

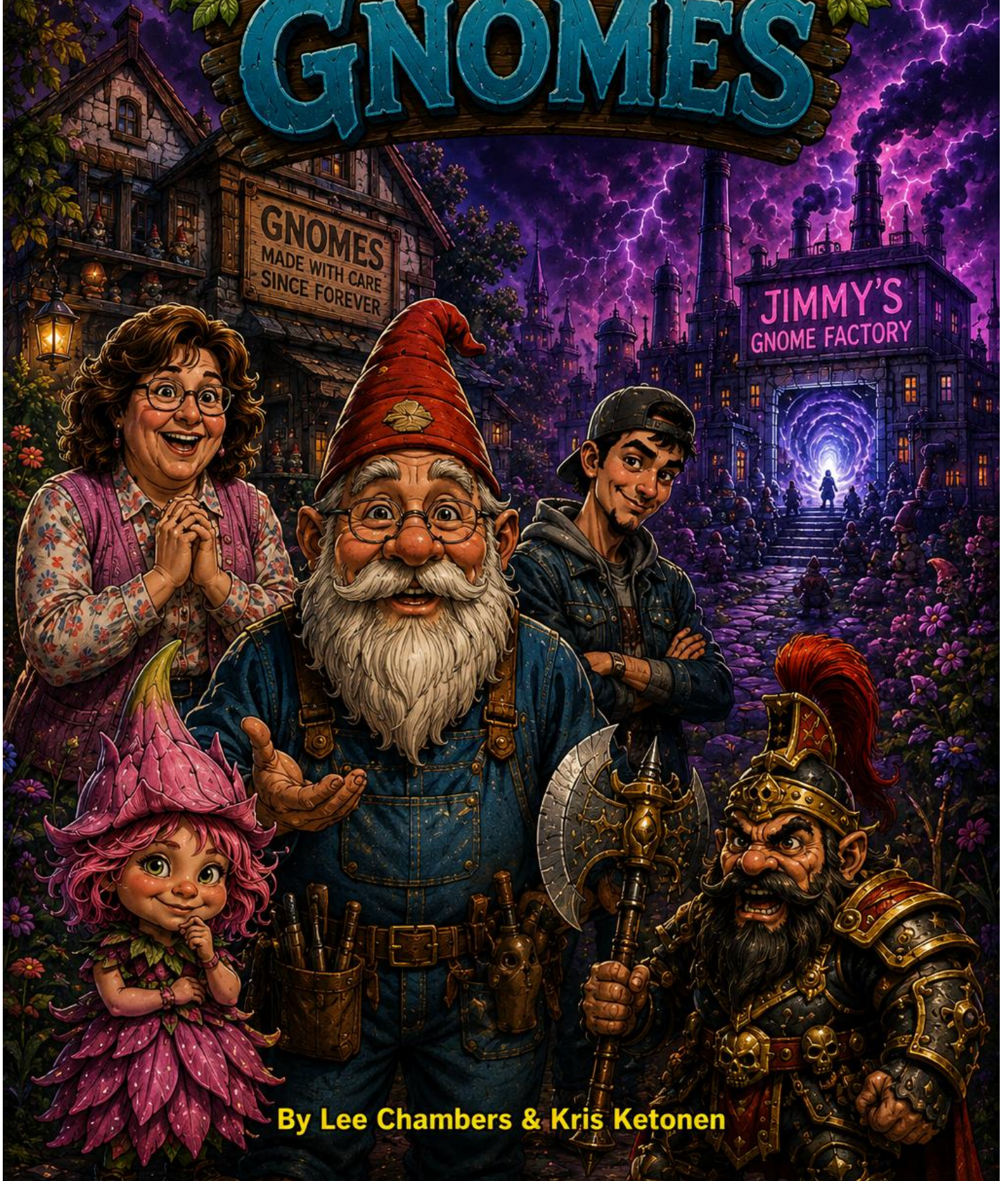


GNOME  
TALES  
COMICS

#1

\$4.99 US

# NORBERT & THE GNOMES

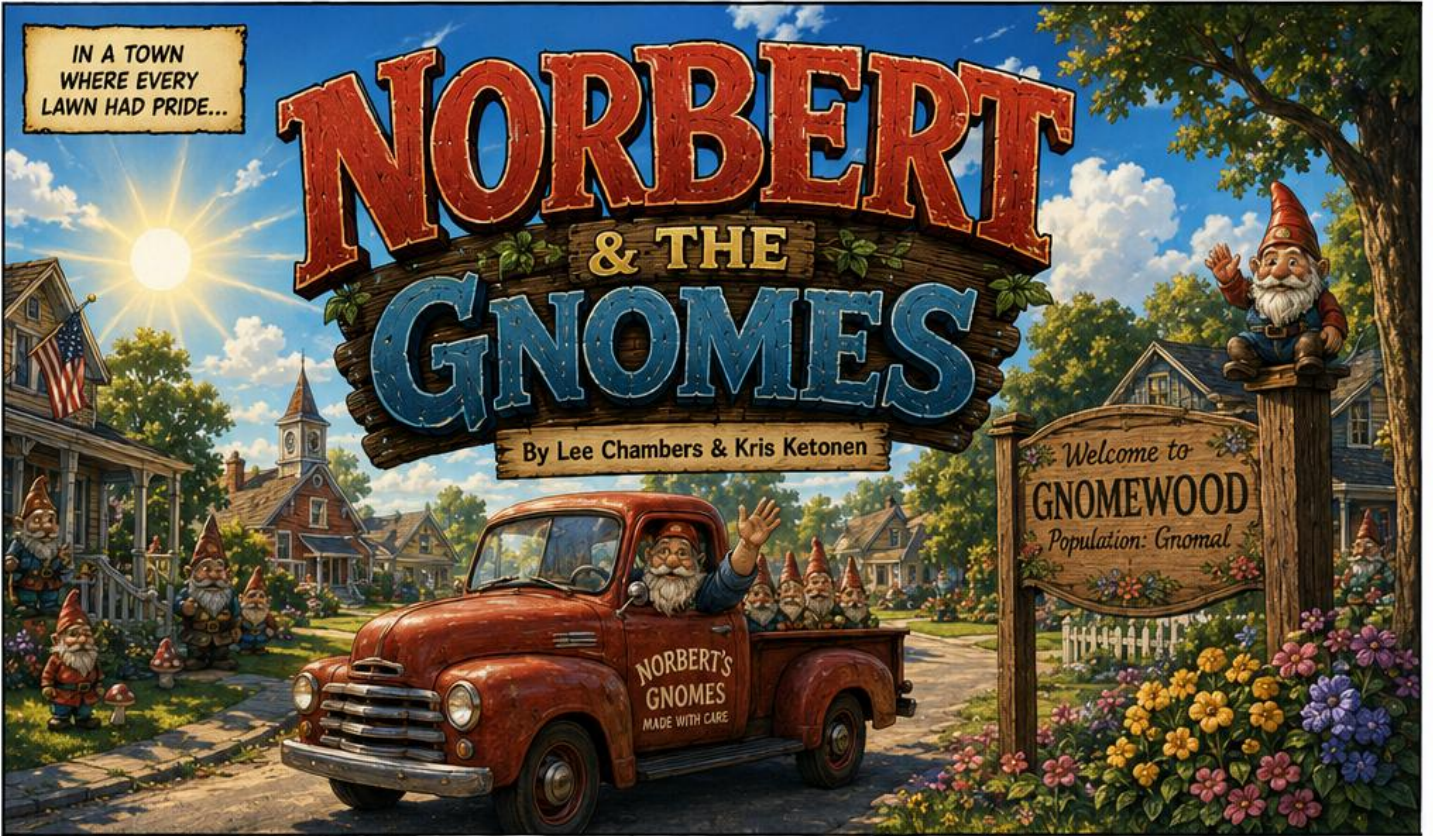


By Lee Chambers & Kris Ketonen

IN A TOWN  
WHERE EVERY  
LAWN HAD PRIDE...

# NORBERT & THE GNOMES

By Lee Chambers & Kris Ketonen



AND EVERY  
GNOME HAD A  
STORY...



MADE WITH CARE.



MADE TO LAST.



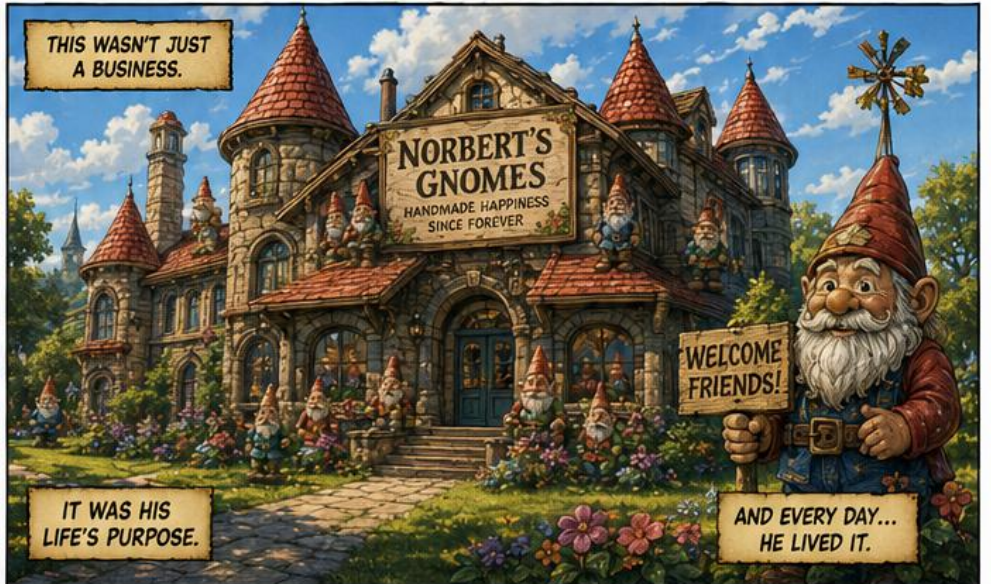
MADE  
WITH HEART.



BECAUSE TO NORBERT...

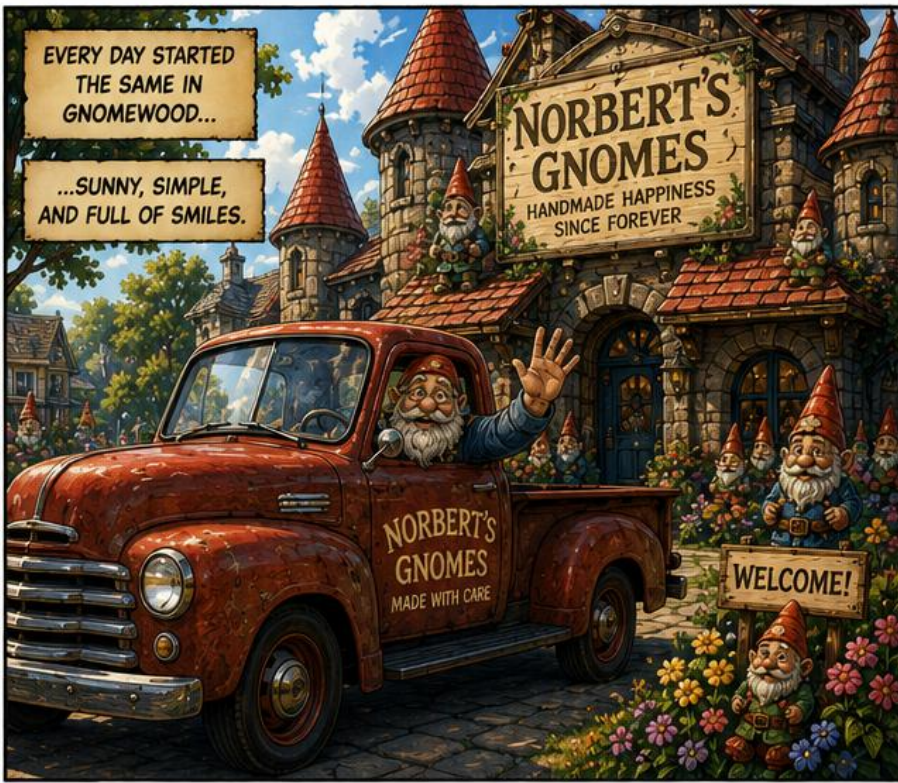


THIS WASN'T JUST  
A BUSINESS.



IT WAS HIS  
LIFE'S PURPOSE.

AND EVERY DAY...  
HE LIVED IT.



EVERY DAY STARTED THE SAME IN GNOMEWOOD...  
...SUNNY, SIMPLE, AND FULL OF SMILES.



GOOD MORNING, NORBERT. I HATE TO BOTHER YOU...

...BUT THIS LITTLE GUY ISN'T HOLDING UP SO WELL.



GOOD MORNING, PATTY! ALWAYS A PLEASURE!  
WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE TROUBLE?



WELL... THE PAINT HAS BEEN PEELING OFF. FIRST THE HAT, THEN HIS NOSE...



AND NOW EVEN HIS NOSE!



FLAKE!



OH NO! THAT'S TERRIBLE!  
I'LL GET YOU A NEW ONE RIGHT AWAY!

