

Written and illustrated by
Della Jayne Hales



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Dedicated to:
Lucky Lil
Famous Seamus
Rosalie & Poppy
Mimi
Tori
Rheya
Frankie & Florence
Jessica & Lucy
Jessica & Jim
Gracie & Daisie
Little Sarah from Donegal





Many thanks to Vanessa Tanner for
'oiling' my rusty English!



About the Author

Della comes from Hertfordshire and works for a not for profit mediation service.

This is Della's first book and has been in the planning since 2009. The 2009 notes were lost on several occasions and when they finally surfaced again in 2017, they were hastily scanned and uploaded to the cloud! Della's main hobby is crafting, and she always has a project on the go, i.e. greeting cards, children's clothes, furniture restoration, dolls, soft furnishings, needle felting, embroidery, illustrating, etc, etc. Della adores working in her studio situated deep in the heart of Ashridge Forest. Della's craftwork can be viewed on her website

www.serendipitoustradingcompany.co.uk

Della loves spending time with her young granddaughter, who often comes for a sleepover.

Della enjoys travelling and this book was created in sunny Lanzarote!

Chapter One

The Grumpy Little Gnome

Once upon a time there was a little flint cottage in the village of Wendunder. In that cottage, lived a Grumpy Little Gnome.

The cottage had a very big garden, almost the size of a field. At the back of the garden, was a small wood and there were a few fruit trees dotted here and there. The part of the garden nearest the house was overgrown and untidy.

The Grumpy Little Gnome longed to use this area to grow flowers, vegetables and herbs. He also wanted somewhere nice to sit in the good weather.

He didn't know very much about gardening because he worked very long hours making things out of wood all day. When he did find the





time to work in the garden, the plants always died.

One day, the Fairy Princess came to visit. She lived in a big white tower in the town. She spent a lot of her time helping the other fairies with their problems. The Fairy Princess was very kind, sociable and had lots of friends, including the Grumpy Little Gnome. They met when the Grumpy Little Gnome made some shelves for her and they have been friends ever since.

She liked to come and stay with the Grumpy Little Gnome in his little cottage in the country whenever she could. She enjoyed the peacefulness of the countryside.



When she arrived, the Grumpy Little Gnome seemed grumpier than usual.

“What’s wrong?” asked the Fairy Princess.

He gloomily replied, “I want to make my garden beautiful, but the plants don’t seem to like growing here.”

“Don’t worry, I will help you when I come over for visits, starting tomorrow,” she said. “With a bit of magic the garden will grow for me!” She took out a small handful of fairy dust and blew it around the garden. “That will do the job,” she said.

The next day, the Grumpy Little Gnome decided not to go to work so he could help



the Fairy Princess with the garden. The Fairy Princess was surprised how far her magic was working as he never took a day off work!

They went to the garden centre and bought some hanging baskets. They chose lots of pretty, colourful flowers to put in them, such as petunias, snapdragons, fuchsias, pansies, gypsophelia, impetuous and lots of others.

The Fairy Princess planted five baskets to hang at the front of the cottage and two for the back. There were still lots of flowers left over and the Fairy Princess was in a planting frenzy! She looked around for other pots and found an old, chipped china potty, which she filled with plants. Then she found an old milk pail and she filled that with flowers too.



There were still lots of flowers left to plant, but there were no pots left. The Grumpy Little Gnome said that the local shop was selling pots, so off they headed. They bought 4 beehive shaped pots. There were also some very sorry looking impetuous, plus a plant with no flowers, as they had all fallen off. The Fairy Princess put them in the basket too, in the hope that they might grow, now she had rescued them, and she has magic!

Whilst the Fairy Princess was potting up all the plants, the Grumpy Little Gnome spent the time clearing and cutting back the overgrown and untidy bits of the garden. He also dug over a big patch of earth in the corner of the garden, next to a flint wall. All the stones and weeds were removed to make it ready for planting.



The sun had started to go down and they were both very hungry and tired. Earlier that morning, the Grumpy Little Gnome had put a stew in the oven to cook slowly all day, so they sat on a step on the newly cleared patio, eating bowls of it with steaming mugs of hot chocolate, admiring the fruits of their hard work.

The garden looked totally transformed. The colourful flowers in their pots and baskets looked beautiful. They made it so much brighter and cheerful. Where the overgrown weeds and grass once were, there was now a small patch of lawn underneath the damson tree.





After they had finished the stew, they felt satisfied and pleased with themselves. Now his garden was beginning to take shape, the Grumpy Little Gnome had a big smile on his face.

Before they headed off to their bedrooms, the Fairy Princess said to the Grumpy Little Gnome, "Tomorrow I am going to plant a herb garden, sweet dreams."

The Grumpy Little Gnome had never felt less grumpy and went to sleep dreaming of cooking lots of nice meals, using the herbs and vegetables grown in his garden.



Chapter Two

The Herb Garden

The following morning, they both woke up when Mr Blackbird introduced the dawn chorus with his lovely song. He is always the first bird to sing in the morning and the last to sing at night.

Before he went to work, the Grumpy Little Gnome made the Fairy Princess a cup of tea and gave her a slice of his home-made caraway seed cake.

