

Go Big or Go Gnome

written by

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EXT. RAVAGED COUNTRY GARDEN - EVENING

Devastated as though a comet has paid a visit.

Broken bits of marble. Birds bleeding out on the gravel.
Trees on the verge of collapsing.

EXT. CHERISHED CHESTNUTS RETIREMENT HOME - EVENING

CLARE and DAVID, two twenty something care workers, bolt down the stairs. Painted skull faces in keeping with Halloween.

DAVID

Jesus, just look at it!

CLARE

Jim?! Jiiiiim?!

DAVID

Roooooy?! Oh where the hell are they? We should have kept them inside and separated, especially after today.

CLARE

I know, but you know how Beatie gets without her gnome.

DAVID

Yes I do, but sending two frail old men out to look for it?

CLARE

I gave them walkie talkie's they'll be--

DAVID

Oh my god. Look.

He points to JIM crawling out from beneath a pile of wood that used to be a shed. They dash towards him, pick up the crippled codger.

JIM

Gah! Watch me back!

DAVID

Sorry.

CLARE

It's alright Jim, we've got you, that's it.

Clare is the more astute individual, whereas David appears twitchy and apprehensive.

DAVID

Wh-what happened mate? We think it was an earthquake but...we heard a roar like a lion or something.

Jim grasps onto David's shirt.

JIM

Are you tryin to tell me ya didn't see it?!

CLARE

Jim calm down.

DAVID

S-see what?

JIM

Here in the garden!

David scans the environment.

DAVID

I think he's delirious. How many fingers am I holding up?

Jim flips him the bird.

CLARE

Don't worry, I've got this, I'll take him inside and you try and look for Roy.

DAVID

O-okay.

David jogs towards the hedge maze.

EXT. CHERISHED CHESTNUTS RETIREMENT HOME - EVENING

The residents, some wearing devil horns, others werewolf hands, gawp from the window as the veteran is carried out of the war zone.

He wriggles out of Clare's helping hands.

CLARE

Try not to move so much.

JIM

I'm more than capable of walking on my own!

CLARE

Oh I dunno, you seem to be limping there soldier.

His gesture to her is less aggressive - waving away a fly.

INT. HEDGE MAZE - EVENING

David navigates his way through the labyrinth via a trail of sweet wrappers.

DAVID
Rooooooy?!

He turns a corner to find his path obstructed by a mountain of soil.

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Clare tucks Jim under the sheets and examines a bruise on his head.

CLARE
Well, good news, your head hasn't swelled up like a pumpkin. Bad news, you're going to have to miss out on the monster mash.

JIM
Get ya hands off me!

CLARE
Tell you what, you get some rest and I'll go and fix you a drink, how about that?

He turns away from her like a baby refusing greens.

Clare walks over to the window, shakes her head at the sorry sight.

CLARE
That's enough excitement for today.

She draws the curtains and exits the room.

Jim glances over to them with a look of concern.

JIM
Where the hell are ya?

INT. COMMUNAL LOUNGE - EVENING

Clare attends to the residents. Some remain staring out the window, others boogie. One man dangles a plastic bat in front of his face like a cat transfixed to wool.

David pokes his head through the front door.

DAVID
(To Clare)
Psst.

EXT. CHERISHED CHESTNUTS RETIREMENT HOME - EVENING

Clare leaves the front door ajar.

David is white as a sheet and pacing back and forth.

CLARE

David?

DAVID

(Shaky)

I f-f-found Roy but...ah shit!

CLARE

Here, sit down.

David drops to the wooden bench next to Clare. Legs restless.

CLARE

What's up?

DAVID

I-i can't handle this. I've only been here a couple of weeks!

He buries his head in his hands and breaks down.

The front door creaks open, BEATIE wanders out looking lost.

BEATIE

Where's my gnome?

CLARE

Ooh, now where are you going missus? The ghouls'll get you if you're not careful.

BEATIE

I want my gnome.

Clare escorts her back inside.

CLARE

Tell you what, we'll have another good root around the home okay?

(To David)

Back in a moment, just breathe slowly.

MOMENTS LATER...

Doomf. Doomf. Doomf.

Earth-trembling footsteps.

David lifts his head from his lap.

INT. COMMUNAL LOUNGE - EVENING

Clare places a blanket around Beatie.

CLARE

Let's get you nice and warm.

