

**Mia Andersen/Hanna Wenzel (ill.): Seaside Sisters.
Lenes Island Summer Bliss (vol. 1)**

Seaside Sisters 1: Lenes Inselfommerglück

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ENGLISH SAMPLE TRANSLATION

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A fresh breeze swept over Lene's arms, small waves lapped at her feet and crushed shells pricked the soles of her feet. Mats and her on the beach. Holding hands.

All against the backdrop of a riot of colour at sunset, just like on the photo poster above her bed.

Mats whispered something in her ear, but the wind swallowed his words. It didn't matter what he said, because ...

"Get up, get up!" a loud voice rang in her ear. "Get up already!"

In a split second, Lene was awake. No sooner had she opened her eyes than she saw the braces-grin of her twin sister Elsa. Typical. Elsa's squeals could rival any seagull's. Lene had only forgotten it briefly overnight.



She rolled onto her other side and squinted her eyes shut again, but the dream had burst like a shimmering soap bubble.

“Last day of school!” cried Elsa, tugging at Lene’s ankles.

Could someone please shut her sister up? Lene knew full well that the summer holidays were starting today. The best time of the year!

Whilst most of her class were going away on holiday, she and Elsa were staying on the island. The *Silbermöwe* guesthouse, which her parents were the second generation to run, was fully booked down to the last little room during the warmer months. That didn’t bother Lene – quite the opposite. She loved the endless summer days on Rosenholm, which smelled of sea breeze, sun cream and wild roses. Which tasted like vanilla ice cream with strawberries. Which felt as soft as the powdery sand on the beach. She took some of it to bed with her in the evenings, because

bits of it were stuck between her toes.

Right behind summer and that island feeling on her



personal ranking list came Mats from her class. Because he'd get any halfwit to copy his work. Because he had a raspy 'wow' voice and round, murmuring seal-like eyes. But Lene had only noticed that a month ago. He'd looked at her so sweetly during break time, given her a fleeting smile, and suddenly her tummy had tingled like fizzy powder.

Fortunately, Elsa finally stopped tugging at her. She sat down next to Lene on the edge of the bed and stroked her hair, which looked like a bird's nest that morning. Quite unlike Elsa's hazelnut-brown

bob, where not a single strand ever strayed from its place. Everything else about her sister was also immaculately groomed at all hours of the day and night.



Her apricot-coloured trainers, her clothes, her nails ... And when Elsa wasn't rudely waking her up, she was the dearest person in the world to Lene.

Understandable, really – after all, they'd known each other since Mum's tummy, where they'd had a brilliant time forming and growing.

"Did you dream about Matsie-poo?" Elsa grinned, her braces glinting as if she'd just polished them.

"Don't always call him that."



“So, did you?”

“Yes!”

Giggling, Elsa pulled the blanket off her and threw it onto the floor.

“You’re such a sea cucumber!” Lene leapt out of bed in one go and chased her giggling sister out of the room. Now she was wide awake. And she resolved to enjoy this last day of school – which, in a way, was also her last day with Mats – like a vanilla ice cream with strawberries.

When, a little later, she burst into the guest room in the basement with a haphazardly scruffy bun, a few guests were already sitting there having breakfast.

“Moin!” Lene called out cheerfully into the room – that was how people greeted one another here on the island at any time of the day or night.



But only the two older men at the table for two returned the greeting. The couple with the little girl, who was fishing a blueberry out of her muesli and smearing it on the table, didn't even look up.

Lene turned into the kitchen, where Elsa was leaning against the sideboard, tucking into her yoghurt. Dad was making coffee; Mum was filling the bread basket.

“Did you sleep well, darling?” she asked, tugging at the scarf in her short hair to straighten it.

Before Lene could reply, Mum scurried past her and out of the kitchen. Mornings were always hectic at her parents' house. That made the twins all the more keen to help them out during the holidays. Elsa loved baking cakes for the buffet. Lene cut up fruit, served coffee and sometimes chatted with the guests too. Just for fun. And because she'd been on the lookout for an interesting topic ever since she'd discovered the '*Wortgewitter*' writing competition for budding journalists online.

