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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The Gnomes

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Many, many years ago, when gnomes and other dwarfs were still visiting humans, it was especially in the city of Cologne where you would find them. When the citizens of the city were asleep, the gnomes worked hard for them. The fat baker, for example, was a bit lazy. He went to bed early, but would forget to get up at night (for bakers bake their bread at night), so that his customers could buy fresh bread in the morning.

Not only the baker was lazy, but his employees were even more lazy! Luckily there were gnomes. Otherwise the people of Cologne wouldn't have fresh bread. They appeared very fast and worked hard. Some warmed up the oven, others fetched the flour and kneaded the dough, others would put the bread in the oven and take it out when it was done. They would work until the sun would come up and then disappear.

When the baker and his employees would enter the bakery in the morning, all the hard work was already done. The fresh bread was cooling off on the shelves and was ready to be sold.

But not only the baker was helped by the gnomes, the carpenter also got help. The gnomes would come at night and work hard. Beams were cut, planks were sown and everything was measured neatly. They worked so hard that the only thing that was left was putting everything together in the morning.

The winemakers also got help from the gnomes. When the winemaker fell asleep at the barrel, the little hands quickly went to work. They made the wine and filled the bottles. They also checked the barrels and repaired them when needed. When the winemaker would wake up, all the work was already done and he could continue sleeping.



The same thing happened at the butcher. The owner and his help would go to sleep and think: 'Tomorrow we will finish the work.' But the gnomes did all the work at night. The meat was cut and cleaned. They would spice the meat and turn it into sausages. When the butcher would arrive at the butchery the sausages, hams and bacon were all done. All he had to do was deliver the meat

and receive the money.

There's one instance when the mayor had ordered a beautiful suit at the tailor and wanted to have it quickly to wear at a party. The tailor worked as hard as he could, but no matter how hard he tried, he would not be able to finish on time. Exhausted he stopped working and went to bed. The wife of the tailor thought: 'I don't care if my husband works hard. The gnomes will surely help him.'

The wife was extremely nosy and wanted to see the gnomes at work. She sprinkled some peas on the floor and hoped one of them would trip and fall. She went to bed fully clothed, so she could jump out when she heard a sound. When everyone in the house was sleeping, the gnomes appeared and walked around the peas carefully.

Some were working on the clothes, others were busy with the yarn and others were measuring. One of them was busy ironing and when he wanted to put down the iron, he tripped over a pea and fell to the floor. This caused an enormous ruckus that woke up the wife, she quickly lit a candle and hurried down the stairs.

When the gnomes heard her coming down they immediately tried to flee. Because of their haste they forgot about the peas and all of the poor little fellas fell. One of them fell into a barrel, another one fell with a broom to the ground. It took a long time for all of them to disappear out of sight.

The wife of the tailor got her way and had seen the gnomes, but she had also scared off the gnomes for good, because since that night they have not been seen. The people had to do all the work themselves now. And no matter how hard it was and how sorry they were, the gnomes never reappeared.

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