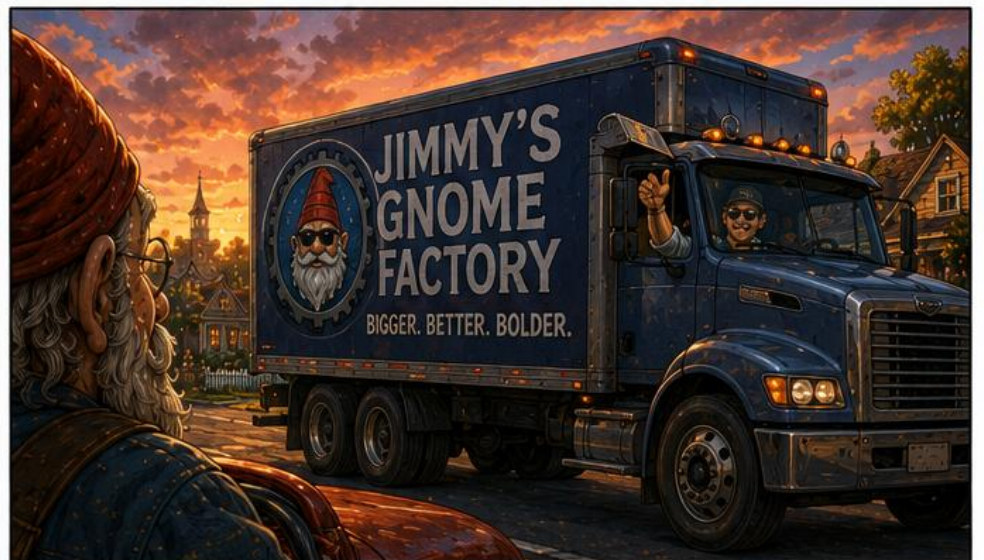
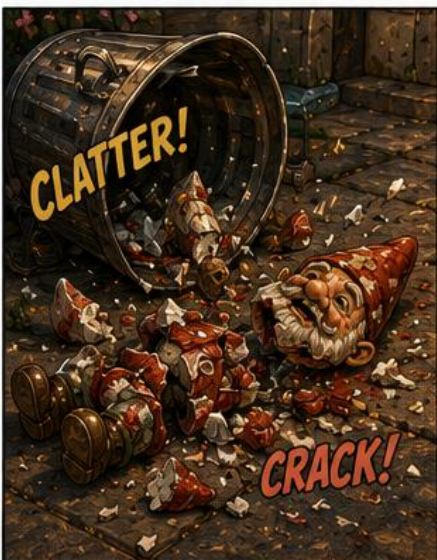
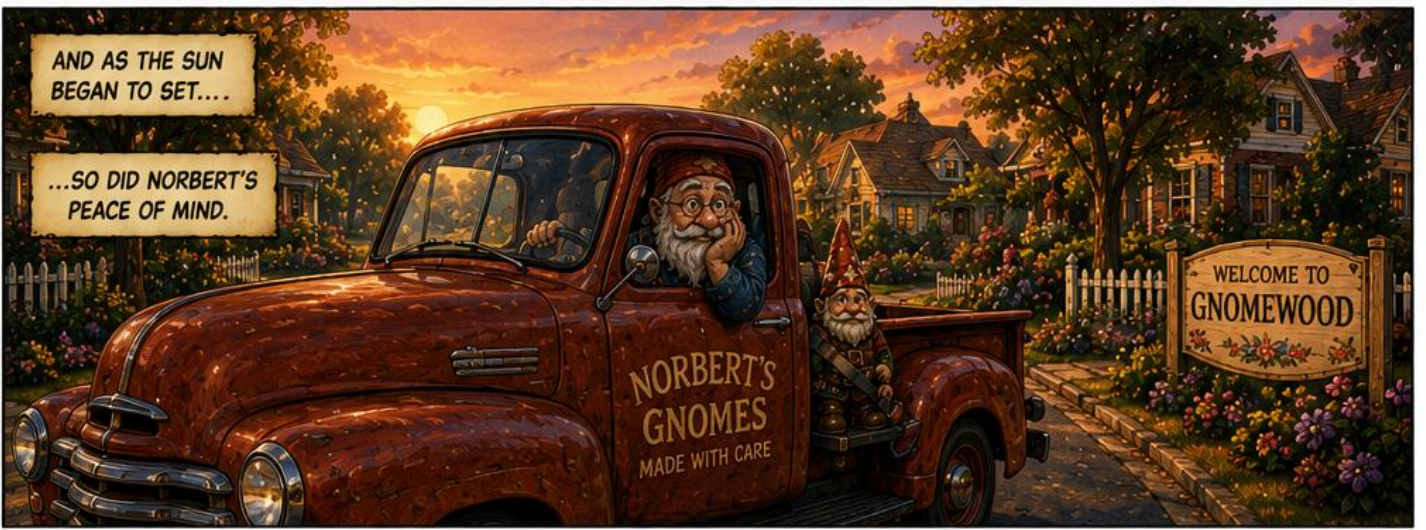


OH NO, NORBERT... THAT'S OKAY.  
I REALLY DON'T WANT A NEW ONE.  
I'LL JUST TAKE A REFUND.



A... REFUND?







NORBERT WATCHED IT DRIVE AWAY...



SOMETHING DIDN'T SIT RIGHT.



SO HE TURNED AROUND.

**SCREEEECH!**



HE FOLLOWED.



AND THAT'S WHEN HE SAW HIM.

NOT JUST BIGGER...  
...BETTER.  
BUILT DIFFERENT.



JIMMY ARRIVED HOME.



**WHIRRRRRR...**

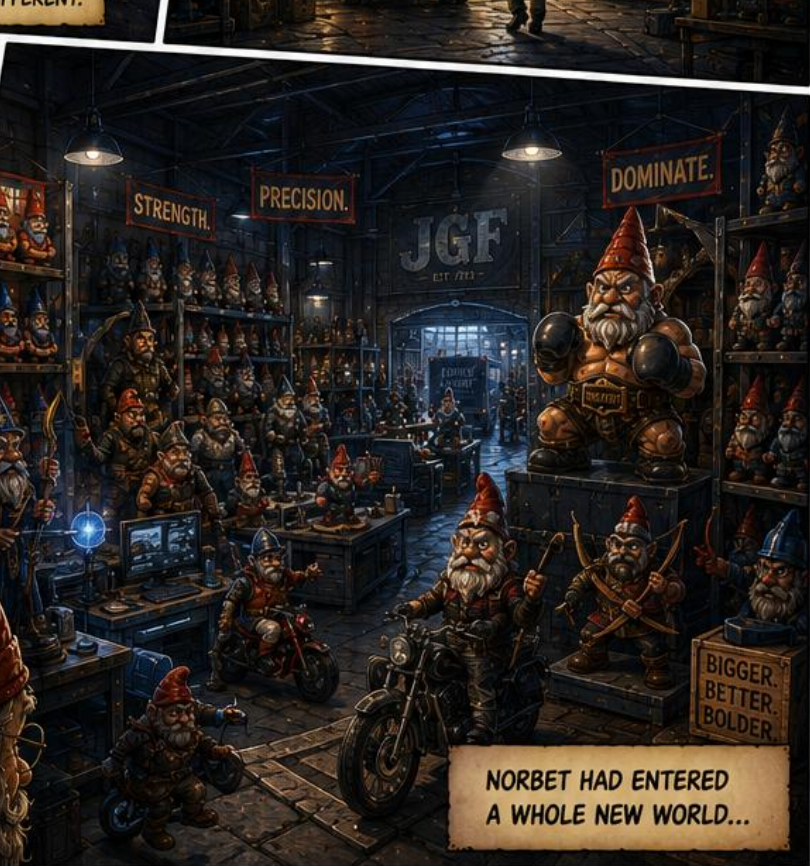
AND OPENED THE DOORS TO SOMETHING BIG.



