

Sunday 14th February 2021



"It's 7o'clock, Gran", I hear him say as I rouse from my slumbers. He knows not to disturb me before the clock says 07:00. What I haven't managed to impart is that being Sunday, it might be nice to have a lie in. Not that it matters; in lockdown it is hard to distinguish one day from another. His smile shines through his eyes as they gaze directly into mine. "I love you Gran". Instantly I forgive him the several disturbances in the night when I had to remove his foot from my ear. Why do small children need to sleep horizontally?

"I love you too", I say.

"Let's get up" he says half out of bed. By the time I go downstairs, two China mugs, one half the size of the other, each containing a tea bag, stand by the kettle. Two slices of bread are already in the toaster. While we eat, we notice our daily visitor, the robin, sitting on the fence and we look into each other's eyes silently acknowledging its presence. Ever since he was tiny, we have had a way of communicating through eye contact when something is familiar, as if to say "we know about that don't we". "We need to make some more fat balls" he says, noticing the bird feeder outside is empty.

"Perhaps we should do some cooking and then go to the park and play Pooh Sticks", I say.

While I clear up, he takes my iPad into his Den - his space between the back of the sofa and the bay window containing two small canvass 'recliner' chairs, a Paw Patrol blanket, a boy-sized rocket he made from a kit of long straws and octagonal balls with holes to connect the straws, and a car made from two cardboard boxes with a CD for the steering wheel.

"Have you found anything interesting?" I say, smiling at his tousled hair. I feel sad for this generation of pre-schoolers as they have missed out on so much with the pandemic. We cannot go on the bus or train, and playgroups and soft play are closed. But we have been given the gift of time together to not rush about; to enjoy growing things in garden, invent games and do lots of cooking.

He shows me a recipe being shown on kids Utube for heart-shaped rainbow biscuits.

"Let's make these Gran". How do three year old boys know how to use technology? I muse. I have enough trouble using the remote control. He runs the clip back with his finger to show me that we need to divide biscuit dough into seven balls and colour them with food dye. "We've got those colours haven't we?"

I point to the picture of the heart-shaped biscuits. "It's Valentine's Day today".

"What's Valentine's" he asks. "It's a day when people say they love each other", I say.

"But I love you every day Gran", he says. I look into his eyes and say "and I love you too, Teddy".