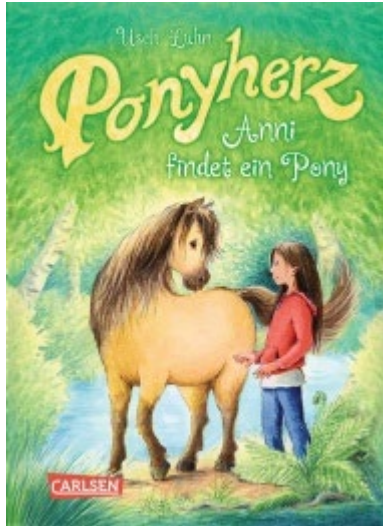


**Usch Luhn: Vol. 1, PONY HEART – ANNI FINDS A PONY****Illustrations by Franziska Harvey****Bd. 1: Ponyheart – Anni findet ein Pony**

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Age: 7+ | 128 pages | 978-3-551-65251-5 | pub date: March 2014

**ENGLISH SAMPLE TRANSLATION**

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Rough translation

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## Guinea Pig Morning

"Fiep! Fiiiep! Fiiiiiep!"

It is a very early summer morning.

Anni is still asleep, her face buried deep in her pillow.

A tiny snout approaches Anni's ear. She sniffs. And nudges impatiently in the middle of the ear.

"Ewww!"

Anni shoots up like a rocket.

The guinea pig flees behind the pillow.

"What was that?" exclaims Anni, rubbing her ear.

Just as she is about to snuggle up again, she discovers a pair of thin antennae.

Whiskers!

"Ronja, you rascal!" Anni giggles.

The cage on the floor is wide open. A second guinea pig has just burrowed out of the litter.

"Well, great. Now we've woken Rudi up."

Rudi scurries around the room and jumps exuberantly in the air.

"All right, friends!" Anni grins. "I know all about it."

Anni swings her legs over the edge of the bed and sits Ronja on the carpet.

She skilfully builds the perfect guinea pig obstacle course out of Legos, her thick pencil case and clothes pegs. Then she takes out two nibble sticks from her stash. Ronja scampers off. With the treat firmly in her sights, she hops effortlessly over the obstacles.

"Not bad, Mrs Woodpecker!" Anni giggles. "You're the first, as always!"

She gives Ronja the well-deserved pole.

"Now you, Rudi!", Anni calls.

Rudi the guinea pig is not as ambitious as Ronja. And not as hungry. He simply rolls over everything that gets in his way. Finally, he hides under the opened pencil case and starts to gnaw the eraser off Anni's pencil.

"Are you crazy?" cries Anni indignantly.

At the same moment her alarm clock rings.

Anni pauses.

Once again she has a super stupid day at school ahead of her with Pia, Bine and the other silly girls from her new class. They talk about nothing but their great horses and the next horse show.

Actually, that wouldn't be so bad. Because Anni really likes horses.

But with only two guinea pigs in the hutch, it's hard for her to have a say.

She lures Rudi and Ronja into the cage with a treat and locks it.

She hurriedly washes her cat and puts on her favourite red shirt.

She always wears her favourite thing anyway, day and night: the silver necklace with the little heart. It is a gift from Mara. Since Anni moved away from Hamburg, she has not taken the necklace off once.

At the last moment she remembers that she has forgotten something important. Anni keeps her drawing book under the edge of the carpet by the window. In it, she draws her secret horse story every free minute.

She hastily puts it in her backpack and runs to the kitchen so that she can have breakfast before the school bus arrives.

## Big-Hottendoof

Anni has been living with her parents and her little brother Lars in Groß-Hottendorf for six months. Far away from Hamburg and her best friend Mara. The new house is huge and has a garden with lots of fruit trees. When Anni runs across the meadow, she only has to jump up a little and she grabs a mouthful of sweet cherries. Since yesterday, the first apple on the apple tree in front of her room is as red as Snow White's. And directly behind the garden, the garden already begins to grow. And directly behind the garden, the forest already begins.

It's actually really nice here.

But still: whenever Anni thinks of Mara and her old school, she gets a very scratchy throat.