Dad pointed to a small bowl of shelled North Sea prawns. “Fresh from Imke’s *fish box*. Help yourself.”

“Maybe later,” said Lene, reaching for the wholemeal toast. Crabs were delicious, but not first thing in the morning, please.

“Er, Lene?” Elsa let out a giggle. “How about a toastie smoothie today?”

Only now did Lene realise that she’d put the toast in the blender instead of the toaster. Mum, who’d come back into the kitchen, started laughing too. Yes, that really was hilarious. And because Elsa was already tapping meaningfully at her sports watch, Lene wolfed down the soggy toast just as it was, popped the lunchbox Dad had prepared into her bag – and off they went.



The school was on the mudflat side of the island, just under twenty minutes’ cycle from the *Silbermöwe*. When the twins were in a hurry, they took the shortcut through the Holmer Heide. If five minutes more or less didn’t matter, they’d pop round to see their best friend Amba from the

the East residential area. Just like today.

Amba wasn't originally from the island; she'd moved here with her parents just before she started school. The three girls had met ages ago on the playground at Weststrand, and after a week of sliding and romping about, they'd become the very best of friends. Ever since, they'd done everything together and messaged each other obsessively in their island chat group. So that none of them missed out on what the other two were up to.

Amba was a brilliant friend. The most brilliant you could possibly imagine. Cheerful, easy-going and never sulky. The fact that she'd been given the nickname 'Fashion Crab' at school – it didn't matter. Amba was always dressed really cool. She wore short skirts with lace-up boots, loved jackets with floral patches, adorned her shiny black hair with clips and scarves, and often had a dusky pink gloss on her lips. Hardly an afternoon went by without Lene, Elsa and her meeting up, and their families were also well acquainted with one another. Amba's mother, Shirina Samant, who was originally from India, was her

GP. They bought bread and rolls from her father, Thomas Lundt, the island baker.

Amba was already waiting impatiently on the street corner when Lene and Elsa cycled up.

“There you are at last!” she called out, jumping onto her bike.

“Lene had to dream about Mats first and make herself a toast-bread smoothie!” Elsa cycled ahead, giggling.

“A what?” asked Amba.

“Elsa’s just daydreaming,” replied Lene, and started pedalling too. The sky was as bright blue today as



it could only be on the very finest summer's days; seagulls screeched as they swooped over their heads, and the fresh morning air cleared their minds.

Just in time for lessons to start, the three of them arrived at school. They locked up their bikes and hurried into the hall, where everyone was scurrying about like ants in an anthill. Lene linked arms with Amba and Elsa, and together they pushed their way through the crowd. Lene wanted to get to the classroom as quickly as possible. Every second with Mats was a vital second – she didn't even know if he was going away during the summer holidays. And perhaps, just perhaps, she'd take a secret photo of him.

"Hey!" A hand landed on her shoulder.

Lene spun round and the blood rushed to the tips of her hair.

MATSI.

He was wearing an orange sweatshirt with the word *HERO* on it and mirrored sunglasses that hid his seal-like eyes. Instead, Lene saw herself reflected in them. Bright red and with her mouth agape.

"Are you coming along later?" he asked, whilst Elsa was in the throes of a silly fit of laughter.



“Where to?” croaked Lene, thinking she’d go anywhere with Mats. To the North Pole, in case of need. But then, preferably without her embarrassing sister.

“The litter-picking event later. *Rosenholm’s sprucing itself up.*”

Right, there was something else. The notice had been up on the noticeboard for a while.

“You’re coming too, aren’t you?” Amba asked, tugging at her crop top, which was rather revealing for a school *report-giving* ceremony.

“Sure,” said Lene. “What about you, Elsa?”

“Fine by me,” her sister grumbled, though it sounded as if she’d rather have gone for an ice cream to kick off the summer holidays.

