

The Knitting Grannies and the Cloud of Doldrums.

Chapter 3

Exactly one hour later found us all gathered once again in the Grannies' sitting room with yet another (yes you guessed it!) cup of tea!

"Petunia, will you kick it off please? What have you discovered?" asked Gertie as she was always taking charge of proceedings.

"Clouds of Doldrums are affecting the whole country and have been appearing more and more since the latest Government announcements. Seems every time there is a news broadcast another little cloud appears and starts growing and that is not a good state of affairs at all as there are so many news broadcasts in a day! The good news on this front though is that so far, none of the clouds have merged together. I am awaiting analysis reports of density and consistency to be filed and I have not yet had chance to investigate our own cloud as I need access to the basement to collect equipment and for that I need the key!" Petunia looked around at the other Grannies.

"Oh crumbs, we didn't think of that!" twittered Bluebell.

"As soon as we have all finished reporting here we will sort it out", said Gertie, "Bella and you dear, what did you find out?"

"Well to save time and prevent repetition we have already compared notes" replied Bluebell proudly

"and the situation is identical in both areas. Streets are pretty empty but the few people that are out are wandering around looking gloomy and with no clear idea of what they are doing. We found some just sitting slumped at the bus stop in a stupor with no idea when asked what they were intent on doing! We both peeked into some house windows and it seems similar inside, no activity going on just people still in their nightclothes sitting, staring into space. The children aren't even playing on the game stations! The adults seem to have the TV on but it's always on the news channel which as we know isn't helping. All our hidden rainbows are dull and have lost their sparkle and the children's NHS rainbow posters are dull and in a sorry state quite frankly and would inspire no one!"

"One lady was walking around in Sanderstead and bumped into us because she couldn't be bothered to walk around us" I put in. "she didn't say sorry just staggered on muttering what's the point, what's the point? Another man again walked into us and actually kicked Frankie and said some very unkind and unrepeatable words!"

Gertie shook her head and gave Frankie's ears a stroke. "poor lad!" she murmured softly. "It is pretty much as we suspected so let us waste no more time and get that final piece of information and then we will be in a position to start dealing with this. Ladies, please, the key."

As I knew they would, for I had seen it several times now, each Granny reached into their pockets and brought out a small metal object. Petunia took Bluebell's piece and slotted it together with hers and passed it to Gertie who pressed her piece into it with a loud click. The three pieces together made a very ornate key which I knew would open a door that wasn't there in the corner of the room! Now I know that will sound silly to you if you haven't read the previous stories so for your benefit, I will explain! The Grannies' house is exactly the same as mine and I know I don't have a door in the corner which leads to a basement because I don't have a basement!

Petunia took the key and opened the door, disappearing down into the basement that shouldn't be there and returning after a few minutes with a giant wooden knitting needle and a ball of something I couldn't quite work out. Once again, if you have read the previous stories you will know all about the Giant Knitting needle which is the size of a small tree branch that has been carved into a knitting needle shape, sharp at one end and blunt at the other with a wooden button on the top to stop stitches from falling off should you ever get to actually knit with it! Petunia unscrewed the button on the top and pushed the ball of mysterious substance into the hollow area underneath, screwing the button firmly back in place.

"Box 290 section A" she said to the others who nodded their heads in agreement and understanding (which is more than can be said for me!)

"Ladies if you please" said Gertie, "show respect to the Queen Pin"

The Grannies all gathered into a circle which (apparently had to include me and the animals) and once we were all holding paws and hands Gertie chanted:

"We solemnly promise to do our best,
Before we can knit we need to test
Our trouble hangs high in the overhead sky,
Please help us discover if it's concrete or pizza pie"

"OK, armed and ready, let's do this!" said Petunia, the first one to break the circle and she strode towards the back door and out into the garden. Once we caught up with her we found her braced against the garden table shouldering the knitting needle as if it were a rifle, in fact it seemed to have acquired a gunsight which was attached to the side of it through which she was peering intently! Midnight was sitting on the table with a pair of binoculars at his eyes softly meowing at her, in all the world as if he was saying "right a bit, left a bit, bit more, down a bit, up a bit.....fire!" And that is exactly what she did! A silver streak of gossamer thread (rather like the webs that spider man shoots) shot out from the end of the needle and streaked into the sky overhead, striking and piercing the cloud and disappearing into its depths.

"10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1,.....zero!" counted Petunia carefully, with that the thread fell back to earth and landed at her feet. It was now a damp grey tangled mess and appeared to be wrapped tightly around something I couldn't quite make out. Petunia gave a grunt of satisfaction, thanked the knitting needle (odd!) and gathered up the mess and marched into the house, passing the Knitting Needle to Gertie.

"She's gone to her laboratory to analyse what we managed to get" explained Bluebell. "Let's go back in and whilst Gertie puts the Knitting Needle away, I will make another cup of tea and definitely break open the Jammie Dodgers! Come on Midnight and Frankie, come along dear, time for a plan! Lead the way Gertie!"

To be continued.....