

The Knitting Grannies and the disappearing dog. Chapter 4.

Refreshment break over, empty teacups returned to the tea trolley and whiskers washed (Midnight only on that one!) plus a last minute emergency trip to the toilet completed (Bluebell only on that one - well, all that tea has to go somewhere and if you've got to go, you've got to go!) and we were all ready to begin.

"Whilst we now know the method used to steal Frankie, we don't know who stole him or the reason why and until we can work that one out, we can't hatch a plan to get him back." said Gertie, summing up the situation so far.

"Agreed" said Bluebell.

"Thanks to Petunia and her excellent detective work, we do know that the perpetrator was wearing something made of red wool. What else do we know?" she peered round at us all.

"He or she used the coat hanger wire to open the gate which is actually quite tricky!" said Bluebell.

"and had carrots in their pockets so they somehow knew that Frankie liked them." I added.

"Well that isn't very difficult dear if you don't mind me saying" said Bluebell. "most of the children and staff at Hamsey Green that remember you know about Frankie and his love of carrots! OH! I have just had a thought, what if it wasn't just one person? What if the person had an accomplice?"

"That is not a nice thought but it is relevant and we must bear it in mind Bella." said Gertie. "good work!" Bella blushed enjoying the moment of praise from Gertie.

"Now I am thinking that, with Bella's encyclopedic knowledge of wool and all the types and what not, you could team up with Petunia in analysing the sample we have found which might give us some more clues as to our unknown perpetrator."

"Oh yes, Gertie, we can discover a lot from wool, don't you worry, whatever secrets it is holding we will find out!

Petunia.... Petunia dear are you quite alright?"

Petunia had been sitting quietly in her chair, brow furrowed in concentration (she was frowning a lot!) and muttering to herself quietly under her breath. She was becoming more and more animated as if she was having a discussion with someone we couldn't see!

"Petunia!" said Gertie more loudly "Whatever is the matter? PETUNIA!"

The pink haired Granny jumped at Gertie's loud calling of her name and gave herself a little shake. She refocused her eyes on us all and seemed to come to some decision with herself.

"I've been going back over and over Frankie's morning and all the things you told us dear and my mind just keeps sliding back to one thing. No matter what I do to go forward to the next bit of your story, it refuses and slides itself back to the same point, refusing to go any further. It has my Granny senses quivering I must say and when Granny senses quiver and are so insistent then we have to listen to them!"

"I absolutely agree with you" said Gertie firmly. "Our Granny senses have never let us down, go on Petunia, what is it?"

"The little old lady that spoke to you because she thought you were training a guide dog. Can you think back dear and try to remember as much about her as you can, what she did and what she said, and what she looked like?"

"And what exactly did you tell her as well" put in Gertie. Take your time dear, that is a lot to remember but, like Petunia, I think it is important."

I sat trying to cast my mind back but it was very off putting with the three Grannies intensely staring at me! Try as I might (and I tried closing my eyes but it didn't help much!) I could only remember what I had already told them. Usually I am so focused on making sure that Frankie is behaving and looking out for other dogs that I didn't really pay the old lady as much attention as I should normally have done.

"Gertie," said Petunia quietly. "I think we need to help out here, I think Bella should pop down to the basement and find the rewind machine."

"Good idea" Ladies, if you please....."

The three Grannies each produced a metal object from their pockets which, when placed together in sequence (Bluebell to Petunia, Petunia to Gertie) clicked together to form the key to their basement that shouldn't be there (because I haven't got one and my house is the same as theirs!) reached by a door in the corner of the room that shouldn't be there but is (you know why, see previous reason!). Bluebell took the key from Gertie and made her way down into the basement where their mysterious wool is kept in boxes that perpetually move around. It didn't take her long to return carrying a very strange looking machine and an enormous ball of white wool.

The machine had a wooden base from which protruded a metal framework you might have seen something like this in the Biff and Chip books at school, they found one in their basement. It is an old fashioned wool winder) but there the similarities end. The Grannies one worked slightly differently to the Biff and Chip one!

"Right now dear, this might be a bit uncomfortable, but go with it for it is very necessary. We are going to wind this wool around you like like an Egyptian Mummy and then attach the other end to the machine. The machine will wind the wool from you on to its cage, and as it does so will wind your memories of that meeting from your mind and onto the wool, and we will see your memories flash up on the wall behind it. All you have to do is to shut your eyes and concentrate on Frankie and the old lady." instructed Gertie.

"And don't worry about seeing the memories, just keep concentrating. They will stay in the wool until we wash it, so if we need to revisit it we can. Now are you ready dear?"

I stood up and Bluebell started at my feet and began to wind the wool upwards, like a spider wrapping up its prey! Don't think about spiders, concentrate on Frankie and the old lady I told myself or otherwise the wool will show the wrong thing! Once she had reached to the top of my head, Bluebell carefully walked over to the machine making sure that the continuing thread of wool didn't catch on anything, and wound the end into the metal cage.

"Right, are you ready dear, you might feel a little dizzy and you will feel a little tug as the wool winds off you, but just stay as still as you can and concentrate in your mind on Frankie and the little old lady. Right Petunia, the switch! "

Petunia pressed the switch and I heard a loud humming sound begin. I couldn't see what was happening but Bluebell later told me that, after the hum, the metal cage of the machine begins to spin, imperceptibly at first but gathers a gentle speed after that and the wool slowly starts to unwind from me to the machine.

The thread began to loosen and move away from the top of my head. The Grannies turned their attention to the wall, waiting for my memories of that meeting to be revealed.

To be continued.....