

The Knitting Grannies and the disappearing dog

Chapter 6

Having done what Gertie had suggested, I returned to the Grannies house intending to sit with Gertie whilst we waited for the others to return, however, Gertie had other ideas!

"Make yourself useful and wheel the tea trolley out into the kitchen and wash the cups and saucers so they are ready for when the others come back. Oh! and fill the kettle and make sure the teapot is ready as well. Oh, and have a look in the cupboards and see if you can find any hidden....er I mean forgotten Jammie Dodgers and if you do find any, bring them straight to me and I will look after them!" Huh! Firstly, what did her last servant die of! The cheek of her ordering me to wash the cups when she had just been sitting there doing nothing and if she thought I was fooled for one minute about the Jammie Dodgers she was very much mistaken! I gave her a hard stare, just to let her know I was not happy but I was on to her game! She met my stare and returned it with one of pure innocence! I sighed and did as she had bid, let's face it, she was going to get Frankie back for me so it was the least I could do. I swallowed my annoyance and set to wash the cups and saucers. As for the Jammie Dodgers, I wasn't even going to look!

Just as I was putting fresh teabags in the teapot and setting the clean cups and saucers back on the trolley, the other two Grannies came clattering down the stairs. Petunia went straight into the sitting room but Bluebell came into the kitchen.

"Oh! thank you dear you are so kind!" she twittered "but you are a guest in our house and shouldn't be doing this. I'll take over now, you go and sit down, but if you could wheel the trolley back in I'll bring the teapot when its ready, that will be really helpful." (See? There are ways of asking people to do things!) Once again, the tea had to be poured and distributed. Gertie looked hopefully at the biscuit tin and finding only hobnobs sighed heavily. (It didn't stop her taking three though!) Petunia then began.

"The wool is double knit and was purchased at the old Allders department store in Croydon before it was closed. I would say that it's a good 15 to 20 years old. It was knitted into either a jumper or cardigan (although I suspect the latter is more likely) and has been well worn. It has been well cared for, washed in the most gentlest of soap flakes (old fashioned Woolite or Dreft I would guess). It has also, over time, absorbed the wearers scent or fragrances and in this case, it is "Lily of the Valley."

"That was all Petunia's detective work" smiled Bluebell. "you are so clever dear!" she smiled at the Pink haired Granny. "I can add that the wearer (and we know it is the old lady) is very unhappy, very unhappy indeed. She is also very lonely and not as well as she could be which I put down to not eating properly." "How on earth do you make that out?" I asked "surely a piece of fluff can't tell you any of that, especially the eating bit!"

"Bella has the ability to pick up emotional vibrations from objects and, because she is our wool expert, she is especially tuned into to any vibrations from it." explained Petunia.

"True, but the eating bit I didn't get from the wool" admitted Bluebell. "Remember when we saw her, she was very thin and pale."

"Very interesting" said Gertie who had been listening quietly (although in doing so, had munched all three of her biscuits!) "I think it is safe to assume that no harm will come to Frankie. I don't think she has taken him to use in fighting or any such thing. "

"I agree" said Bluebell. "I am wondering if loneliness is behind all this. Feeling lonely is a terrible thing at the best of times, but it's been made worse by the National lockdown and also by the worry of catching Covid 19."

"There are lots of kind people willing to help and make sure that people are not feeling lonely, but there is sadly always someone who falls through the net and I think this lady must be one of them" said Petunia. "I wonder where her family and friends are?"

Bluebell was sitting deep in thought and suddenly lent forward and whispered in Gerties ear. Gertie nodded her head gently

"Great idea Bella you clever thing! You go and select the wool, you will know exactly which one is best and the basement door is still open." Pink cheeked from Gertie's praise, the blue haired Granny headed for the basement, stopping only to whisper in Petunia's ear. Petunia clapped her hands in delight and urged her to hurry, then reached down for her knitting needles, sitting with them on her lap waiting.

"You do know it's rude to whisper!" I said a bit annoyed.

"Sorry dear, you are quite right and we apologise. Bluebell suggested we knitted a draught excluder for the old lady, like we have at the front door, but to make it Frankie shaped."

"And of course," twinkled Petunia, "if she chooses the correct wool, it won't be just any old Frankie shaped draught excluder!" she winked at me.

Bluebell hurried back into the room with lots of balls of black wool plus one ball of red which she gave to me instructing me to cast on 30 stitches and knit a collar! It wasn't long before the three Grannies filled the room with their clackety clacking as they set their needles flying.

Into this scene strolled Midnight who had followed instructions and let himself in through the cat flap. Needles were immediately stilled as Gertie bid the cat to tell all. There followed a deep long conversation from the cat to Gertie which ended with her declaring

"Certainly NOT! Just because you fancy being wound up in wool like she was doesn't mean to say that we are going to do that! Utterly ridiculous Midnight!"

Midnight huffed and flicked his tail at Gertie before moving over to sit on the arm of Bluebell's chair.

Bluebell knew how to handle him.

"There, there, Midnight, don't you fret," she said stroking his head. "when this is all over, if you still want to try being an Egyptian Mummy cat then I promise I will wrap you up, but for now, why don't you have a saucer of milk and when you have told us what you have found out, there will be a big saucer of sardines waiting for you!"

Midnight considered this offer kindly made and seemed satisfied, sat up a little taller and reached one front paw into his hat, pulling out..... Frankie's collar!

He then proceeded to Meow his story to Bluebell who translated for us (well me really, the others could all understand him!)

Midnight had followed instructions and mooched around Crewes Avenue until he had struck lucky and come across a couple of cats who lived in the road. He showed them the picture he was carrying in his hat and they were able to direct him to a shabby house tucked right in a dark corner. It was surrounded by an overgrown evergreen hedge and the front garden was also neglected and resembled a jungle! Wandering around in this tangle of weeds, he had come across the collar near the dustbin, and also some piles of dog poo! (Yuck!)

"Have the other cats seen anything of Frankie?" asked Petunia.

"Meoww....."

"Not seen but definitely heard a dog in there, there was always barking when a car door banged"

"Proof if proof were needed" said Gertie, putting her needles and knitting down. "I think we have heard enough, well done Midnight, sardine time for you and action time for us! Bluebell, whilst Midnight is eating, warm up some soup and put it in a thermos flask and PLEASE dear will you help Bella make some sandwiches and wrap them up in some tinfoil. It isn't just rescue time for Frankie but rescue time for the old lady as well."

To be continued.....