NORBERT PARKED ACROSS THE STREET...



AND CROSSED QUIETLY.



STRENGTH.

PRECISION.

DOMINATE.

JGF  
EST. 1713

BIGGER.  
BETTER.  
BOLDER.

NORBERT HAD ENTERED A WHOLE NEW WORLD...



WHAT NORBERT SAW TOOK HIS BREATH AWAY.



EVENING SIR! LOOKING FOR ANYTHING?



YOU'RE **SELLING GNOMES!**



SURE AM. FIGURED THERE WAS ROOM FOR SOME COMPETITION.

BIGGER. BETTER. BOLDER.



THE OTHER GUY'S ARE A BIT... **BLAND.**



AND THEN HE NOTICED THE JOURNAL.

Week	Sales
Week 17	8,731
Week 18	12,456
Week 19	18,901
Week 20	27,335
Week 21	41,887
Week 22	63,221

- MARKETING STRATEGY
- BRAND
  - PACKAGING
  - POSITIONING
  - GROWTH

DOMINATE THE MARKET



I **SELL** THE GNOMES IN THIS TOWN.

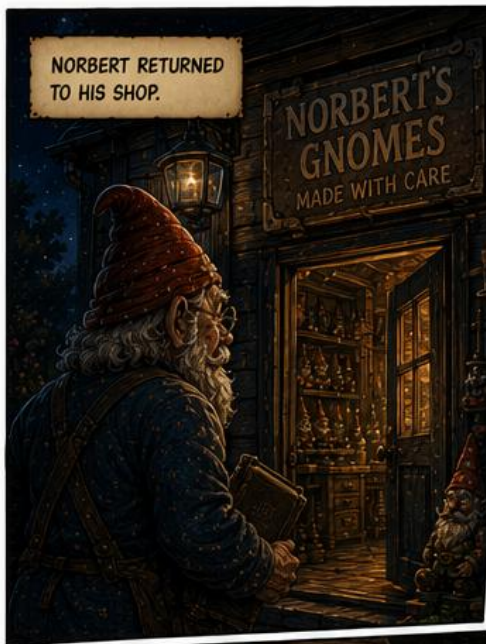


NORBERT STORMED OUT... FILLED WITH FURY, FEAR, AND QUESTIONS.



OW!

THUNK!



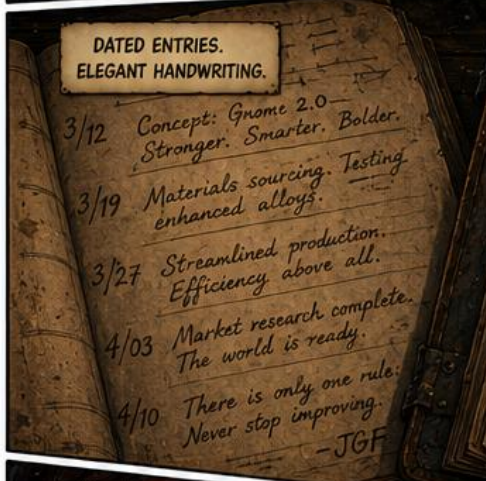
NORBERT RETURNED TO HIS SHOP.



INTO THE BACK ROOM. A SINGLE LAMP.



HE OPENED THE JOURNAL.



DATED ENTRIES. ELEGANT HANDWRITING.

3/12 Concept: Gnome 2.0 - Stronger. Smarter. Bolder.  
3/19 Materials sourcing. Testing enhanced alloys.  
3/27 Streamlined production. Efficiency above all.  
4/03 Market research complete. The world is ready.  
4/10 There is only one rule. Never stop improving.  
- JGF



HE TURNED THE PAGE.

## OPENING THE PORTAL

Alignment is everything  
The veil is thin. But it remembers.

When the third moon waxes full the path will open.



HIS EYES WIDENED.



THE INSTRUCTIONS WERE ILLEGIBLE TO HIM.



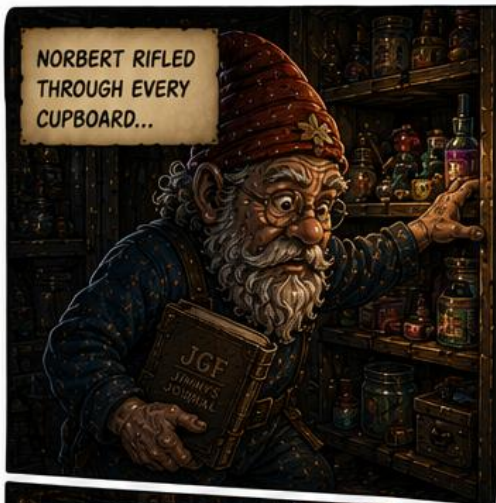
HE LOOKED AT THE GNOME HE HAD RETURNED EARLIER.



HE LOOKED BACK AT THE PAGE.



FOR THE FIRST TIME... NORBERT CONSIDERED MAKING SOMETHING NEW.



NORBERT RIFLED THROUGH EVERY CUPBOARD...



HE FOUND PAINTS...



GLITTER...

**SPARKLE!**



HE DREW THE SIGILS AS INSTRUCTED...



HE POURED THE LIQUID...

**GLUGG!**



IT SMOLDERED...

**SSSSMOLDER...**



THE SMOKE BEGAN TO SWIRL...



THE SIGILS GLOWED...



THEN IT OPENED.

**WHOIOORRRRR...**



NORBERT HAD SPENT HIS LIFE MAKING GNOMES...

...NEVER IMAGINING WHERE THEY TRULY CAME FROM.

NORBERT STEPPED THROUGH.

A PLACE OF LIGHT, COLOR, AND LIFE BEYOND IMAGINING.



HE STOOD IN AWE.

THEN, A SOUND...

HE HID.



A CREATURE EMERGED.

A FLOWER GNOME.

INNOCENT. BEAUTIFUL. UNAWAKE.