Mats nodded at them (without his seal-like grin), pushed his sunglasses back into his hair, then ran into the classroom.

“Seriously, Lene,” Elsa whispered in her ear as they strolled leisurely behind him. “You’ve completely lost your sense of taste.”

“And you only like cheesy, romantic book boys with muscles.”

Elsa giggled and Lene was secretly glad that she could admire Mats all on her own. That way, at least, she and Elsa wouldn’t get in each other’s way.



Cigarette butts & *hip-hop*

Mr Petersen was from southern Germany, spoke Bavarian and was the most likeable class teacher in the northern hemisphere. During the last lesson, he passed round a large bowl of sweets, then handed out the school reports without much fuss. There were no unpleasant surprises for Lene. As every year, she'd got an A in German – a matter of honour for her as editor of the school newspaper. Elsa, who was brilliant at drawing, was delighted with her A in Art. Amba celebrated her B in Values and Norms, because in that subject she'd regularly dozed off or painted her nails.

Lene stole a glance at Mats, who was tucking his report away; then Mr Petersen wished them an '*exorbitantly nice*' holiday and they were dismissed.

"Exorbitantly nice!" Amba shook out her long hair,

cackling with laughter as she walked out. “It would be pretty nice if it didn’t rain all the time, wouldn’t it?” She was right about that. The weather at Rosenholm was never consistent. There were days when you’d wake up to blazing sunshine, pop down to the beach in shorts, and suddenly lake mist would roll in. Then, from one moment to the next, it would turn freezing cold.

“As far as I’m concerned, it can even snow,” said Elsa, who loved the cold season more than anything. “It’s always cosy in our bus, isn’t it!”

The rosehip-red bus, which stood in the guesthouse’s garden, was the friends’ second living room. They’d hole up in there when the weather was rubbish; when it was nice, they’d sit on camping chairs in front of it. Lene would tinker with her articles, jot down ideas or edit photos. Elsa would draw portraits and comics, and Amba would sew beads or patches onto

old clothes. Sometimes they’d just chat and tuck into Elsa’s latest cake creations.

The bus used to belong to Granny Almi and Grandad Klaus.



As a couple newly in love, they'd travelled round the world in it. Colourful paintings and floral stickers served as reminders of their wild years. When Grandad Klaus died five years ago, Granny Almi was determined to scrap the bus at the car graveyard. It was as if she wanted to bury Grandad Klaus a second time. Fortunately, Mum and Dad hadn't let that happen and had brought the camper van to the guesthouse grounds. It was meant to serve as original accommodation for holiday guests, but as they weren't keen on dilapidated buses, the twins had taken it over. They'd been looking for a while for a place where they could spend their afternoons with Amba without a parent constantly barging in. With its fold-out table and the two benches – for which Granny Almi had sewn flamingo cushions – the campervan offered plenty of space. Underneath the benches were pull-out drawers, crammed full of their drawing and writing bits and bobs, their sewing kit and whatever else they needed for their hobbies.

“Bye, school,” muttered Lene, turning towards Mats, who had just whizzed past her. Amba needed to go to the loo, and by the time the girls arrived late at the

meeting point in front of the school, all hell had broken loose there. Pupils from all year groups were crowding round Mr Yilmaz, the trainee biology and chemistry teacher leading the initiative. They were scrambling for the protective suits and litter pickers as if there were hardly anything cooler than picking up other people's rubbish during the first few hours of the holidays. Lene, Elsa and Amba managed to get hold of protective gloves and bin bags – at least that was something.

“Do you want one?” Mats appeared as if out of nowhere and held out his protective suit to Lene.

How sweet was that?! But then she replied with the daftest thing she could possibly think of: “I don't need one. I'm not a wimp, after all.”

“Er, no, sure,” replied Mats, and walked over to the other lads.

“Why did you say something like that?” asked Amba. “I thought you fancied him.”

“Because I'm a total idiot.” Lene let out a sigh. At school she was one of the best, but when it came to lads she fancied, she tended to completely fall apart.

