

“Not More Gnomes!”

Your laughter couldn't hide your horror.

“Yeah, he just turned up with them!”

I waited for you to negotiate the stile.

“On your wedding day?”

You paused with one leg successfully in the next field, one suspended in disbelief.

“Eighteen of them. I guess he really wanted them re-homed.”

My inherited gnome collection has been surprisingly divisive. If my husband had known we'd be starting our married life together with an army of small, bearded men, I have no doubt that he'd have had other plans that day.

“You're not keeping them? You can't!”

Ah, another anti-gnomer. Oh look, some lambs. Perfect timing for a distraction.

Two spring-loaded youngsters stumble-bounced towards a ewe brunching with two friends. The hassled mum flicked her tail as they took turns nudging her underside. A red kite circled over the field next door.

“Well! You can stay over there.”

Thoroughly told off, the bird soared away, distracting twitching drivers on the main road while we admired the munching sheep. The sun warmed our shoulders as we walked together across the land, freshly decorated with its bleating woolly baubles. We couldn't be further from bank-holiday traffic jams.

I thought of you at Easter. With one foot over a stile, I wished you were here to squeal about tiny lambs. The clouds couldn't seem to stop crying this year, but you hated a fuss, so I swallowed the lump in my throat threatening to make my eyes drizzle and smiled, remembering your outrage.

“Not more gnomes!”