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UNICORNIA

The Cupcake Contest



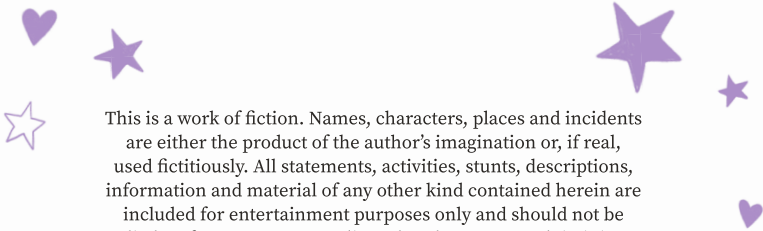
Ana Punset

illustrated by Diana Vicedo

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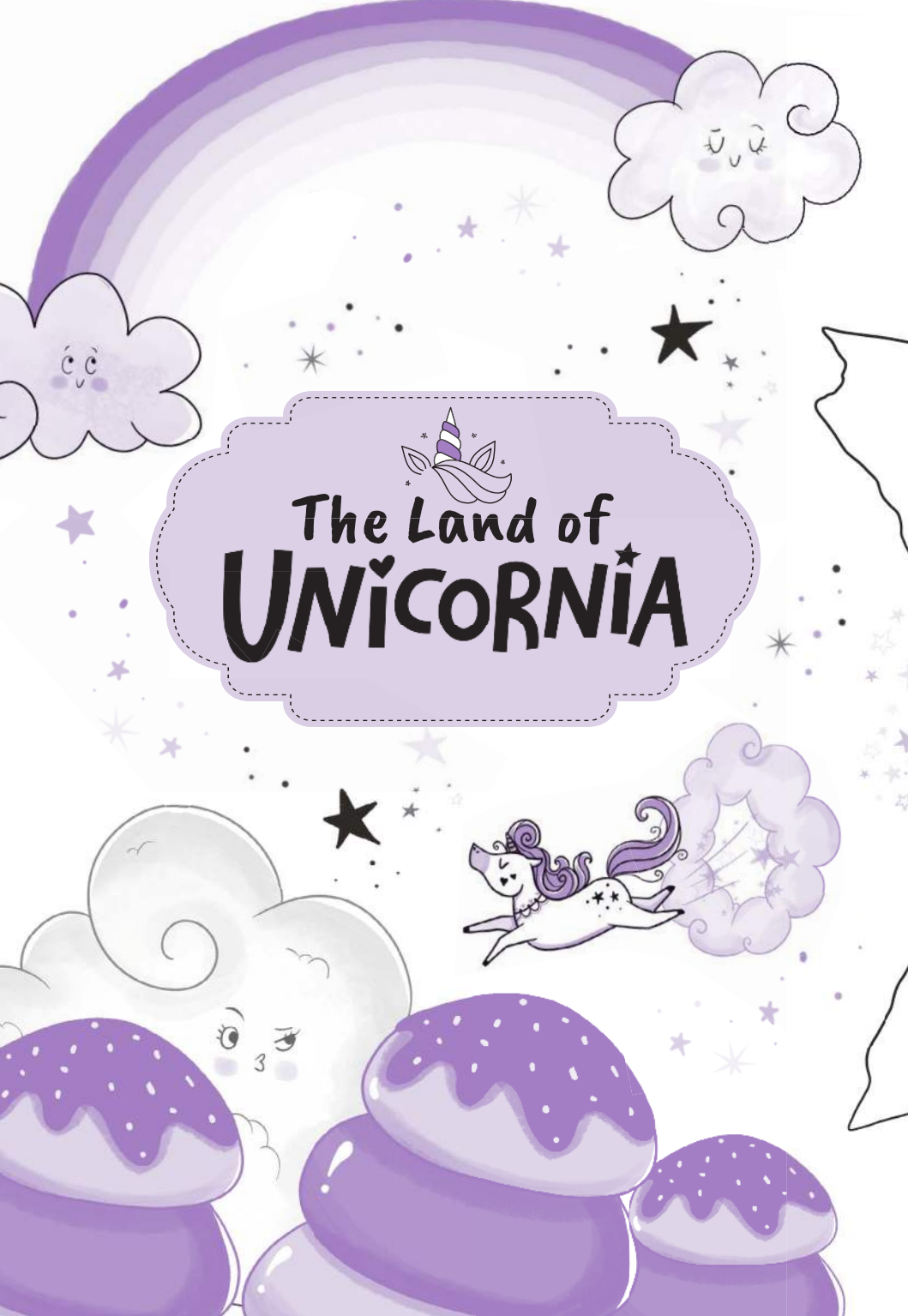
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The Land of
UNICORNIA

Syrup-pumping station

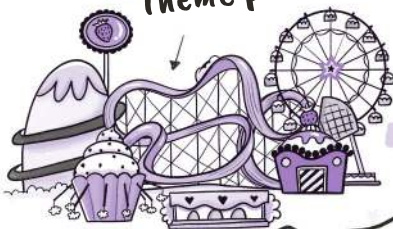


Unicorn shelter

My parents' shop



Enchanted Falls theme park



The Unicornia Academy of Magic



My house



Happy Birthday, Unicornia!