"Will you look after Lars this afternoon?" her mother asks when Anni appears in the kitchen. She gives Anni a good-morning kiss and puts a mug of hot cocoa on the table.

"I have to deliver two dozen orchids to the Hottenhöh estate. If things go well, we'll get our first great order to decorate the flowers at the next tournament." Anni's parents are gardeners and grow rare orchids. They need a lot of space for that, so they moved from Hamburg to the empty house of Anni's great-uncle. Her parents proudly call their new house "Orchideenhof". This name is also on the advertising leaflets that the postman handed out right after they moved in. Anni climbs onto the corner bench next to Lars and blows into her hot cocoa.

"Sure, Mummy. I don't have anything special planned anyway. As always."

Her mother looks at Anni scrutinisingly. "Why don't you invite a few girls from your class to join us? I could bake waffles and make ice cream from our raspberries. You like that so much! That Pia Wittenberg, for example, seems very

nice to me."

Anni snorts through her nose like a horse. "Really super nice, that Pia!"

She contorts her face into a grimace and imitates Pia in a stilted tone:

*"I don't ride Tinkerbell in tournaments anymore. She's skittering over the ditch like a plough horse. Totally embarrassing!"*

Lars laughs like crazy. "Totally embarrassing!" he shrieks enthusiastically and lands his digger right next to Anni's cup. Lars loves his digger. He even takes it to bed with him.

Now he extends the scoop loaded with biscuits and unloads directly into Anni's cup. The cocoa splashes in all directions and spills on her shirt.

"Ew, you piglet! My beautiful T-shirt!" shouts Anni. She snatches the excavator away from Lars.

Lars howls like a siren.

"Yes, what's the circus at the breakfast table today?" calls Anni's father. He has just come out of the greenhouse and is taking off his rubber boots. "One coffee and a big helping of good humour, please," he says and takes Lars onto his lap.

"You can find good humour elsewhere," grumbles Anni.

"All right. How can I cheer up my big girl?" her father asks as he pours himself a mug of black coffee.

"Hmm." Anni's eyes twinkle enterprisingly. "Have you had another talk about my pony, Daddy, Mummy?" She watches her parents intently.

"Oh, Anni," her mother sighs. "We've been over this topic long enough.

Anni's lower lip begins to tremble noticeably. "But you promised me firmly!" she protests. "You said that if we moved away from Hamburg, I would get my own pony."

Her parents exchange a glance.

"And I want a fire engine!" Lars interjects excitedly. "A really big one! One like Daniel has!"

"That was obvious! The dwarf always gets everything and I get nothing!" exclaims Anni.

"That's all right now, Anni," says her mother. "First of all, Lars isn't getting

anything at all, and secondly, there's a pretty big difference between a toy and a living animal. Learn to ride properly first, then we'll talk more." That is the end of the subject for her.

Anni's father shakes his head. "I don't understand you, Anni. Why do you want your own horse so badly? Because of the other girls?"

"Not at all!" exclaims Anni indignantly. "I don't give a damn about those bitches! But I can ride my own pony much better. Because then it's mine and not someone else's. Like Rudi and Ronja. They're only mine, too."

"Me too!" protests Lars.

"Not at all! These are mine alone. Not even a quarter leg is yours!" She jumps up.

"Anni, I've really had enough now." Her mother's patience is wearing thin.

"Put on something clean and get ready for school. All this bickering will make you miss the bus."

## A wild ride

When Anni arrives at the bus stop out of breath, she only sees the tail lights of the school bus. And Pia and Bine! The girls wave to her from the back seat, giggling.

"Goats!" hisses Anni and sits down perplexed on a large stone.

She could walk back home and ask mum to drive her.

Or wait until the next bus comes and skip German. Mrs. Greenclover has announced that she will write an essay, and she is not in the mood for that now anyway. Mrs. Greenclover, in fact. With her beady eyes, she looks just like Rudi. Unfortunately, she is not as nice as the guinea pig.

On the very first day of school, Mrs. Greenclover put Anni right at the front next to Pia. Pia stared at Anni the whole time as if she were a strange insect. Shortly afterwards, Mrs. Greenclover had a terrible sneezing fit and it turned out that she was allergic to the guinea pig hair on Anni's jumper. Sniffing, she banished Anni to the back of the room with Lorenz. He was not at all pleased about suddenly having to share his table. And with a girl at that.

