

The Brown Gnome

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Once upon a time a gnome lived amongst the roots of a tree. He was a brown gnome, with brown boots, brown pants, brown jacket, brown cap and long brown beard. Even his eyes were deep, dark brown. Only the tip of his nose was red—especially in winter when white frost covered the ground. Then he sneezed and blew his nose, and said: “Achoo! Achoo! Achoo!”

This gnome never left his job. All day he worked for many a long year, making sure the roots had all the food they needed to keep the tree healthy. Not that he complained. He loved his job and was good at it—that’s why his tree had grown so big and strong and lived so long.

One day the wind huffed and puffed and blew the tree down.

“Crash!” went the tree as the roots were pulled out of the ground.

“Yikes!” cried the gnome as the roof of his house disappeared.

“Golly gosh!” cried the earthworms, wiggling away as fast as their squirms could carry them.

The little brown gnome stood in the hole where the tree once stood. He was covered with dirt from head to foot: dirt in his boots, dirt in his pockets, dirt on his cap, and dirt in his ears.

He climbed out of the hole and looked around. He saw green-green grass, blue-blue sky, and red-red poppies waving in the wind.

“Ah!” cried the little brown gnome in surprise. “What lovely colors! I want some of those!” He’d never seen anything other than brown before and his eyes were dazzled.

So he took the green from the green-green grass and moss and lovely leaves and made his pants and jacket the brightest green you have ever seen.

He took the red from the bright red poppies and made his cap and boots the reddest red there has ever been (except for his nose in wintertime).

He took the blue from the blue-blue sky and let it rest in his gentle gaze.

Last of all he put a sparkle of yellow sunlight on the tippy-top of his cap. There it glistened like magic!

Off he went to find a new tree. He looked here, he look there, he looked everywhere, but all the trees thereabouts had brown gnomes working away and who didn't need any help.

"Then I shall live in a garden," said the gnome, and off he went and found a garden. There he became a flower gnome and lived in a house made of petals and drank nectar all summer long. And he still lives there—even until today!

And how do you know if this little gnome lives in *your* garden? That's easy! Go outside when the white frost lies on the wintry ground and you will hear him sneezing: "Achoo! Achoo! Achoo!"