NORBERT NOTICED A ROCK NEARBY.



SOME DISCOVERIES BRING WONDER...  
...OTHERS AWAKEN SOMETHING DARKER.



HE THREW.



IT HIT.



SILENCE.



HORROR.



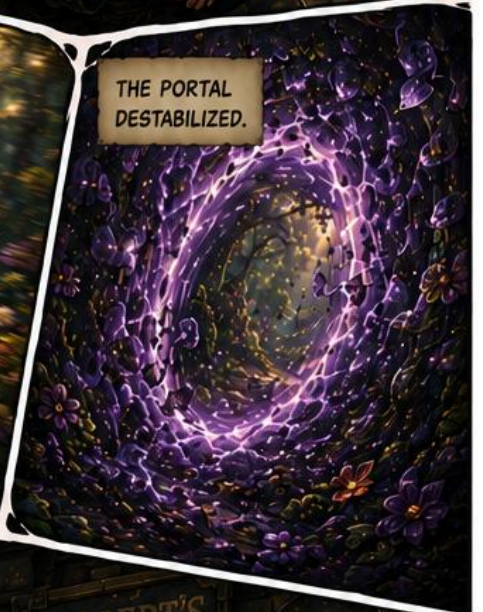
HE SCOOPED  
HER UP.



THE FOREST  
STIRRED.



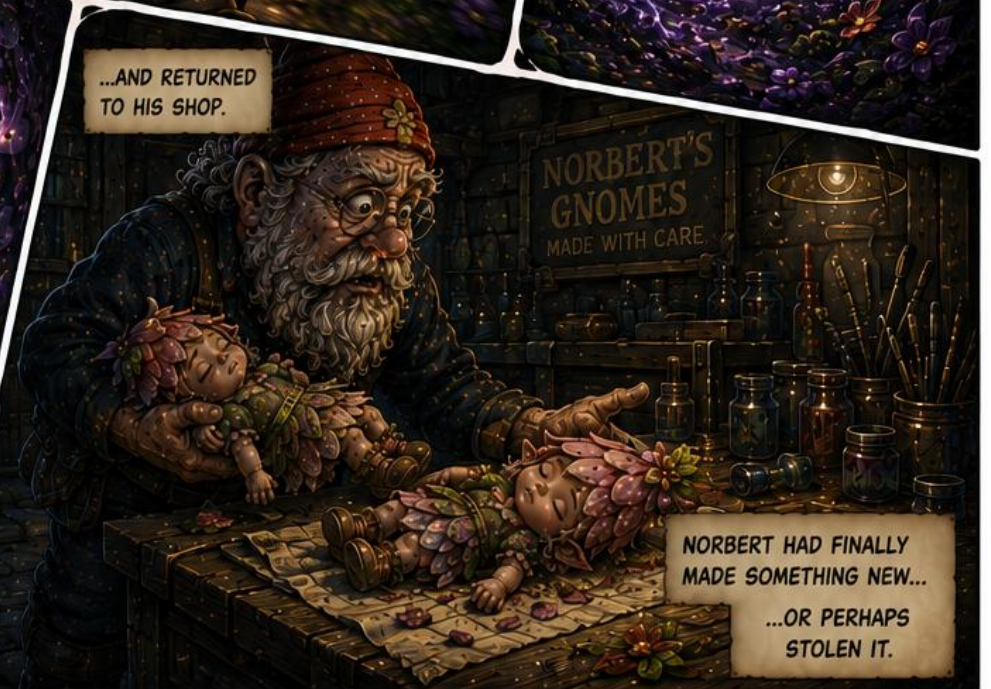
HE RAN.



THE PORTAL  
DESTABILIZED.

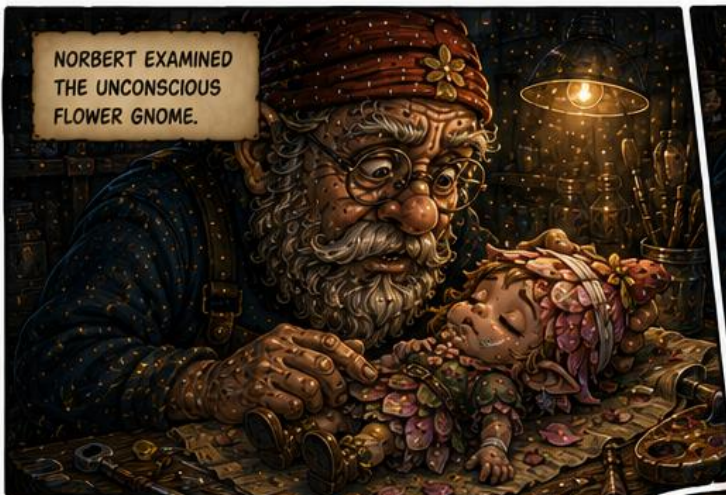


NORBERT  
JUMPED...



...AND RETURNED  
TO HIS SHOP.

NORBERT HAD FINALLY  
MADE SOMETHING NEW...  
...OR PERHAPS  
STOLEN IT.



NORBERT EXAMINED THE UNCONSCIOUS FLOWER GNOME.



HE TRIED TO REPAIR HER.



PAINT, BANDAGES, PRECISE HANDS... NOTHING MADE SENSE.



THEN---

*TWITCH.*



HER EYES FLUTTERED OPEN.



AND THEN... SHE LAUGHED.

*HEE  
HEE  
HEEE!*



*LEAP!*



SHE SPUN AND DANCED, TOPPLING EVERYTHING IN HER PATH.

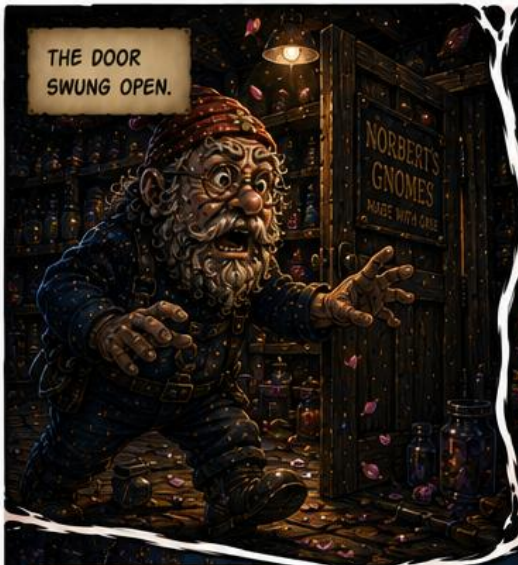
*CRASH!*



HEY!



NORBERT HAD BROUGHT HOME SOMETHING NEW...  
...SOMETHING WONDERFULLY ALIVE.



THE DOOR SWUNG OPEN.



SHE ESCAPED!



