

— Connecting Hearts and Generations —

GUSTA & GUSTO

HORNS & HEARTS IN RHINO COUNTRY

Book 1



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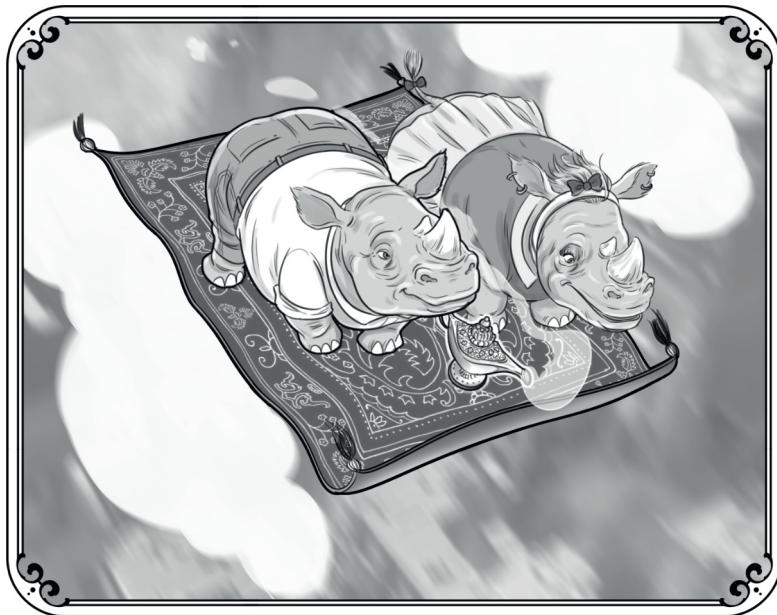
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Gusta and the Magic Lamp

“Me gusta a bailar, me gusta a bailar.”

Gusta, the Rhino Lady wanted to dance, jump, sing the most beautiful songs surrounded by glittering stardust, and admire the world, by travelling with gratefulness on a flying carpet, sparkling joy and comfort from above. This was Gusta’s secret wish, hidden for a long time in her heart.

“Wow, this would be a great thing – such a flying carpet!”

Years ago, when Gusta’s grandfather was still alive, she remembered he used to tell stories about the flying carpet. Gusta often thought of these carpet stories and, of course, of her grandfather. *How* her grandfather told the stories was just wonderful!



Whenever the evening sky turned warm pink-orange-purple, her grandfather sat under his lemon tree, and Gusta was always allowed to sit next to her grandfather whom she admired very much. Then, Gusta’s grandfather began to tell stories about the flying carpet, and Gusta’s grandmother always brought warm mint tea. All the rhinos, and friends, and neighbours, and neighbours of friends, sat in a big circle around Gusterro, Gusta’s grandfather, and listened to his stories. Meanwhile Gusteta, Gusta’s grandmother, always ensured that everyone had enough tea.

And grandfather Gusterro told, in his deep, warm voice, how the beautiful carpet shone in all the colors of the rainbow. The miracle carpet was very light and flexible in the air, sometimes flying slowly and smoothly and then again jaggedly fast when it took a turn to get from one continent to another. And despite the lightness of the carpet, it was stable and robust.

Gusta's grandfather explained, you always felt safe on the carpet. For example, when it was cold flying over Greenland, the carpet magically warmed its passengers. And when flying over a hot country, like a desert, you felt this gentle cooling, softly enveloping breeze, as if a pink cloud was embracing you.

One should have such a carpet, Gusta often thought when she rested on her old perforated carpet after her mud fun bath. She let herself dry by the sun and looked into the blue sky, watching the two or three little clouds that sometimes passed by.



And then, suddenly, today of all days, there was a vast noise.

Tatada klirr and *tatada klang* and *klirrklangklong*. Oh no! Gusta woke up from her daydreaming and immediately sat up, like a jagged rock, and looked around sharply. Oh dear, she could guess who that was.

“Gusto, are you okay?”

Gusto stepped out of his workshop. He was colored green, yellow, light blue, white, and pink because when he was looking for something on the top shelf, all the paint pots above him fell out. A soup pot was hanging on his horn and something was hanging behind his ear too.

“What is that?” Gusta rushed to Gusto and removed an old bicycle chain dangling behind his ear.

“I was just looking for something,” Gusto explained, slightly irritated.

“Gusto, it just doesn’t work like that. Look at your workshop. The chaos is getting bigger and bigger, and now, this bicycle chain dangling behind your ear. I am glad we gave away the motorcycle. Your

workshop is not a highway, Gusto. It just doesn't work like that. I'm very worried, Gusto."

"Worried?" asked Gusto. "About me?" smiled Gusto at Gusta.

"No! Because of the workshop ... or no, because of you or both ... or no, because of me, especially me, I can't stand this mess! Gusto, you're getting me all confused. And anyway, that's not the question here. The chaos has to go!"

Gusto didn't know whether he should smile or cry and did both. Smiling slightly tense at Gusta, a thick teardrop from his left eye dropped loudly onto the ground.



Now they started to clear everything out of the workshop.

"Why is there so much in this workshop?" Gusta wanted to know. "You can't need all that. Get rid of it."

Gusto explained to Gusta that these were not just his things. When he was still alive, Gusta's grand-

father had also brought many things into Gusto's workshop. He could not say, "No".

"Grandfather Gusterro and Gusteta?"

Now, Gusta also didn't know if she should laugh with joy or cry because of the chaos. Gusta then also did both. She smiled slightly tense at Gusto and released him from the soup pot on his horn. From her right eye, a thick tear clonked onto the tinny soup pot bottom.

Oh dear, thought Gusta, this is how history catches up to you, to us.

The whole potting shed was cleared out, but it seemed as if the mess kept growing back. It was so much, as there had been generations of stuff accumulated. There were even old film reels that were used a long time ago to play movies. For example, there were Charlie Chaplin films, one with a greeting written directly on the film reel in white chalk:

For my dear friend Gusterro and his wife, Gusteta – with warm greetings, your Charlie