

The Knitting Grannies phone a friend**Chapter 8**

It felt strange to see the Grannies just sitting knitting and not, as they normally are, in the thick of the action. However, Petunia told me that both Sylvia and Marigold were Grannies in their own communities and there was no shame in asking for help from someone who had, perhaps, better skills than you did or could advise you on what to do.

"It's that Acorn again dear," she continued "only I guess you should think of it as a United Kingdom shaped acorn and we Grannies are being the "C".....collaborative!"

Gertie agreed and pointed out that there would be times when other Grannies called upon the three of them and it would be their turn to help.

I liked the picture of loads of Grannies scattered across the country, borrowing each other's skills, just like neighbours popping next door for a cup of sugar!

"I wonder how Sylvia and Marigold are getting on?" said Bluebell anxiously "the garden is such a big space to try to capture something in and I know Sylvia is the expert and everything but I can't help worrying that this is a flaw in her plan, just think, they could grab for the pasty with their long arms and then run for it in all directions!"

Funnily enough, Sylvia and Marigold had come to the same conclusion, which is why, the pasty now lay (with steam rising gently from where Marigold had slit it open to reveal the succulent beef, potato and swede mix inside) on the table in the Grannies shed.....oops, I mean Summer house! Sylvia had secreted herself in the gloom behind the door, super soaker in hand, finger on the trigger. She was a little anxious about the smell that still lingered where she had painted marmite on the door and window frames earlier, but just had to hope that the smells coming from the pasty would mask that. With the bait inside the summer house it would take a little longer for the aroma to reach Mrs Booker's and Frankie's houses but it couldn't be helped. Patience was called for!

Meanwhile, Marigold had continued fussing around the pasty, cutting a small slice, she popped it on a plate and stepped out into the garden where she walked round and round wafting her hand over the plate so that the smells would drift quickly around and hopefully attract the Tommy's slightly quicker! She then sat herself down in a deckchair and proceeded to very slowly eat, pretending that everything was perfectly normal whilst all the time her sharp hearing tuned into every small noise in the garden. Just as she was finishing the last crumbs of pastry, she heard and saw a rustling in the bushes next to the summer house and could also make out some faint sniffing noises. It was working! She made sure to stay as still she could and hoped that Sylvia was ready!

She was! Sylvia had even sharper hearing than Marigold and had already heard the noises. It wasn't long before she noticed a movement just inside the door. Her eyes honed into the spot and as she focused, she saw two Tommy Knockers making their way over to the table. She watched as they climbed up the table legs and were soon sat with their twiggy little fingers poking inside the pastry, hooking out lumps of meat and potato and squabbling over the shards of swede! Moments later, and bingo! The remaining Tommy appeared in the doorway and, seeing his friends already gorging themselves, he flung himself towards the table and was soon pushing and shoving his way in, eager to get his share!

Judging it to be the right moment, Sylvia pressed the trigger and sent a stream of Marmite shooting across the room! Bullseye! It landed squarely on the backs of the Tommy's, the force of the impact pushing their faces right into the pasty! Not giving them time to recover, she bounded across the room and had quickly drawn a circle of marmite around both the pasty and the little men! Marigold appeared at that moment and slammed the door shut tight, cutting off any escape route and then she handed Sylvia the three prepared ice cream tubs! Sylvia, with a quick hand, picked up each Tommy and popped them inside each tub, adding a piece of pasty as she did so. With the sides coated in Marmite the little men couldn't climb out and all three sat in the bottom of the tubs scowling crossly up at the two ladies. One of them directing a string of very bad words at them!

Adopting a very firm tone, Sylvia addressed them in their own Elvish/Cornish language, suggesting that they might like to finish eating before she put them in a sleep freeze after which they would be returned to somewhere in Devon or Cornwall along with Jago who was already sleep frozen. This seemed to shock the others and there was silence from the tubs before they then all started talking at once begging Sylvia not to return them to the mines where they had been starving. Hardening her heart, she told them once more to finish their pasty, put their lids on and she and Marigold took them into the house and popped them into the freezer next to Jago. Shutting the freezer door firmly they looked at each other and gave a sigh of relief before returning to the sitting room and the Grannies. Marigold was holding the foil package containing the remains of the pasty which no one fancied now that it had been poked about by the Tommy Knockers fingers!

