

Elfin Solution

By Carole Gauntlett

Once upon a time, in a glade deep in the forest, lived a colony of elves. They were kind and loving creatures who had created a happy, thriving community. Even the forest animals had learned to respect and live peaceably beside them. This society had existed for a very long time before the first gnomes arrived from the south.

The elves welcomed the first few newcomers despite their repulsive looks. They were twice the height of the elves with stocky muscular bodies and flat faced features. They stomped through the surrounding forest sometimes frightening the animals. When an elf disappeared, it was wondered if perhaps the stomping had been the cause.

As the gnome settlement grew, Elliot, the elves' leader, sought out their leader Gruffle. Agreements were reached and issues resolved. Whenever an elf disappeared, the gnomes made a showy effort of helping the search party.

None of the children seemed to care about the bodily differences between them and worked and played happily together. In fact Elliot's son Payton was quite close to Griffit, son of Gruffle. One day when they were out marking a new trail through the forest, Griffit turned to Payton and calmly asked, "What do you taste like?" Payton stood stunned while gathering his composure and said quietly, "Chicken I suppose." "What's chicken?" asked Griffit. "A large bird" he replied still staring, amazed that the question had not been a joke.

Much later, after a long conversation, Payton and his Dad hatched a plan to work on a "farming project." Curiosity grew and grew about the pen that was being built until one morning the pen held four large birds, much to the delight of both the elves and the gnomes. When another elf disappeared, some worried that he'd gone too near the birds. Everyone took part in feeding the creatures and in sharing the bounty of eggs the birds laid. Some of the eggs were allowed to nest and become new birds. As the pen began to get more crowded, it was suggested that the pen be enlarged. No action was taken.

Elliot and his son announced plans for a party to celebrate the anniversary of the arrival of the gnomes. Everyone was excited and committees were busy everywhere preparing games and contests for an all-day celebration.

Games were slated to begin at 10:00 in the morning. The elves and gnomes could be seen practicing their running and jumping and the band players playing and marching by 8:30.

At noon while most were lying about resting or bragging about their ribbons, Elliot and Payton rode into the middle of the glade in a large cart filled with fried chicken for everyone. To the elves it was a rare treat and a total surprise to the gnomes who had only heard of such a thing. All ate their fill and were overjoyed. No other elves ever went missing again.