NO!  
NO!  
NO!



THROUGH THE SLEEPY STREETS OF GNOMEWOOD...



INTO PATTY'S YARD...



SHE NOTICED SOMETHING...



AND THEN...



SOMETHING ANSWERED.



AND DEEP WITHIN THE STATUE...

NORBERT HAD WANTED SOMETHING NEW...  
...HE HAD NO IDEA WHAT HE'D UNLEASHED.





HE TOOK HIS FIRST STEP.

**THOOM!**



THE FENCE WASN'T BUILT FOR THIS.

**KRUNCH!**



THEN CAME THE PINK FLAMINGOS.

**SMASH!**



MY FLAMINGOS!



FLOWER GNOME THOUGHT IT WAS THE BEST GAME EVER.

**HEE!  
HEE!  
HEEE!**



ALL ACROSS GNOPEWOOD, NEIGHBORS WOKE TO THE CHAOS.



THE BATTLE-AXE GNOME ROARED--

**RAAARRR!**



--AND THE GROUND ANSWERED.

**RUMMMBLE!  
RUMMMBLE!**



JIMMY SAW THE PURPLE GLOW ON THE HORIZON.



...WHAT DID HE DO?



JIMMY DIDN'T HESITATE.

HE RAN.



AND HE SAW IT.



AND HE SAW THE FLOWER GNOME.



YOU TOOK ONE.



WHAT DID YOU DO?!



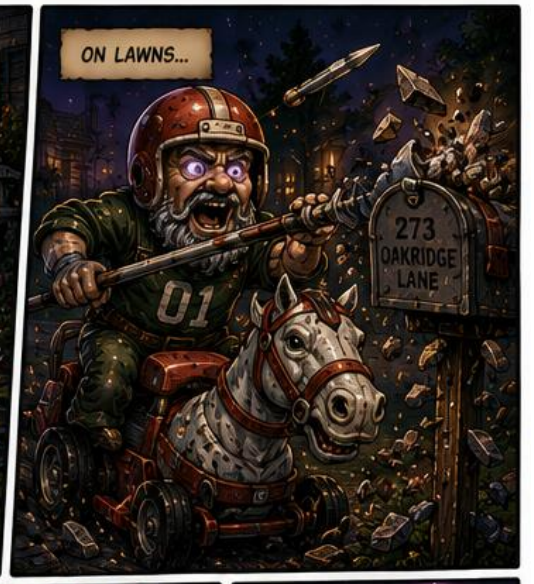
I... I JUST WANTED TO MATTER... TO BE THE ONE WHO FOUND SOMETHING AMAZING.



ALL ACROSS GNOMEWOOD...



AND SUDDENLY... ONE MISTAKE BECAME MANY.





GET INSIDE!  
**NOW!**



BARRICADE IT!  
THEY'RE  
**EVERYWHERE!**



Hee  
hee!



THE JOURNAL  
HAD ANSWERS.  
OR SO THEY  
THOUGHT.

**CLOSING THE PORTAL**

- To seal the breach and return Gnomewood to slumber, follow these steps in order.
- 1. Ground the arcane core.
- 2. Reverse the flow.
- 3. Rebind the anchor.
- 4. Seal with final sigil.



SOMEONE HAD  
RIPPED OUT THE  
MOST IMPORTANT  
PART.

2. Reverse

- 3. Rebind the
- 4. Seal with

**FINAL SIGIL**



LOOK, NORBERT...  
I KNOW I SHOULD'VE  
DONE THIS PROPERLY.  
BUT I... I MAY HAVE  
**SKIPPED AHEAD.**  
I WAS IMPATIENT.  
I WANTED RESULTS.



**YOU  
WHAT?!**



**RAAAARRR!**



SAVING GNOMEWOOD  
WOULD REQUIRE  
SOMETHING NEITHER  
RIVAL HAD MASTERED...

**BIGGER,  
BETTER,  
BOLDER...**

...FINISHING WHAT  
THEY STARTED.



THE PAGE WAS TORN CLEAN OUT.

LOOK AT THE EDGE... IT WAS REMOVED ON PURPOSE.



BEFORE EITHER OF THEM COULD THINK...

HEE HEE!



HEY!



LET'S SEE... THIS GOES HERE... AND THIS CURLS AROUND...



THAT SYMBOL...



I KNOW THAT SYMBOL...



IT'S ON THE OLD SHOP SIGN! THE ONE MY GRANDFATHER CARVED!



HE PUSHED THE LOOSE PANEL BEHIND THE SIGN...

...AND FOUND ANOTHER LAYER.



A HIDDEN SYMBOL... CARVED DEEP.

SEALED AND FORGOTTEN.



MY GRANDFATHER... HE WASN'T JUST A TOYMAKER. HE WAS... A KEEPER OF THINGS.



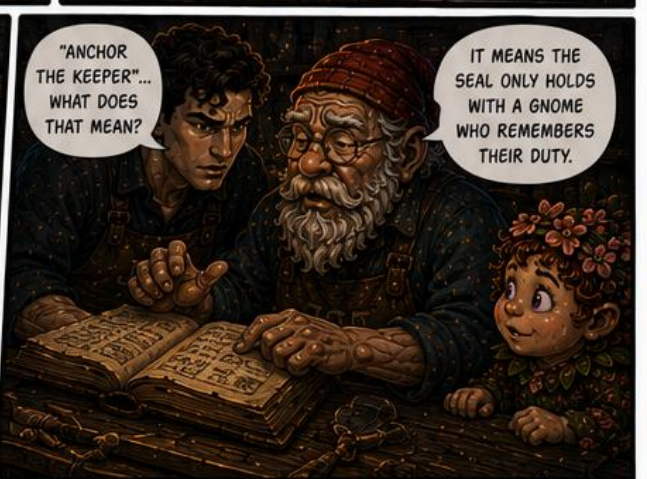
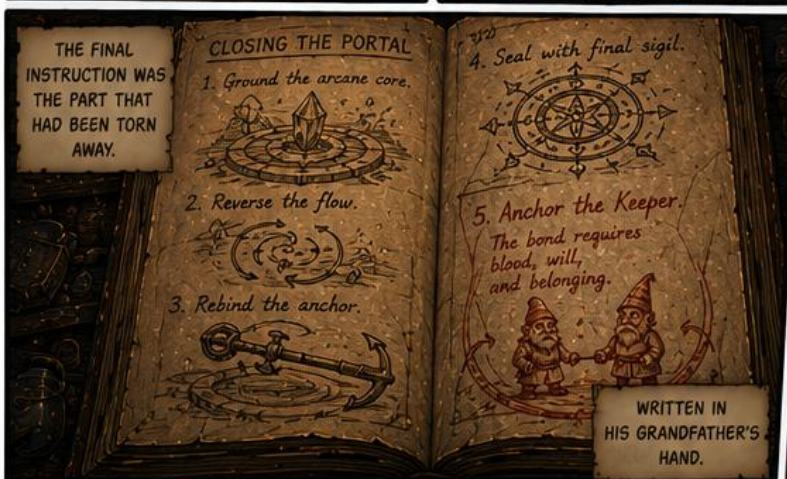
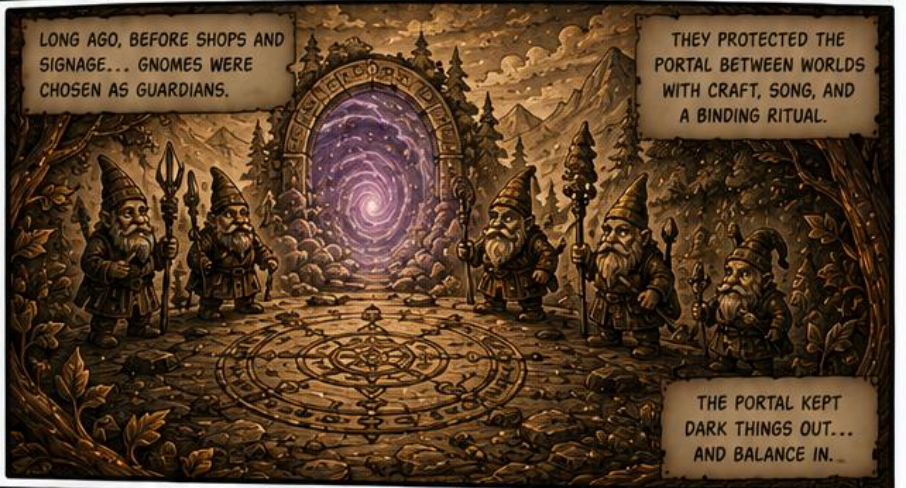
THIS SYMBOL ISN'T DECORATION. IT'S INSTRUCTION. IT'S KNOWLEDGE.

