

The Gnomes' Stone

A jig for three couples in a straight four-couple set

BARS	DESCRIPTION
1–8	1st and 2nd couples dance four hands across and back. 1st man finishes facing out.
9–12	1st couple pull right shoulders back. 1st woman, followed by her partner, casts off to finish in the middle of the set in 2nd place. 2nd couple step up on bars 11–12.
13–16	1st couple turn with the right hand one and three quarters round to finish in promenade hold, woman on her partner's right, facing the women's side. Meanwhile, 2nd and 3rd couples chase clockwise halfway round the set to finish in diagonally opposite places.
17–20	1st couple (in promenade hold) dance a half reel of three with first corners, giving right shoulder to 2nd man to begin.
21–24	2nd corners dance the track of a half reel of three while 1st couple dance up, drop right hands, then cross to cast off on opposite sides to finish in 2nd place. (In effect, 1st man finishes the half reel of three while 1st woman casts out of the reel.)
25–28	1st man dances a half figure of eight round 3rd man while 1st woman dances a half figure of eight round 2nd woman.
29–32	2nd, 1st and 3rd couples turn partners with the right hand once round.
Repeat, having passed a couple.	

For the dancers at the Proitzter Mühle, Whitsun 1999.

The "Gnomes' Stone" (der Zwergenstein) near the Proitzter Mühle marks the entrance to the subterranean abode of a tribe of gnomes in a local folk tale.

At the Whitsun workshop, 1999, the Proitze dancers presented me with a beautifully illustrated children's book by Susanne Laschütza, telling the story of the Gnomes' Stone. This inspired the movements of the dance, starting with the gnomes surreptitiously grinding their corn at the Mill (bars 1–8) before being surprised by a group of farmers (beginning of bar 9) and having to retreat to their lair under the stone, pursued by the farmers (bars 9–16). In the tale, a farmer and his farm hand proceed to kidnap one of the gnomes as a children's playmate; this gnome subsequently escapes overnight, and on the second attempt the farm hand vanishes in the gnomes' cave, never to be seen again (most of this could be read into bars 17–28). Since that time, the entrance to the gnomes' abode remains sealed, but the stone can be visited during an easy walk from the Mühle.

Note: The turn in bars 13–16 may be danced three quarters round instead of one and three quarters round if dancers do not feel the need to escape from a group of angry farmers.