

The Knitting Grannies and the Disappearing Dog. Chapter Two

The three Grannies (and Midnight) all turned their gaze on me and waited for me to start, Gertie munching vigorously (and somewhat noisily I might add!)

"Gertie! Munch quietly!" instructed Bluebell "no wonder we get through so many biscuits, you chomp them so quickly I don't think you can taste them at all and then you shove the next one in! Manners dear please!"

Gertie turned her gaze away from me to fix Bluebell with such a hard stare that the little blue haired Granny blushed and she clutched nervously at her blouse.

"Stop it you two" said Petunia, "you are like two children sometimes! Sorry dear, you were about to tell us what happened."

"This morning was just like any other lockdown morning" I started. "Frankie played out in the garden with Mr. R. and then around lunch time I took him for a road walk along the Limpsfield Road to Warlingham, around the Green and back down the other side."

"Did anything unusual happen on your walk? Anything strike you as odd?"

"No, nothing."

"Did you meet or talk to anyone?"

"Um, well..... there were several runners, a few other dogs that Frankie barked at as usual, and a few people walking for their daily exercise." I thought for a moment. "Most of those out walking were older, some couples walking together, some ladies on their own."

"And as Petunia asked before dear, did you talk to any of them, think now, it could be important!" asked Gertie.

"A few said thank you as I moved out of the way to let them pass at a safe social distance, but other than that no,.....oh, yes, there was one old lady who stopped to ask about Frankie. She wanted to know if I was training him to be a guide dog because I was making him sit down and wait at the edge of the pavement. I explained he wasn't and a bit of his story and after giving him a stroke she went off and we carried on. She was very sweet. Then we came home, had lunch and I was busy doing some more jobs when I realised that my "Supervisor" wasn't helping me (normally he follows me around and watches what I am up to). I thought he was probably downstairs sleeping on the sofa but when I went down to check he was nowhere to be seen. Mr. R was in the garden and he hadn't seen him either, thinking he was with me. We checked all over the house and garden again, but nothing."

"And your gate?" asked Gertie.

"Closed and latched although the bolt which is usually across wasn't for some reason. I guess one of us must have forgotten to push it across last time it was open. It doesn't matter though because, as I said, the gate was latched closed and Frankie can't open or close bolts!"

"Hmmm" said Gertie, not sounding convinced.

"Your fence dear," asked Petunia. "Can Frankie jump over it?"

"Nope, too high. One of the conditions of him coming to live with us from the rescue centre was that we put new high fences in all round and they came to check that we had done so and the height was right."

"What about digging under the fence" asked Bluebell.

"Nope again, He's never been a digger. Even when he sees a fox in next doors' garden he has never tried to get under the fence and there is no sign of fresh digging or anything that might indicate that he got out under the fence. All the plants and shrubs and the earth are undisturbed on both sides."

"To sum it up then" said Gertie "we have one black Labrador dog who can never be described as a small dog, simply disappearing into thin air!"

"Seems that way!" I said tearfully.

"There, there, dear, don't worry, we will sort it" said Bluebell reaching over to pat my hand.

"How long has he been missing?" asked Gertie.

"We noticed he wasn't around at about two o'clock, but I don't know how long it was before we noticed, he could have been gone much earlier, we just didn't realise."

Gertie thought hard. "Remind me, is he microchipped and is his microchip information up to date?"

"Yes and yes, and he has a tag on his collar with his address on it."

Petunia looked at her watch. "it's now five o'clock and if I remember correctly that is Frankie's dinner time. Why don't you pop back home to see if he has appeared?. Nothing normally keeps him from his dinner!"

"Good idea Petunia, said Gertie. "and whilst you are doing that, Bella will make a fresh pot of tea. Something doesn't feel right here, there is some mischief afoot but right at this moment in time I am not sure what sort of mischief it is, good or bad. I need to think some more."

I didn't need to pop home to check if Frankie had appeared, just a quick text to Mr. R. and an answer pinged back almost at once, but sadly not the one I wanted.

"No Frankie" I told the Grannies.

"No Frankie at food time! Well that is the confirmation we needed. Frankie hasn't gone somewhere of his own accord" declared Bluebell. "Gertie, we have to do something!"

"And we will dear, we will but first we must think."

Bluebell sighed, got up and headed to the kitchen to replenish the tea pot. Meanwhile Petunia who had been sitting quietly thinking, announced

"Won't be a tick, just need to check something out." and she headed upstairs and could be heard rummaging in drawers and cupboards before clattering back down the stairs declaring

"Found it! Knew it was somewhere!" Pausing only to put her coat on and call Midnight to follow her, she went out the front door informing us that she wouldn't be long and not to eat all the biscuits whilst she was gone! Honestly, how can anyone think of biscuits at a time like this!

To be continued.....