It was a lovely sunny day with no clouds in the sky. The Fairy Princess sat on the patio steps drinking her tea and eating her cake.

The Grumpy Little Gnome came outside and said, "Goodbye, I am looking forward to seeing the herb garden planted when I get home."

The Fairy Princess decided to have another



cup of tea before she started work. Then, off she went to the garden centre to buy some herbs to plant. There were so many to choose from it made her head spin.

Finally, she chose penny royal, caraway (for the Grumpy Little Gnome's delicious cakes), thyme, parsley, chives, tarragon, basil, sage, coriander and mint. The Fairy Princess also bought some strawberry plants, which are obviously not herbs, but she thought they should go in anyway.

When she got back to the Grumpy Little Gnome's cottage, the Fairy Princess set all the plants out in the positions where they should be planted. She decided to have another cup of tea before she started work.



Whilst she was sitting on the patio step drinking her tea, the Grumpy Little Gnome's neighbour, Marko-the-Wisp came by on his bicycle. The Fairy Princess knew Marko-the-Wisp quite well, as he was one of the Grumpy Little Gnome's few friends.

Marko-the-Wisp lived in the field next to the Grumpy Little Gnome's cottage in a little tin shack. He rode his bicycle everywhere but is always forgetting where he left it. He was getting quite old which made him forgetful. The Grumpy Little Gnome often had to take him out in his truck and drive round looking for it.





Marko-the-Wisp worked in the nearby farm shop most of the time, but it was his day off. He was on his way to the Green Dragon for some ginger beer but called in to say hello to her on his way there. The Grumpy Little Gnome kept some of Marko-the-Wisp's favourite ginger beer in his pantry and the Fairy Princess went to fetch him a mug of it. He sat with her on the patio for a while.

The Fairy Princess showed Marko-the-Wisp where she had placed the pots in position in the herb garden. He walked around looking at each herb. He was very fond of the Grumpy Little

Gnome's seed cake, so heartily approved of the caraway plant. He warned her that the slugs liked coriander a lot. Then he held his hands to his head in dismay!

"You aren't thinking of planting those mint plants directly into the earth, are you?!"

The Fairy Princess replied, "Yes I am indeed going to plant them. Why are you getting so excited about it?"

"Because they will take over everything! Don't do it," he pleaded.

They hunted round the garden for something to pot them in. There were no pots, as the previous day, the Fairy Princess had used everything imaginable for all the flowers.

Then Marko-the-Wisp said, "I have an idea, I'll be back soon..."

A short while later he came back from his field carrying a heavy white ceramic kitchen sink. "I knew this would come in handy one day" he panted, plopping it down on the earth next to the mint pots.

As he set off on his bicycle to the Green Dragon, the Fairy Princess said, "Why don't you call in on your way back to see the herb garden and have another slice of the Grumpy Little Gnome's seed cake? He will be home by then."

The Fairy Princess then set about planting

all the herbs in their places. She filled Marko-the-Wisp's sink with earth and planted the mint. After several hours of frantic digging and planting, the task was complete.

She stood back and looked at the herb garden. It looked very neat and orderly with the freshly dug earth and new plants. The sink of mint looked most at home in the middle, with the strawberry plants next to it bearing their bright red fruit, which stood out in contrast to the white ceramic.

She swept the patio area and steps going up to the newly discovered lawn area. When the Fairy Princess put the broom away in the Grumpy Little Gnome's cupboard, she found a bird feeder and food. She filled it up and hung it on a branch on the damson tree.





The sun started to go down and the Grumpy Little Gnome pulled up in his truck, home from work. A few minutes later, Marko-the-Wisp wobbled by on his bicycle and parked it up against the gate.

The Grumpy Little Gnome came round the back of the house and gave a gasp. "It's so beautiful!" he cried. "Thank you so much Fairy Princess, how can I ever repay your kindness?"

"You don't need to, that's what friends do for each other and it's payment enough to have made you so happy," the Fairy Princess told him.



At that moment, Marko-the-Wisp came into the garden walking in a very zig-zaggy way. "What do you think of the Grumpy Little Gnome's garden?" asked the Fairy Princess.

"Marvellous," replied Marko-the-Wisp, then he saluted and fell over backwards into the compost heap!



Chapter Three

Birds in the Garden

The next day the Fairy Princess had to go back to her white tower in the town as she had lots of things to do. The Grumpy Little Gnome was sad, but she said, "I promise to come again next week to do some more work on your garden," which cheered him up.

A week soon passed, and the Fairy Princess returned. She went to look at the garden.

"I am pleased to see that you have been watering the plants regularly," she commented to the Grumpy Little Gnome. "They have all grown quite a bit, even the sorry looking impetuous and flowerless plant are beginning to grow new buds," she continued.

