, do you have a water pistol?"

"Water Pistol?" we all said together, totally confused!

"Yes, I want to make a marmite mixture which I can shoot from the pistol once they are all on the pasty! If I draw a marmite ring around it before they are there, they won't go near it!"

"Mrs Booker's son and daughter will have one, I feel sure" I said, getting up and heading for the door.

"I will pop up and ask!"

"Great, and I will get on with making the marmite just thin enough to shoot out of the gun but thick enough to settle on the table and trap the Tommy's!" said Sylvia. "Don't worry, I know exactly what to do, have done it many times before!"

Bluebell looked unconvinced, "and when we have captured them? What then?"

"Then we pop them into the ice cream tubs which you will have prepared with the marmite coating on the walls and lids and sleep freeze them. (That is what it is called when you pop them in the deep freeze). Once they are all accounted for, we will ship them back to Pebble Sands or I will take them back to Cornwall with me and let them go by some abandoned mine workings."

"NO! NO! NO!" shouted Bluebell, banging her fist on the arm of her chair with each word, making poor Frankie jump and run anxiously under the table to hide.

"Bella! Whatever is the matter?" asked Gertie most surprised at this outburst which was so out of character for the gentle Blue haired Granny.

"Catching them is all well and good and I accept that freezing them doesn't harm them as you say, but it doesn't solve the problem does it? Taking them back to Cornwall and letting them go at an old mine will mean they will starve and even in Pebble Sands, they will have food yes, but the real problem is they are bored and will still be bored and then they will try this again and next time there might not be a Granny at hand that knows you Sylvia and can sort it out! It simply won't do, we have to have a plan for afterwards to help them, give them a purpose."

"You have made a very good point Bella dear" said Gertie. "I shall put my thinking cap on whilst Sylvia is rounding them up. You too Petunia and you Marigold."

I returned from Mrs Booker's with not just a small water pistol but a huge water soaker!

"Crikey!" exclaimed Sylvia laughing, "well that should blast the marmite goo right enough!" With that she disappeared into the kitchen to make up her Marmite liquid and fill the water soaker. Marigold followed her, ready to take the pasty out of its resting place in the warming oven and place it as directed. Gertie went into the kitchen to prepare the ice cream tubs and once done, returned to the others who were sitting and knitting and filling me in on the problem of what to do after the little scamps had been successfully captured. No one thought to ask me what I thought, which was funny really, because in the end, it was me who came up with the perfect solution. However, for now, it was all down to Sylvia Stinkwort to put her plan into action and put an end to the Tommy Knockers fun and games!

To be continued.....