No wonder Anni doesn't want to go to school any more.

"I'm just playing hooky," she mutters as the doorbell rings behind her.

It's Lorenz on his mountain bike. Of all things.

"Hi, Anni. Not in the mood today?"

Anni shakes her head. "Nope, just missed the bus." She squares her shoulders.

"German is out for me."

Lorenz is silent for a moment. Then he says: "You do know that you will get into trouble with Mrs. Greenclover if you miss your essay? I can offer you a ride on my horse. It's not as comfortable as the bus, but it's just as fast."

He taps his handlebars.

"Are you serious?" asks Anni in surprise.

Lorenz nods patronisingly. "Sure. Or are you scared?"

Cheerfully Anni shakes her head. "Nope, why? No horse is too wild for me."

Lorenz looks at Anni in surprise. "Oh really? I thought girls only liked little horses that trot obediently."

Anni gives him an indignant look. "Now listen! What nonsense! Is my name Pia?"

She climbs bravely onto the handlebars. It wobbles quite a bit. But she doesn't let on.

Lorenz pedals off at top speed.

"Uiiiih!", Anni shrieks. But after the initial panic, she really enjoys it. And when they crash into the schoolyard, Anni is amazed that they are already there. The ride could have gone on a bit longer.

"Thank you!" says Anni and jumps exuberantly off the handlebars. In the process, the drawing book falls out of her backpack without her noticing.

"It was an honour," Lorenz grins.

Anni giggles. "That's what my dad always says."

Lorenz chains up his bike and bends down for the notebook at his feet.

"Yours?" he asks. Before Anni can stop him, he has opened it.

"Wow! What is that? Did you think that up all by yourself?" He continues to turn the pages. "The drawings are really cool! I can't believe you did the horses so well! My uncle draws too. He says heads are really hard. The head of the pony with the white star is the best."

Anni begins to beam. "That's not a star, but a heart on his forehead. It's called Pony Heart and it's totally brave."

Lorenz laughs out. "Pony heart. Nice kitsch. But it fits somehow. It looks just as cheeky as you do. Is that your horse?"

Anni turns bright red. "Unfortunately, I don't have my own horse. It's all just fantasy. The story isn't even finished yet." She quickly takes the booklet from his hand and puts it away.

She has not even shown Mara the drawings of Pony Heart. She is relieved that Lorenz did not gossip about it.



Suddenly she is in a hurry to get to class. She simply leaves Lorenz standing there and runs off.

He only catches up with her at the classroom door. "Really cool, your pony heart, Anni," he repeats and taps on her backpack. "If you feel like it, you can come to our farm and sign off on horses there."

Crass. Anni is stunned and stands rooted to the spot. She has wanted to see a real horse farm for a long time. It's much more exciting than an orchid farm.

Apparently the other girls have seen that Lorenz has taken Anni on his bike. They stand in a circle around Pia and whisper fiercely.

Anni can guess why. Some of them think Lorenz is quite cute, she overheard in the schoolyard.

When Anni passes them, they fall silent and stare at her curiously.

There's no way I'm inviting those bitches over for waffles, Anni swears to herself at that moment. And what if Mum gets her knickers in a twist!

But she would like to visit Lorenz at the horse farm and look at the horses.

Fortunately, none of the girls would ever find out.

### **Mrs Green Clover does something mean**

The essay topic that Mrs. Greenclover writes on the board is called:

#### **MY BEST HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE**

"You have enough time. Make an effort and don't make so many mistakes," the teacher admonishes her class.

She sits down behind the teacher's desk. "I'm sure you've all experienced something exciting. The most beautiful essay will be read aloud."

Great. No matter how much Anni thinks about it, she just can't think of anything.

After all, her parents were busy with the new greenhouse around the clock during the holidays. That's why Anni spent most of her time sitting outside in the garden drawing on her pony story. Or helping Lars build a tunnel with his digger. Totally exciting, then.

"Anni Sommer, don't dream again. The task applies to you too!" Mrs. Greenclover drums a biro on her desk and blinks at her impatiently.

