

Chapter Four

The Carousel

GETI RAN as fast as she could in the direction of the Ferris wheel, and just beyond it she spotted the merry-go-round. Ordinarily she would have stopped to admire the magnificent animals on the carousel. They were large and colorful, and looked so real it was hard to believe they were carved from wood. But there was no time for that now.

Just as Dune had promised, there was an empty spot between the tiger and the elephant. The merry-go-round slowed to a stop to let some children off, and other children rushed to climb aboard. In the hustle and

bustle, Geti was able to slip through the crowd unnoticed.

She hopped onto the platform and tried to catch her breath. Holding her head high, she stood as majestically as she could in place of the giraffe. The colors in her long coat glistened in the sun, and Geti looked as though she were a statue handsomely painted in red and gold and orange.

The children were choosing their animals with great care. “Which lovely animal do you want to ride?” Geti heard one mother ask.

To her dismay, a little voice shouted, “I want to go on the doggy!”

“The dog is the only animal without reins to hold. Why don’t you go on the ostrich instead, Danny?”

“I WANT TO RIDE ON THE DOGGY!” little Danny insisted.

“Well, okay,” his mother relented. “Hold on very tightly to the dog’s ears, so you don’t fall off.”

Geti tried to remain perfectly still while the child climbed onto her back. “Giddyap,” he yelled as he poked the heels of his shoes into her sides. Music flowed from an organ in the center of the platform, and the merry-go-round began to glide. Geti wasn’t sure which was worse, the boy bouncing on her back and tweaking her ears, or the topsy-turvy feeling that swished in her stomach as

the carousel carried her round and round and round.

“Burrrip!” A big belch escaped from Geti’s lips, and the child immediately cried, “This dog is alive, Mommy. It’s really alive.” Danny’s mother smiled and waved, the boy thumped up and down on Geti’s back with excitement, and Geti blurted, “Burrrip! Ouch! Burrrip!”

Once her queasiness settled down, Geti tried to keep her body tense and motionless, only allowing her eyes to dart about. She caught sight of Dune and Cushman for a few seconds each time the carousel completed a full circle. The jolly bear was walking on his hind legs, happily slurping ice cream from a huge container he carried with his front paws. Cushman gently led him with a leash. The park visitors stepped aside to give them room to walk, but applauded and laughed, seeming to believe that this was a show for their entertainment. Cushman had a broad grin on his face, and occasionally took a deep bow.

Cushman was a big fellow wearing red suspenders over a shabby white undershirt. The suspenders held up dark blue pants, which rested just below his heavy belly and hung an inch above his mud-covered shoes. His grey hair was combed straight back from his forehead, and he had a long mustache drooping around his lips. He wore glasses over his steel-blue eyes.

Geti didn’t think the man looked very threatening at

all. *Could the frog have been wrong about Cushman?* she wondered. Dune didn't seem afraid of him. *But I'd never want to be caged in a zoo, no matter how much ice cream I was offered!*

Geti's body ached. With Cushman out of sight, she rearranged her position to get a bit more comfortable. The child on her back screeched again. Just when Geti decided she couldn't stand the carousel for one moment longer, it glided to a stop. Children jumped off and children climbed on, and when everyone was settled, Geti was gone.



