

5 Flowers, 4 Stories, 3 Cheers for Animals!



ZINNI'S STORY ¡Bienvenido a México!

Welcome to Mexico! Zinni, the zinnia, opened her photo album. It was filled with pictures of her visit with her family in Mexico. The flower friends loved seeing pictures of Zinni's colorful cousins. They were lavender, pink, purple, rose, and even yellow.

"All beautiful *colores*," Zinni said proudly. "*Colores* is the Spanish word for colors."

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Zinni turned the page. The flower friends squealed with delight. A tall, brown horse gazed out with gentle eyes. The horse reminded Zinni of an adventure at her cousins' farm in Mexico.

Each morning at the farm, Zinni and her cousins woke up to the loud **cock-a-doodle- doo** of a rooster. That rooster was better than an alarm clock!

"A rooster—now that's something we don't hear in our garden," Vi said.

Each morning in Mexico, Zinni went into the barn and brushed the horses' silky coats. Then she fed them oats and apples.

One day, a strong wind blew open the barn doors and blew the oats right out of Zinni's pail! As Zinni swept them up, she heard a little peep coming from one corner. There she saw a fuzzy, baby chick. Zinni bent to pick it up.

"I had to be very gentle," Zinni said. "The chick had just hatched from its egg."



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The flower friends could almost feel the soft fuzz of the little chick. “So if you hadn’t been feeding that horse, and the wind hadn’t blown the oats from your pail, you might not have seen the chick at all!” Tula said.

“That’s right,” Zinni said, “and that’s the horse, right there in my photo album. She’s the reason I was in the barn in the first place.” She pointed to the picture of the horse with gentle **yes**.

“Well, pictures really do tell stories,” Tula said with a smile.

Zinni turned the page again, and the flower friends’ eyes grew wide. They had never seen some of these critters before!

“What is that animal that looks like a little horse?” Vi asked. “It’s cute!”

Zinni explained that it was a burro. The burro carried hay to the barn in a wagon. It also carried the tasty fruits and vegetables that were grown on the farm.

“We ate lots of those vegetables with my aunt’s delicious **quesadillas**,” said Zinni. “We ate peppers, avocados, and beans, too. Those foods are really good — and good for you.”



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"I guess you could say the burro helped everyone stay healthy," said Mari.

Zinni closed her photo album. "There's just one problem," she said.

"What's that?" asked Vi.

"These pictures remind me of all the fun I had in Mexico. But they also remind me that I really miss my family," said Zinni.

"I have an idea," said Gloria. "My family just sent me a postcard from Japan. Postcards are a nice way to keep in touch. Why don't you mail a postcard to your family in Mexico? Then maybe they'll send a postcard back to you!"

"That's a good idea," said Zinni. "I love getting mail; I bet they do, too. Let's all get together and take our picture for the postcard."

"**Cheer-i-up! Cheer-i-o!**" sang Robin, the red robin. "I'll take the picture for you, Zinni. Now, smile, everyone! And say 'Cheese!'"

"No, say '**QUESO!**'" Mari shouted. And then all the flowers laughed.