"I shall take it back with me and leave it in the ruined village in case the others are still there" she decided. "I think we must keep a piece for Jago too for when he wakes up, he might be hungry!"

"So, any thoughts on what we should do with them?" asked Sylvia. "Is it back to the ruined village or the mines? I guess if they went to the village, Marigold could make sure they had a pasty every now and again?"

"Of course I could" smiled Marigold.

"Can I suggest something?" I put in. "I know the area very well and I think the Tommy Knockers could be very useful. A few years ago, the land over by the lighthouse slipped and was very unstable. Why don't you release them to live over at the lighthouse and they could check on the rocks underneath and warn the keepers if anything like that was about to happen again?"

"Oh, I remember that!" cried Marigold. "It was awful! Keeper Ken who was there at the time looked out of his house window and the edge of the cliff was almost underneath! He had lost his yard and the engine room and foghorn also fell over the edge of the cliff as well! They had to take Kens house down as it was too dangerous to live in. There are sensors all over the place now to detect any further movement"

"Yes, but I think Tommy Knockers are more sensitive than any sensors dreamed up by the scientists, and they would be in the caves and crevices, they would get to know them and would see if they were getting worse and warn the keepers much earlier than a sensor!" I said.

Everyone looked at me in amazement.

"Well! who would have thought it!" said Gertie "what a brilliant solution! We will make a Granny out of you yet!"

"But where would they live and what if they tampered with the lighthouse equipment?" asked Bluebell thinking things through.

"If they are doing a job and feeling useful, I don't think they will play too many tricks and if Sylvia could get them to promise I don't think they would damage the lighthouse." I said. "As for where they will

live, well years ago when the lighthouse was built, they built a bell tower into the sides of the cliff. It went down about 10 levels with the bell at the top which rung out in fog. It is in ruins now and no longer used but it's a perfect place for these little chaps. They could sleep in the top room and use the bottom levels to get down to the rocks and cove below."

"Perfect!" said Bluebell clapping her hands together in delight!

"It is indeed!" agreed Gertie. "I will get right on to Keeper Bill and discuss this with him and, if he agrees, we can pack these little fellows off! She rushed to the hall to phone her friend at the lighthouse straight away.

"And we shall send them off in style as well." said Petunia, finishing sewing up her knitting. She held up a perfect little shirt, just the right size for a Tommy Knocker! That is what the Grannies had been doing, knitting new clothes for the wee ones! They had even knitted spares so that the ones back in the ruined village could have some new clothes too. If they needed more, Marigold would be more than happy to keep them supplied. Sylvia had agreed to stay with her in Fishing Lane for a bit so she could make sure the Tommy's settled in and also to teach Marigold how to speak their language so that she could continue to look out for them.

Gertie reappeared, telling us that Keeper Bill was more than happy to have some extra expert eyes keeping watch over the Lighthouse and would even leave food parcels for them every week as long as they stayed in the Bell Tower and didn't try to get in the Lighthouse.

"Time we weren't here" said Sylvia "I've looked up the next departure for Pebble Sands and we have ten minutes. I won't wake them up here to tell them all this, let them sleep. When we get to Marigolds, we will wake them up and tell them and then get across to the lighthouse and get them settled into their new home. Once they get their bearings they will be able to pop across the headland and see their friends in the village.

"Yes, and I will make sure I leave food and knitted clothes up there regularly as well" said Marigold.

"I don't think we could ask for a better ending" sighed Bluebell contentedly.

"I do" thought Frankie looking up at Bluebell. "It would be better if I had had some of that pasty inside my tum-tum!" Sighing he lay his head back down, narrowly missing the pool of drool that decorated the floor!

The end.