Guiltily, Anni bends over her empty notebook. Even Lorenz seems to have an idea. At least he has already written almost half a page.

My best holiday experience was,

Anni begins on the off-chance,

when my pony moved in with us. I was still in bed.

Then Mum called out: "Anni, come quickly to the courtyard!"

When I ran out, my pony was standing there. He looked at me with his big brown

eyes and scratched his hooves in greeting. His coat was very soft. There is a small spot on the front of its forehead that looks like a heart.

I immediately knew a name for my pony: Pony Heart.

I climbed onto Ponyheart's back without a saddle and we rode into the forest.

Every day we experienced something new. Once, a deer even ran along with its young one. The deer were very trusting and I was able to stroke the little fawn.

When it was very hot, we took a break down by the forest lake and Ponyheart drank water thirstily. I swam to the middle of the lake. Suddenly I saw that

Ponyheart was swimming next to me. That was pretty funny!

Although my dad works a lot, he built a new, bigger stable for Pony Heart during the holidays. It's right outside my room, so I can look through the stable window in the evening.

My pony heart and I are inseparable. Every morning when I get up, the first thing I do is say hello to my pony.

That was my best summer holiday ever! Because Pony Heart is the greatest pony in the world.

Anni puts her fountain pen aside and reads through the text again. She doesn't usually like writing essays, but today she is very pleased with her work. She does not find a single spelling mistake.

Lorenz has also just finished. He looks at her notebook. Anni quickly puts her hand on the full page.

The other children are all still writing. Anni looks at the clock above the blackboard.

Mrs. Greenclover has announced a reading exercise for the second lesson. In ten minutes, however, the bell rings for the breakfast break. So there is still enough time for ...

Anni carefully pulls her drawing book out of her backpack and places it over her essay. She looks for her soft pencil in her pencil case and starts drawing. She absolutely has to draw the idea that she is paddling around in the forest lake together with Ponyheart.

It's not that easy to draw a swimming horse. Concentrating, she first draws a sketch. No, she doesn't like it yet.

So her pony heart looks more like a hippo with its mouth open.

Dissatisfied, she erases the head again and starts anew.

Much better! Maybe she can even make it look like she's putting her arm around Pony Heart's mane while she's swimming.

Anni is so absorbed in her pictures that she doesn't even notice that Lorenz is watching her draw with curiosity.

But someone else has become aware of Anni. Mrs Green Clover.

Unlike Lorenz, she doesn't seem to like what she sees. At the same moment as Lorenz nudges Anni in the side with his elbow, Mrs. Greenclover is already standing in front of Anni.

"So you call that writing an essay?" she asks sternly, blinking hard.

Anni drops her pencil in shock. It rolls right in front of Lorenz's foot.

"I finished a long time ago, Mrs. Greenclover," she stammers sheepishly and casually slams the drawing book shut.

Mrs. Greenclover grabs the notebook and flips through it impatiently. "So quickly? I'm not used to that from you, Annie. Besides, that's no reason to doodle around while you're bored. You'd better have done the reading exercise already. Am I right?" She looks at Anni expectantly.

Anni does not answer. She finds it totally nasty that Mrs Greenclover calls her drawings doodles.

"Suddenly mute?", Mrs Greenclover asks indignantly. "Oh, you know what, Annie? We'll make a deal: I'll take custody of your painting skills until I've read your essays. So I can be absolutely sure that you won't miss anything in my lessons." The bell rings for recess. Mrs Greenclover pockets Anni's drawing book and disappears from the classroom.

Pia gives Anni a strange look.

Anni quickly turns her head away. She really doesn't need another stupid saying right now! Hot tears rise in her eyes.

"Man, that was really mean!" Lorenz grumbles next to her. "What does Mrs.

Greenclover have against you? I think your pictures are really funny." He bends down. "Here, your pencil. Can you draw dogs too? We have a pug, he looks like a riot."

Anni's throat tightens. "Oh, leave me alone!" she hisses. "Nobody likes me. Haven't you noticed that yet?"

She runs angrily into the schoolyard and scrambles to the top of the climbing tower. "Nobody likes me," she repeats defiantly. "And I don't like anyone either." And then she has to cry with grief for quite a long time.