

The Upstairs Knitting Club

Mom told me about her new club in a dream. I had been explaining to her that there was a terrible virus going around, here on Earth (which she called "the Main Floor"), and that there would be many people coming her way.

A lot of these people, I said, would be elderly, and would be coming from Seniors' Living Centres, just like the one where Mom had lived out her last four years.

Mom said, "No problem, we will love to have them, in fact, I've started a knitting club, the "Upstairs Knitting Club", I call it".

"How many members do you have so far?" I asked.

"Oh, just two so far, Maggie, who asks a lot of questions, and the new girl, Brittany, she doesn't talk".

"Probably because you don't let her get a word in edge-wise". I laughed and we both had a chuckle.

"So - tell your friends that if their Mom, Dad or any Loved One passes away, to come find Karin at the Upstairs Knitting Club".

"What if they don't know how to knit?" I asked.

"That's fine", she said, "I'll show them. It's very relaxing".

The very next day I woke up bright and early, eager to pass on my knowledge. My friends, especially those who had known Karin, thought this was wonderful. My mom was always known for her humour and cup half-full ideology.

My sister had two neighbours who both worked in a Seniors' Residence in Lindsay.

"So - I should tell my neighbours that Mom started a knitting club in Heaven?" she asked.

"Yes", I said, "it might be comforting to the Golden Oldies to know there is such a club. A lot of them have arthritis or dementia, whereby they can't do the things they used to do, but at the Club, they'll be able to. Knitting is very relaxing".

My sister said she would spread the news. Little did I know how many questions I would need to field in the days to come!

That night, I was allowed to eavesdrop at our Mom's club.

Maggie, a rough-looking redhead, was knitting a scarf that looked like it belonged at Hogwarts.

“Karin, how do my fingers know how to do this? I never knitted a thing in my life!”

“Well, Mags, here at Upstairs, we can do whatever we like, and time stands still for as long as we like. I’ve actually been teaching you for about two days straight now”.

“That’s true, now, isn’t it”, Maggie agreed, “what about Brittany?”

We all looked over at Brittany, a sad girl with huge brown eyes.

“Oh, Brittany’s just getting used to Upstairs. She hasn’t made up her mind what to make yet, or who to make it for”, Karin explained.

Karin was knitting up a neon orange doggie sweater. “This here is for my daughter’s dog, Gordie. It’s so the hunters don’t mistake him for a turkey”.

“Is he the terrier you’re always talking about? When are you expecting him?” Maggie asked.

“Oh, probably not for a few months, I hear he’s got kidney failure”.

Brittany peeped up – “But there are no hunters up here?”

“Oh well, you know, I just always wanted to make this for him, but then I got the dementia, and forgot how to knit”, mused Karin.

I started to cry, right in the middle of my dream. Gordie was such a good boy, but so skinny now, aged fourteen and on his last paws.

Brittany smiled, just a tiny bit, and I knew this club to be another one of Mom’s brilliant ideas.

The residents of Victoria Manor had a lot of questions, which I tried to answer to the best of my knowledge:

Q: “How will we find Karin?”

A: The Angels will get you signed up, I’m sure they have a system.

Q: “What if I don’t know how to knit?”

A: My Mom will show you – it’s very relaxing.

Q: “I have rheumatoid arthritis, I can barely move my fingers – will this be a problem?”

A: All that pain/immobility goes away, Upstairs.

Q: "Where do they get the wool from?"

A: You just imagine what you want, and it will appear.

Q: "What kind of music does Karin like?"

A: That's an easy one – everyone hears whatever kind of music they like.

Thus armed, my sister's neighbours, two very hard-working young ladies, went back and updated the residents.

The next night, I was able to snoop at the Club again.

A youngish male nurse, Mikko, had joined the group. He had a very complicated-looking pattern for a Nordic elf hat and matching mittens. The hat called for a red pom-pom at the end.

"You know, I've always wanted to try my hand at these – been holding on to this pattern from my Granny for years. Now I finally have the time", Mikko said, as he scrutinized the beautiful skeins of merino wool he held in his hands.

"These reindeer antlers are going to be tricky!" he added, poring over the pattern.

Maggie piped up, "So Brittany, have you decided?"

"Um," Brittany spoke softly, "I was thinking maybe I might make mittens? For my baby sister? But I don't know what size? I might not see her for eighty or ninety years." She blinked back a tear.

"Just think of how happy she'll be that you thought of her all those years ago", Karin said, and cast a loving look at Brittany. "Make them for her size now, and you two can have a good giggle when she finally sees them!"

Recanting this story led to MORE questions from the seniors:

Q: "What if I don't go Upstairs but go Downstairs instead?"

A: If you are worrying about that – you will definitely go Upstairs. The people going Downstairs know who they are.

Q: "What happened to Brittany that she is so sad?"

A: We don't know, but knitting will help her feel better. It's very relaxing.

A few nights went by, before I was privy to another night of spying on the Club.

This time, there were eight new elderly folks.

“I heard about your club, and I thought I would check it out”, a whiskery fellow, who quite frankly looked like a scruffy old tom cat, announced.

“We’re so glad that you did, Andy, now what do you think you would like to make?”, asked Karin.

“I was thinking booties for my newest grandson, who I never did get to meet...”

A couple of the new ladies knew each other, from the Main Floor, and so were chatting away merrily.

“I didn’t know you could talk, Edna!” said one.

“I couldn’t – back at the home - but look at me now! I even got my old teeth back”. Edna smiled and showed everyone her pretty teeth.

Word got back to the seniors, and one of my sister’s neighbours, Sally, who worked at the Residence, called.

“Hey, how did you know that Edna and Andy passed away last night?” Sally asked me.

“Huh? Well I told you guys I was eavesdropping on the Upstairs Knitting Club in a dream”.

“Oh-Kaayyy,” Sally said, “anyway, they believe you. The older ladies and gents really like hearing about this Club”.

Here are today’s questions:

Q: “Do they serve tea at the Knitting Club?”

A: Yes, any kind of tea you can imagine. Also – no need to worry about incontinence – it’s simply not a problem.

Q: “Will I see my dog/cat at the club?”

A: Pets are allowed. Cats, however, are not allowed to play with other peoples’ balls of wool – only their owners’. This rule is strictly enforced.

Q: “Is there naptime?”

A: Yes, in fact you can request a rocking chair or a lazy-boy chair.

Q: "Will my hearing come back?"

A: Definitely – 100% perfect hearing and eyesight – but you can tone them down if need be.

The very last night I was able to catch a glimpse of my Mom's Upstairs Knitting Club, Maggie was showing a young fellow the difference between a Hufflepuff pattern and a Ravenclaw pattern.

Brittany was making yet another pair of mittens, this time in butter yellow chenille.

Mom was laughing and joking in pleasant company, and Mikko was sharing cookies with a grand old dame. She was wearing a fancier and crocheting a doily.

Just before I awoke, I noticed a little round dog bed in the corner behind Mom. I recognised Gordie at once, wearing a neon orange sweater, his paws twitching, as he chased rabbits in his sleep.

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