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Review of Lotta Geffenblad's **Tora och Tytte planterar (2022) and Tora och Tytte motionerar (2023)**

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*Tora och Tytte planterar* (Tora and Tytte Pottering About) and  
*Tora och Tytte motionerar* (Tora and Tytte Exercise) by Lotta Geffenblad  
Reviewed by Maria Lassén-Seger

(Blurb) In Lotta Geffenblad's life-affirming and humorous picturebooks about the lovably odd couple Tora and Tytte, size does not matter if you care for one another. Together the couple explores everyday chores with unexpected, hilarious results and a deep sense of the small pleasures of everyday life.

Meet Tora – a kind giant of a woman with bright yellow skin and tattoos scattered all over her bulging, muscular arms – and her tiny pink partner Tytte, who is four times smaller yet just as capable. Together the pair undertake everyday chores at home, which have a habit of getting out of hand and causing hilariously unexpected complications.

In *Tora och Tytte planterar* (Tora and Tytte Pottering About), the two set out to plant bulbs in pots in order to grow flowers. However, Tytte's very bulb-like hairdo causes Tora to mistake her small companion for one of the flower bulbs. As a result, Tytte accidentally ends up in one of the pots. Covered up to her nose in earth, Tytte has no means to alert Tora to her disastrous mistake as she falls asleep on the sofa having finished her planting chores. Who will come to Tytte's rescue?

In the recent follow-up to the series, *Tora och Tytte motionerar* (Tora and Tytte Exercise), the odd couple decides to have a proper workout. Skipping rope and lifting weights – or “dangling” weights as Tytte prefers to do – they end up concluding that dancing, in which everyone can join in, is the best exercise of all. Because of the physical activities, Tytte is soaked in sweat and ends up taking a secret bath in Tora's teacup, adding a much-appreciated flavour to the beverage. If these attempts at summarizing each plot seem strange, just read the books and you will see that it all makes perfect sense.

Lotta Geffenblad is an experienced animator and picturebook artist with well over 50 picturebooks on her résumé. She has gained a reputation, as well as several awards, for her unique style and quirky sense of humour, which appeal to readers of all ages. In the Tora and Tytte books, Geffenblad gently subverts preconceived notions of age and gender, representing the odd duo getting along excellently despite their differences in size. Whether these protagonists are adult and child, mother and daughter, a same-sex female couple or simply friends living together is never clarified, but up to readers to decide for themselves. Cat and mouse are also part of the household. They make up a parallel pair to the protagonists and readers can follow them mainly in the visual narrative, where they experience their own adventures alongside those of their mistresses.

The Tora and Tytte picturebooks offer high-spirited situation comedy, cleverly communicated through the verbal and visual narrative. Geffenblad's skills as an award-winning animator has made a clear impact on her picturebooks in that they continuously play with warped perspectives and a font size that shrinks and expands. Every spread is infused with a sense of life and movement, which draws readers effectively into the topsy-turvy oddball world of Tora and Tytte. But most of all, Lotta Geffenblad's unrestrained use of bold, brilliant colours comes across as fireworks colliding with rainbows. Exploding with radiant colours, the Tora and Tytte books upgrade mundane everyday life into a never-ending, sparkling adventure enjoyed by everyone in their own fashion.

*Tora och Tytte planterar* (Tora and Tytte Pottering About) by Lotta Geffenblad. Bonnier Carlsen, 2022, 25 pages.

*Tora och Tytte motionerar* (Tora and Tytte Exercise) by Lotta Geffenblad. Bonnier Carlsen, 2023, 25 pages.

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Lotta Geffenblad's awards include e.g. Elsa Beskow-plaketten (The Elsa Beskow Plaque) 2009 and Otilia Adelborg-priset (The Otilia Adelborg Prize) 2018.