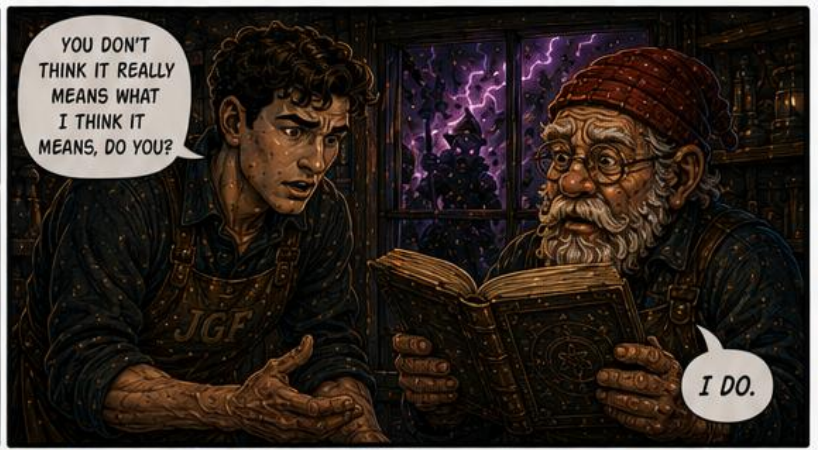
HEE!

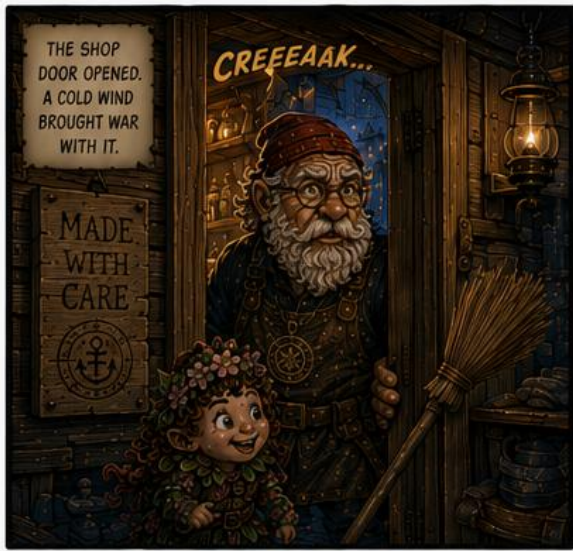


TO SAVE GNOMEWOOD...

...NORBERT MAY NEED TO REMEMBER WHAT HE WAS NEVER TAUGHT.







THE SHOP DOOR OPENED. A COLD WIND BROUGHT WAR WITH IT.

CREEEAAK...



NOT AS A SHOPKEEPER...

...BUT AS A KEEPER.



LET'S FINISH WHAT WE STARTED.



I KNEW THIS REFUND WAS SUSPICIOUS!

NOBODY GETS A FULL REFUND FOR "BAD VIBES"!



GNOMEWOOD HAD AWAKENED.



TOGETHER, THEY WALKED TOWARD THE HEART OF THE STORM.

AND HE WAS WAITING.



BATTLE-AXE-GUARDIAN OF THE SEAL-BLOCKED THE WAY.



THE KEEPER'S SYMBOL IGNITED.



BATTLE-AXE FELT IT.



FOR A MOMENT, THE RAGE FALTERED. THE MEMORY SHONE THROUGH THE DARK.

FOR THE FIRST TIME... THE FORGOTTEN WERE REMEMBERED.

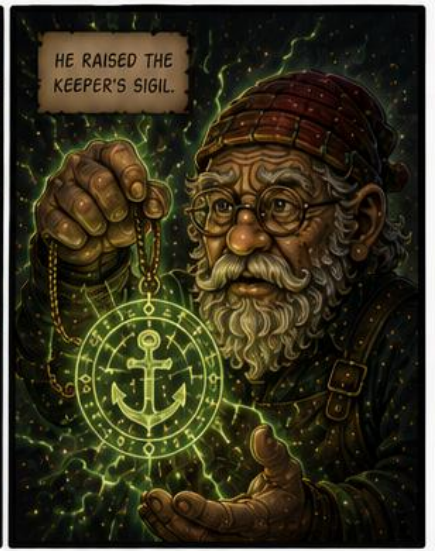




NORBERT--  
BE CAREFUL!



NORBERT STEPPED  
FORWARD.



HE RAISED THE  
KEEPER'S SIGIL.



BY ROOT, STONE, AND CRAFT...  
BY HAND, HEART, AND HONOR...  
BY THE FIRST MAKING--  
I CALL, AND I REMEMBER.



SOMETHING  
STIRRED.

THE HISLOR  
THAT BOUND  
HIM FLICKERED.



THE CORRUPTION  
CRACKED LIKE  
OLD RUST UNDER  
SPRING RAIN.



KEEPER...  
YOU  
RETURN.

