

The Knitting Grannies and the disappearing dog. Chapter 3

Despite saying she wouldn't be long, Petunia didn't come back for over an hour and of course, by that time all the tea had been drunk and the biscuits eaten (Gertie!). So, whilst she divested herself of her coat and put her slippers back on, Bluebell went back to make yet more tea and investigate the state of the biscuit store. (With much clattering and loud sighing, I might add!) On returning to the sitting room, she poured Petunia a large cup of tea and went about replenishing empty cups. (I declined! I had drunk so much tea I could feel it slopping about inside me! How do they drink so much!) Tea duties done, Bluebell then peered round at us all.

"Sadly, ALL the Jammie Dodgers have gone, so you will just have to make do with a Hobnob" she stated, offering the packet around before emptying the rest into the biscuit barrel. Petunia tutted loudly and looked accusingly at Gertie. Gertie looked straight back at her daring her to say something.....she didn't! Once the Hobnob had been dispatched and her teacup was drained, she began to explain where she had been.

"We went to have a closer look at your gate dear" she started. "I remembered I had an ultra strong magnifying glass (triple X you know!) upstairs which I purchased when Drainpipe Dave was up to his tricks of shinning up drainpipes and breaking into peoples' houses to steal things. I haven't used it since and I have to say it was useful and revealing."

"About Drainpipe Dave?" asked Bluebell.

"No silly! About Frankie! Although it was a great help with Dave too I must admit, but do try to keep up, Bella dear!"

Bluebell blushed. "Silly me!" she twittered.

"On first examination, your gate looks completely normal, just as you described to us, latched closed but the bolt not pushed across, so anyone can just turn the handle and open it. However, once I had trained the power of the Triple X on it, well then it told a different story! First of all, in the wood at the top of the gate I found gouges, I thought they were maybe claw marks at first but I got Midnight to make some further along and when I compared them they were quite different. It's as if something metal had been rubbed into the wood for quite a long time. Then I looked at the bolt. It is at the top of the gate just under the gouge/groove marks and around the knob of the bolt, there are lots of tiny scratch marks in the metal and some on the wood planks around it. I searched around for any possible explanation for this and with the eagle eyes of our Midnight found this (she went back out into the hall and returned with a long piece of thin metal hooked at one end) "This started off life as a metal coat hanger and someone has straightened it out and look what we have, a metal fishing line really with a hook on the end. I went back to the gate and indeed, it fitted perfectly in the grooves in the wood and, although it is a bit tricky, the hook goes around the bolt knob and you are able to pull the bolt back."

"Well done Petunia, that is excellent work...." began Gertie but the pink haired Granny held up her hand to stop her saying any more.

"There's more Gertie, hold on a minute! The Triple X also found tiny wool fibres around the top of the gate as if someone had rubbed their sleeve on it. Red wool. Have you or Mr. R got a red jumper dear?"

"No, we haven't"

"Then they must belong to whoever was manipulating that piece of wire. Now, whilst I was busy having my second look at the gate, Midnight did his own mooching around and look what he found!" Petunia put her hand in her pocket and pulled out tiny orange bits of ... CARROT!

"These were on the drive all in a row as if laid out in a trail and they stopped where your drive meets the pavement.!"

A heavy silence filled the room. Gertie was the first to speak.

"There can be no doubt, the evidence is clear, Frankie has been dognapped by person or persons unknown and for what reason we have yet to discover!"

"But why would anyone want to steal Frankie?" I exclaimed.

"More to the point dear, what do they intend to do with him now they have stolen him?"

"I have heard in the news that lots of dogs are being stolen," put in Petunia, "some are for breeding puppies to sell for ridiculous amounts of money....."

"Well Frankie isn't a female so that can't be why" said Bluebell.

"and, IF I may continue, others want dogs for dog fighting!" Petunia went on.

"Again, Frankie would be no good for that either, he doesn't fight!"

"No, but I am sorry to say this Bella and you dear, this is going to upset you greatly, he would make a perfect victim dog for those dogs who do!"

Bella went white and looked very distressed and I must admit, I wasn't far behind her.

"Not our Frankie! NOOO! we must DO something!" she cried.

"And we will Bella dear, don't fret. We don't know that is why he was taken, it's the worst case scenario as they say. There could be a third explanation which we haven't thought of yet. We need to put our thinking caps on and come up with a plan. I am not sure our knitting skills will be of any use to us but we will see. Whatever the case, Frankie is one of us and we must rescue him! Now you won't thank me for this dear (she continued turning to me) but we think best when we are drinking tea so kettle on Bella dear oh, and whilst you are about it, feed Midnight too, for I think we are going to be in need of his expertise as well!"

To be continued.....