She glances to the window as the footsteps get louder.

Walks over...

Silence.

Seconds later, David is winched into the air at an alarming speed.

DAVID

Gaaaaahhhh!

CLARE

Oh my...David!

She bangs on the glass frantically as David convulses before the light of the moon.

CLARE

Daviiiiiid!

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Jim watches the grisly shadow puppet performance unfold against the curtains. Something appears to be throwing David around like a rag doll.

The horror show concludes with David's insides plummeting to the ground.

CLARE (O.S)

Noooooooooo!

Jim makes a painful dive off his bed, slithers across the carpet and reaches for the door...

TSSSSHHHHHH!

The window explodes. Shards of glass fly towards him.

He's hoisted a few inches off the carpet and pulled out into the cold air.

JIM

Daaaahhhh!

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. COUNTRY GARDEN - DAY

Summer paradise, lush and undisturbed.

Frogs leap from their lily pads and hide beneath rippling water.

Doomf. Doomf. Doomf.

INT. SHED - DAY

Jim is taking shelter, just as spooked as the wildlife but well prepared. He sits crouched against the wall, listening closely to the growing footsteps, then...

Silence.

He rises to the window.

In the distance, a flawless marble statue crumbles into a fine powder.

An ear-splitting roar follows.

Jim drops to his knees and shuffles across the floorboards towards a walkie-talkie.

JIM

Roy? Pick up, it's Jim.

INT. HEDGE MAZE - DAY

ROY, comfortable in corduroy, portly and red, lies slumped against the foliage.

ROY

Yes, I...I hear ya just...give me a moment.

Roy combats persistent wheezing with toffees.

INTERCUT - INT. SHED/INT. HEDGE MAZE - DAY

ROY

Wha...what's it doing?

Trees rattle and plant pots fly into the distance.

JIM

Well it ain't gardenin!

ROY

It's ludicrous! I could be inside now watching Elvira...but no...instead I'm out with you hiding from god knows what!

JIM
Hey, ya still alive ain't ya?!

ROY
I'm seconds away from a coronary!
I don't think I can last much
longer. In pretty deep here.

The beast releases another roar, so powerful it shatters the shed window and travels fast like a hurricane through the hedge maze.

INT. HEDGE MAZE - DAY

The force knocks Roy over and he loses the walkie-talkie.

END INTERCUT

INT. SHED - DAY

Toolboxes and paint cans vibrate.

JIM
(To Roy)
This thing's comin my way fast.

No response from Roy.

JIM
Roy? Pick up goddammit!

EXT. COUNTRY GARDEN - DAY

The enemy clomps it's way through a pond, catapulting frogs and fish in every direction.

INT. SHED - DAY

A power drill lands directly on Jim's back sending him flat on his stomach.

JIM
Gaaaaahhhh!

CCCCSHHHHHH!

The roof is swiped clean off.

Jim covers his head.

The target of the attack, a butterfly, flutters away unscathed.

The behemoth stomps some more, causing the shed to cave in on Jim.

INT. HEDGE MAZE - DAY

Roy hobbles through, gasping for air and redder than ever.

A deafening clap stops him in his tracks.

He turns to find a squashed butterfly in mid air which is chomped down by the veiled villain.

ROY
Good god almighty.

Roy picks up a crackling noise behind him, followed by Jim's inaudible coughs and grunts. He turns around. The walkie-talkie not far behind.

The monster growls.

Roy brings a trembling hand to his coat pocket, takes out a toffee and throws it to the ground.

ROY
There. It-it-it's yours. Take it.
Whatever you are.

The sweet is crushed.

The giant now sounds like a boiler on the brink of exploding.

Roy limps away as fast as he can, but before he can reach the walkie-talkie, he's caught in a downfall of soil.

MOMENTS LATER...

CLARE (O.S)
Jim? Jiiiiim?!

DAVID (O.S)
Roy? Rooooy?!

END FLASHBACK

EXT. CHERISHED CHESTNUTS RETIREMENT HOME - EVENING

Jim wiggles his legs as he dangles in mid air.

JIM
C'mon ya big brute! Show yaself!
I ain't scared. Ya hear me?!

MOMENTS LATER...

A cloaked figure on a broomstick emerges from behind a tree.

WITCH
Lovely night for it. Wouldn't you
say? Kaaaahahaha!