I HAVE NOT  
FORGOTTEN MY  
FIRST VOW.

PASS,  
KEEPER.



AND SO THE  
GUARDIAN OF  
THE SEAL KNELT.



THE GNOMES  
FROZE. THE  
CORRUPTION  
HESITATED.

MEMORIES  
RETURNED  
TO EYES THAT  
HAD FORGOTTEN  
HOW TO SEE.



THE WAY HAD  
NEVER BEEN LOST...  
...ONLY FORGOTTEN.





THE PORTAL  
HOWLED AS THE  
STORM REACHED  
ITS PEAK.



NORBERT STEPPED  
INTO THE CIRCLE,  
RECLAIMING THE  
KEEPER'S OATH.



REBIND  
THE ANCHOR!



ROOTS WILL HOLD.  
BLOOMS WILL BIND.  
LIFE WILL REMIND.



THE GUARDIAN  
TOOK HIS POST,  
DEFENDING WHAT  
HE ONCE SWORE  
TO PROTECT.



TOGETHER,  
THE GNOMES HELD  
THE LINE AGAINST  
THE CORRUPTION.



THE SEAL BEGAN  
TO LOCK. LIGHT  
AGAINST THE  
DARK.



BY ROOT,  
STONE, AND  
CRAFT!

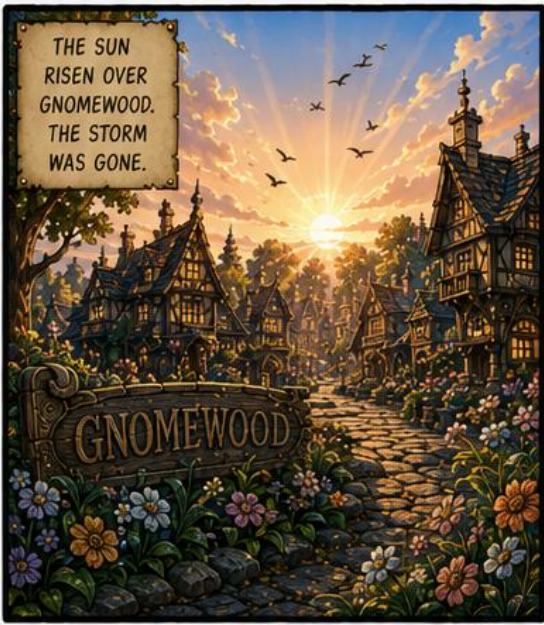


THE STORM PUSHED BACK.  
THE MEMORY WAVERED.  
BUT THE KEEPER DID NOT.  
HE REMEMBERED  
FOR ALL.

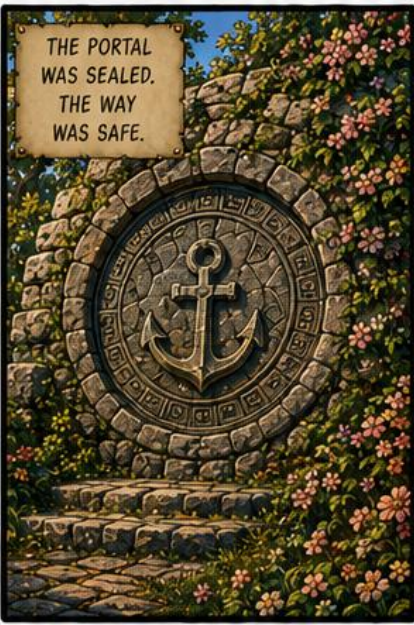


TO MEND WHAT  
WAS BROKEN...  
...EVERYONE HAD  
TO REMEMBER.

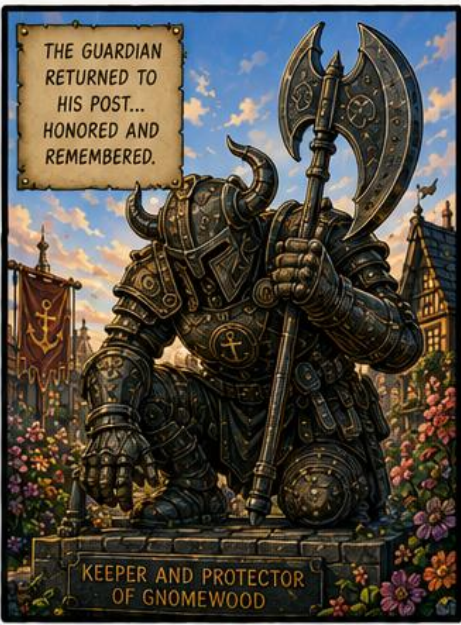




THE SUN  
RISEN OVER  
GNOMEWOOD.  
THE STORM  
WAS GONE.



THE PORTAL  
WAS SEALED.  
THE WAY  
WAS SAFE.



THE GUARDIAN  
RETURNED TO  
HIS POST...  
HONORED AND  
REMEMBERED.

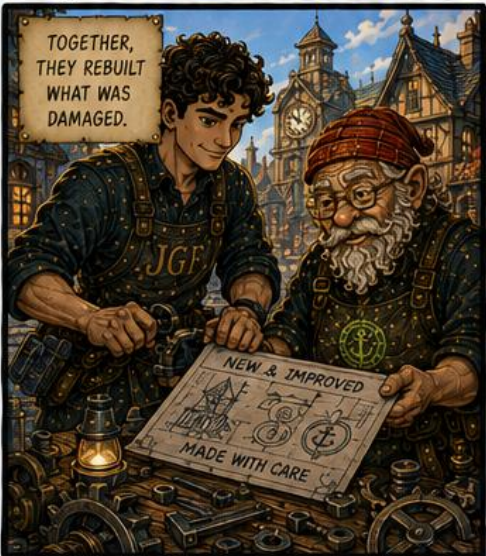
KEEPER AND PROTECTOR  
OF GNOMEWOOD



THESE  
FLAMINGOS  
BETTER HAVE  
WARRANTIES.

FULL  
REFUND  
OR NEW  
BIRD!

SATISFACTION  
GUARANTEE!  
(WE HOPE)



TOGETHER,  
THEY REBUILT  
WHAT WAS  
DAMAGED.

NEW & IMPROVED  
MADE WITH CARE



FLOWER GNOME  
DECIDED GNOMEWOOD  
WAS HOME.  
FOREVER.

FLOWERS  
MAKE EVERYTHING  
BETTER.



A NEW SIGN  
WAS RAISED.

MADE  
WITH CARE  
KEEPERS SINCE 1970



AND THE  
TOWN REMEMBERED  
THE HEART BEHIND  
EVERYTHING THEY  
MADE.



IN GNOMEWOOD...  
THEY STILL  
MADE THINGS  
WITH CARE.  
  
...BUT NOW,  
THEY REMEMBERED  
WHY.

