

ACE and
the
ANIMAL HEROES
The Big Farm Rescue



JB GILL



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*For my Ace and my Kiki Bear – thank you for the
inspiration. And to my Chloe for your belief in me.*

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Grandparents really are the **BEST** kind of parent. Well, at least that's what Ace Sinclair always told himself and his friends. 'Because grandparents have the word "**grand**" in their title,' he would say in an extremely matter-of-fact tone. And the truth was that Ace's grandparents were the grandest of any of them. They had lived together at Number 11 Helix Gardens in a white house with a royal-blue door since Ace was two years old. He couldn't remember much about his own



parents, but Gaga and Gigi had told him so many wonderful stories about them that it didn't seem to matter one bit.

'Gaga' was the first word Ace ever spoke. Nobody could quite believe that he'd said it because Ace's mum had called her own grandfather 'Gaga' when she was little! So Gaga it had always been, and it suited him perfectly.

Before he'd become 'Gaga', Daniel Patrick O'Sullivan had had many different jobs in his seventy-four years of life. He'd been a bricklayer, a firefighter, a driver (although not the racing kind, like Ace's favourite sportsperson, Lewis Hamilton), an insurance broker, a Savile Row tailor and even a florist!



He had retired a total of three times and that meant that he'd received his pension on three different occasions, but Ace still hadn't quite worked out what a pension actually was.

Gaga told the best jokes, but he also had a **terrible** habit of laughing at the punchline before he'd actually finished telling the joke. Nevertheless, Ace would laugh every time because Gaga laughing was always funnier than the joke itself.



Everyone loved Gaga. As soon as he spoke to anyone, they felt like they'd known him for years, and if anybody ever mentioned the word 'Ireland', well, let's just say any chance of sticking to the rest of the day's schedule was pretty much over.

When it came to fashion, Gaga was completely unique and unmissable. You could always find him in a crowd because he insisted on wearing the brightest and loudest shirts for almost every occasion. And today was no exception.

Gaga **bounced** into the kitchen wearing a shirt that was as pink as the inside of a grapefruit, wide open at the collar with the sleeves rolled up to just



below the elbows. Gaga sometimes forgot to take his pyjama shorts off before breakfast but today he had donned a pair of pale pink chinos, which, despite being a completely different shade of pink, matched his shirt surprisingly well. On his feet, he wore light brown, furry slippers – a present Ace had bought him for Christmas. He. Felt. **FANTASTIC!** Even if he did look and sound rather like a flamingo.

‘Goooooooooooood morning, all! Good morning, all! How are we all on this fine morning!’ he sang at them.

Gaga was a talented man in many ways, but singing was NOT one of his strengths. Before he could blast out



another off-key, flamingo-esque tune, Gigi brushed past him like a breath of fresh air on her way to the fridge.

‘Morning, Danny boy!’ she said to Gaga. She gave Ace a big, sloppy kiss on his forehead as he sat down at the breakfast table and then a mischievous wink, before whispering, ‘It looks like someone got up on the right side of bed this morning, didn’t they!’

Ace grinned back at her. There seemed to be something special in the air today.

Ace’s Gigi was equally as incredible as Gaga. Carmen Judith George was an extraordinarily glamorous woman. She dressed the part, she looked the part, she even smelled the part.



Even though Ace thought she was the grandest of grandmothers, Gigi was very clear that she didn't like being called 'Granny'. Instead she came up with Gigi – one 'G' standing for 'Granny' and the second for her surname, 'George'. It took Ace a while to be able to pronounce it, but the name had stuck and now he never called her anything else.

Gigi loved to travel, and the first entry on her bucket list currently read: '*Visit every country in the world.*' Of course, Gigi hadn't even been to half the countries in the world, but she was a cup-half-full type of person who always looked on the bright side.

She had a brilliant creative mind, and



had been an engineer and an inventor with business cards that read:



But those days were all ‘once upon a time’, as she would say.

Gigi was born on a small island in the Caribbean called Antigua. Ace had never been, but Gigi would tell him stories of its 365 beaches (one for every day of the year!) and how she’d left the beautiful beaches behind to live in London when she was only ten – the same age Ace was now. Her mother had decided to come to England to train as a nurse after she and



Gigi's father got divorced. Her training meant long and tiring shifts, so Gigi often had to live with friends and relatives when she was little.

She told Ace that she had sometimes felt lonely during those years, but she knew that you had to work hard to achieve your dreams and that her mum was trying to build a better life for them both.

Gigi had studied and built up an engineering empire from scratch. As engineers go, she was the very best of her kind and she often applied those creative and technical skills to everyday life. For example, she developed a recipe for her world-famous spare ribs, which were – according to Google and verified by *all*



of Ace's school friends – the best ribs in the whole world. Her breakfasts had also achieved legendary status.

Speaking of which, Gigi was putting the finishing touches to a perfect stack of six pancakes and, as she set the plate down in front of Ace, his eyes couldn't help but expand to the size of the saucer holding Gaga's tea!

'Gigi!' he said. 'I thought we only had pancakes at the weekend!'

Gigi flashed another of her heart-warming smiles and replied, 'Well, I'm not sure why, but I woke up today feeling like it was a **special occasion**.'

Ace smiled at her, then looked back down at his plate.





‘What did you put in them this time?’
he asked. He knew Gigi loved to talk
about her latest culinary inventions.

Gigi returned to flipping pancakes as
she answered. ‘Today, I conducted a little
taste test to see which ingredients would
work best with each other. I know you
love lemon and sugar and, of course, those
go so brilliantly because one is bitter and
the other sweet. So I tried out a little kiwi



with some lime that was left over
from last night’s dinner,

then some grapefruit

with banana, and then,

finally, blueberries, raspberries



and mint. Why don’t you

have a taste and see



which one you think works best?’

Ace grinned as he tucked into his pancakes. He wished he could be just as brilliant as Gigi, but he was really more of an all-rounder. He wasn’t the absolute best at anything, but he could be pretty good at almost everything when he was trying his hardest. Gaga said that Ace hadn’t quite found what he was best at **yet**, but he was bound to one day.