Jim is dumbstruck.

WITCH

Recognise me? Hmm? Maybe this'll
jog your memory.

She shape-shifts into a slightly less frightening old lady.

Jim's eyes widen.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. PARK - DAY

The cherished chestnuts sit in deck chairs eating ice cream.
Beatie pats her gnome's head which stands beside her.

David and Claire chat by the mini bus. They notice Jim and
Roy who have paused their game of boules to have an argument.

JIM

And I'm tellin you I have way
more experience in this game!

ROY

Poppycock! You are a cheater Jim
Brittle!

JIM

Right! That does it!

Jim picks up Roy's chrome ball from the grass and throws it.

It hurtles through the air and into a forest.

INT. FOREST - DAY

Lands in the basket of an old lady's bicycle and smashes a
bottle.

Purple smoke seeps into the air.

She brakes hard, grits her teeth.

OLD LADY

Noooooo!

EXT. PARK - DAY

David and Clare flick their cigarettes to the ground and rush
over to Jim and David fighting.

CLARE

Woah, guys? What's going on here?

ROY

Oh boy are you in for it now.

Jim raises his fist.

JIM
Why I outta...!

OLD LADY
Heeeey! Youuuu!

The old lady scurries towards the bunch waving the ball.

OLD LADY
Which one of you half-wits is
responsible for this?!

CLARE
Oh i'm so sorry are--

OLD LADY
You?! Don't you know you should
respect your elders?!

David steps in.

DAVID
Woah woah woah, hang on a minute,
I think there's been a
misunderstanding here.

The old lady gives him a short, sharp slap before scanning
the residents with her piercing green eyes.

Roy subtly points to Jim.

The old lady grabs his collar.

OLD LADY
So it was you?!

JIM
What?!

OLD LADY
You've just destroyed something
I've worked tirelessly for!

JIM
What's this old bag sayin to me?!

She goes to throttle him, Clare pulls him away.

CLARE
Alright, that's enough! We'll
call it a day there.
(To residents)
Everyone? Back on the bus, it's
time to go.

JIM
Woman's completely off her
rocker!

CLARE
Shh, I know, I know.

Clare and the rest of the residents head for the mini bus.

OLD LADY
You'll pay for this! All of ya!

The old lady turns to David, hand on his face, still in a state of shock.

She leans in, whispers poison.

OLD LADY
I could do a lot worse you know.

He raises a brow and shakes his head.

DAVID
Pfft.

Walks away.

The old lady takes note of the mini bus and the words
CHERISHED CHESTNUT RETIREMENT HOME written on the side.

She spots the gnome left behind by Beatie.

INT. FOREST - LATER

She hurls the figurine at a tree and it shatters on the forest floor.

Picks up her bike and turns to walk away, pauses and glances back.

She drops her bike, kneels down and waves her hands across the pieces.

The gnome miraculously fixes itself back together.

The old bag is all smiles.

OLD LADY
Oh yes. You'll do just fine.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. CHERISHED CHESTNUTS RETIREMENT HOME - EVENING

Jim remains nonplussed.

JIM
Bu...how?!

The witch chuckles and descends to the window, sees Clare and the residents in a blind panic and clicks her fingers.

Jim turns his head, looks down to find they've all been turned into gnomes.

JIM
Gn...gnomes?

WITCH
Yes.

She clicks her fingers again.

The 'thing' clutching Jim becomes visible.

Shiny red boots. Black dungarees with orange buttons. Yellow shirt with white polka dots. White beard, blue pointed hat and flashing red eyes.

A gargantuan garden gnome, bearing cracks from head to toe.

WITCH
Gnomes.

The terracotta terror tightens it's grip.

Jim turns purple.

The witch tickles her monster's beard.

WITCH
Go ahead my ornamental ogre.
Finish the job.

It's stomach rumbles once again. It salivates soil from the corners of it's mouth and let's out a deep, throaty chuckle.

JIM
Gah! P-please!

MOMENTS LATER...

It opens it's mouth and showers Jim in soil.

Toxic soil that strips away his flesh until he's nothing but bone.

WITCH
Happy halloween.
Kaahahahahhaaaaa!

The beast drops him before demolishing the entire home.

The Goliath of the garden lets loose the most ferocious roar yet as it stands on top of the rubble.

Victory.

FADE OUT