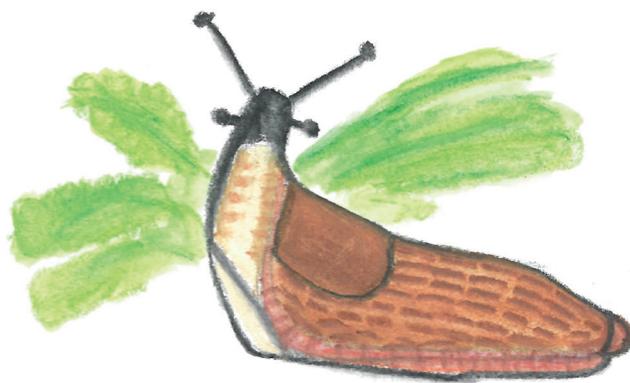
Then, she saw a gap in the herb plants and realised that the coriander was missing. "What

did you do with the Coriander plant?" the Fairy Princess asked the Grumpy Little Gnome.

"I haven't done anything with it apart from give it water," he replied. Then the Fairy Princess remembered Marko-the-Wisp's warning about the slugs liking Coriander and realised that they must have eaten the lot!

Marko-the-Wisp had suggested setting beer traps for the slugs, as they like beer even more than Coriander. The Fairy Princess got several containers and buried them in the ground around the Coriander plant. Then she got a bottle of London Proud, which is the slug's favourite according to Marko-the-Wisp and filled them with the beer.

She looked around the garden and saw that the bird feeder was almost empty, so she refilled it. She had also brought some fat balls and





half coconuts with her to hang on the damson tree. The birds loved to eat these as well as the birdseed and she wanted to give them a variety.

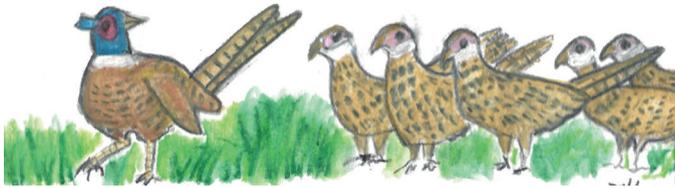
The Grumpy Little Gnome had made a wooden garden table and chairs. The table had a red spotted tablecloth and the chairs had matching cushions. They sat at the garden table, whilst the sun was setting and ate roast chicken which the Grumpy Little Gnome had cooked.

In the morning, the Fairy Princess awoke to the song of Mr Blackbird and lay in bed listening to him for a while. Then she heard a noise like an old-fashioned car horn coming from the garden. Wondering what it was, she looked out of the window and saw Mr Pheasant with his flock of wives and chicks pecking up the food on the lawn, which had been dropped by the birds on the feeder.

The Grumpy Little Gnome came and stood at the window with her.

“They have been coming to eat the bird food on the ground every morning since the feeders went up,” he told her.

The cock was very large and handsome, with a red and blue head and golden body. He had five hens in his flock, which although not as brightly coloured, were still very pretty. There were several chicks, running around in between the adult birds’ legs.



They must have heard a noise because suddenly they all darted back into the little wood at the top of the garden and disappeared.

The Grumpy Little Gnome made the Fairy Princess a cup of tea and gave it to her with a slice of seedcake he'd made the day before. Then, he set off for work and said, "I'm looking forward to seeing you later on."

It was a beautiful sunny day and the Fairy Princess went to inspect the beer slug traps. They were full of slugs, so the Fairy Princess emptied them on the other side of the garden, next to the compost heap. She reburied the containers and filled them back up with London Proud.

Suddenly, the Fairy Princess heard a beautiful song. She turned to look where it was coming from and saw a thrush enjoying a soused slug breakfast. He seemed to be singing for joy for his slimy banquet.

The Fairy Princess was very fond of red kites. Whenever she saw them in the sky, she got very excited. She would often try to take pictures of



them with her camera, but they were so fast that she could only catch a bit of tail or the tip of a wing.

The previous night, the Grumpy Little Gnome had thrown the roast chicken carcass into Marko-the-Wisp's field. Whilst the Fairy Princess was sitting at the garden table enjoying a cup of tea, a kite had spotted the chicken carcass and was hovering in the air above it. She was very excited and ran inside the cottage to get her camera. When she came back out, she saw that the crows, who lived in a tree across the road, were attacking the kite in mid-air and saw it off.



The Fairy Princess was cross and stood under the crows' tree, trying to count how many nests were there. The crows were not happy about the Fairy Princess looking up at them for so long and started to flap about, cawing angrily. At that point, the Fairy Princess counted 29 nests, but she decided it was best to retreat and leave the angry crows well alone.



The Fairy Princess was not disappointed for long, as the kite soon returned and this time the crows weren't interested. They just sat in their tree and ignored it.

The kite swooped down and grabbed part of the carcass, then it took to the air again all in a wink of an eye. Suddenly, from the back of



Marko-the-Wisp's field, a kestrel came hurtling towards the kite and they started having a mid-air battle. The kestrel looked so tiny compared to the kite, but it wasn't letting size put it off, determined to chase the kite out of its territory.

Soon the kite was back again. It swooped down, grabbed the remaining parts of the carcass and headed off, not to be seen again that day.

The Fairy Princess felt exhilarated because she had not had such an exciting time for ages. When the Grumpy Little Gnome returned from work, she entertained him over dinner and late into the evening telling him all about the events of that day.