1 Super-Sparkly Birthday!



I've said a zillion times that Unicornia is the most magical place EVER! Well, for the next few days it's going to be *even more* magical. Why? Because it's Super-Sparkly Birthday Party time! You see, this Saturday marks the anniversary of the creation of the Land of Unicorns—in other words, it's Unicornia's birthday! Yippee!







The anniversary celebrates the day that the first family arrived in this amazing land. They had a mission: to protect and care for all the unicorns left in the world and to save them from extinction. And together, we've done it! We've created a place where unicorns can be happy—and happiest of all when they're soaring through the strawberry-sweet skies!



Sara, Pippa, and I decide to take a stroll through the streets of Unicornia to get in the party mood. When we reach the main square, we discover that it's been transformed for Unicornia's Super-Sparkly Birthday Party! A huge tent has been put up where the festival will be held—or at least the parts that will take place on the ground, since lots of them will happen in the sky! How cool is that?!





“They’re getting ready for the skyball match,” Sara says excitedly, pointing at the clouds.

As I glance up, I see a gardener smoothing out the clouds with a giant rake. But that isn’t the only thing that grabs my attention—there’s also a flock of birds singing the most amazing melodies. Our unicorns are up there too . . .

“What are Sam, Pippo, and Chai doing?”

I ask, intrigued.

“They’re practicing a secret routine for the dance gala.”

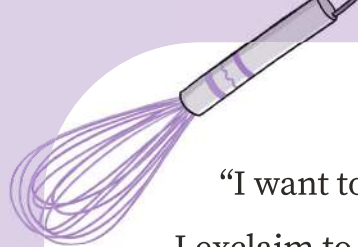


As you'd expect, the celebrations that have been planned aren't the boring kind you might see elsewhere. This is Unicornia—being boring is rarer than a grumpy unicorn!

So the Super-Sparkly Birthday Party festival is set to be extra magical. But when I read the bulletin board that's been put up in one of the tents in the square, I realize just how magical the plans are:

Unicornia Super-Sparkly Birthday Party Festival

- ★ Teachers vs. Students skyball match
 - ★ Unicorn dance gala
- ★ Exhibition of one-of-a-kind objects
 - ★ Magical Cupcake Contest
- ★ A special performance by the Magical All-Bird Band
 - ★ Enchanted fireworks display



“I want to enter the cupcake contest!”

I exclaim to my friends when I read the sign.

“Who’s with me?”

I’ve always loved to bake. Even when I was a baby, I used to crawl into the kitchen to help my mom beat the eggs and stir the cake batter. Multi-flavor icing is my speciality, even if I do always end up covered from head to toe in rainbow-colored splotches!





The best things about baking cupcakes:

- ★ Making lots of mess!
- ★ The smell of melted chocolate
- ★ Testing out new ingredients
- ★ Decorating with every kind of topping you can imagine
- ★ And, of course, the best part of all . . .

EATING THEM!



“Count me out!” says Sara, shaking her head. Her reaction takes me totally by surprise.

“You don’t want to enter? But it’ll be fun . . .”

“Sorry, Claudia. I was built for riding unicorns, not mixing ingredients and making cupcakes. Every time I try, something goes wrong . . .”

“Same here,” says Pippa. “I’m such a bad baker

I could drop a self-flipping pancake!

My grandma has even stuck a picture of me on the kitchen door to ban me from entering!”



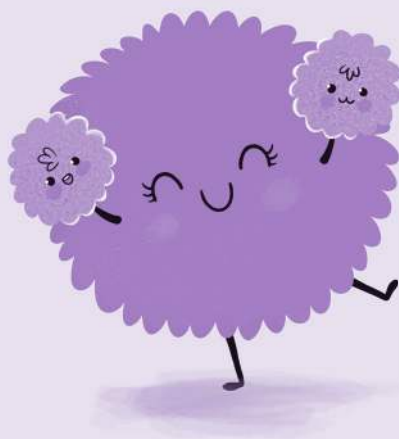


All this makes me feel like a soggy sponge.
I love the idea of the contest, but not so
much the thought of entering alone . . .

“Don’t worry, Claudia!” Sara insists. “Even
though we’re not signing up, we promise to
help you as much as we can.”

“And on the day, we’ll cheer you on and
clap until our hands hurt!” adds Pippa.

“We’ll be your official cheerleaders!” Sara
agrees.





Between them, they grab me and tug me over to a stall that says “MAGICAL CUPCAKE CONTEST REGISTRATION.”



“Remember all those other times you haven’t wanted to do something, and then everything has turned out great,” Sara reminds me.

She’s right, of course. It’s now or never. Time to brave the cupcake contest!