Elsa put her arm round her and grinned at Amba. “Do you realise something? For thirteen years I've had this

twin by my side. It's absolutely dreadful. It's a miracle I haven't gone mad yet."

"You're so lucky to have Lene, do you realise that?" Amba replied, dead serious. In her mind, having a sister you were so close to was the best thing ever.

That was true, of course. Lene wouldn't want to miss a single day with Elsa. And it was exactly the same the other way round.

Amba loved her brother Bodhi, who was five years younger, dearly too, but he was, naturally, her little brother and not her best friend.

Lene quickly wrote to her parents to say that she and Elsa would be late because of the environmental campaign, and then Mr Yilmaz gave the signal to set off.

After a detour to the *Kajüte* beach bar, where some of them grabbed a drink, they explored the Holmer Heide. Lene loved the sea of purple flowers, which was more beautiful here than anywhere else in the world. Time and again, her gaze wandered to Mats, who, in his protective suit and mirrored sunglasses, looked as though he were on a Mars expedition. A bit cute, a bit embarrassing.

“It’s unbelievable what people throw away in the countryside!” Amba picked up a dog poo bag with a look of disgust and popped it into the bin bag.

“It’s absolutely awful,” agreed Elsa.

Lene, who’d photographed a pile of cigarette ends and an empty crisp packet for her photojournalistic archive before picking them up, could only shake her head. What on earth were some people thinking?! That the island was their living room, which they were free to litter to their heart’s content with beer tins, cigarette ends and crisp packets?

They carried on towards the sea. No sooner had they crossed the wooden beach access path than Mats dropped the bin bag and slipped out of his protective suit. With a “Hepp”, he tossed it to Ole, then ran a few metres ahead and launched into a breakdance routine that had the sunbathers all around him jumping up from their towels. Fine sand swirled up, people clapped, and hip-hop blared from someone’s smartphone.

Was that cool? Or just plain weird? And why did Lene feel that fizzy sensation in her stomach again? Without thinking, she took out her mobile and pressed the camera shutter.

“What a show-off,” hissed Elsa beside her. “And you’re even taking a photo of him.”

“At least he can do it,” said Amba, who also loved dancing. “Really well, in fact.”

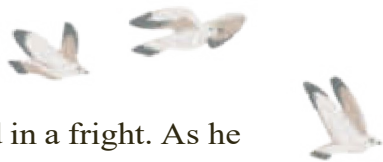
That was true. With increasingly daring moves, Mats whirled across the beach until suddenly his sunglasses flew through the air and landed at Lene’s feet. She bent down to pick them up, but at that very moment a beach-blond girl came dashing over and snatched the glasses away from her.

Before Lene could get upset about it, someone shouted: “Hello! HELLO! Hey, everyone, listen up!”

Lene craned her neck. It was Mats’s older sister Nora, who was helping out as a ranger on the island during the semester break. Mats had once proudly told the class in Biology that she was responsible for protecting endangered animal and plant species. She also organised mudflat walks, repaired fences and planted beach grass.

“You too, Mats!” Nora admonished, as she came running towards them. “And turn that music off straight away!”





Mats plonked down on the sand in a fright. As he did so, he gave his sister such a sweet, seal-like look

that Lene pressed the shutter button again. *Click*. Unfortunately, at that very millisecond, the beach blonde had stepped in front of the lens. She held out his sunglasses to Mats. Who on earth was that girl? She must be a tourist; otherwise, Lene would have seen her at school before.

“Haven’t you heard?” Mr Yilmaz whistled through two fingers. “Emil! Turn the music off!”

At last, the beats fell silent.

“It’s really great that you’re picking up the rubbish!” said Nora, who, with her short, wavy hair, looked older, just like Mats. “But please carry on doing that at West Beach. My boss spotted seals at the southern tip this morning. They mustn’t be disturbed.” Addressing the holidaymakers, she continued: “The same goes for you. If you want to go for a walk... always follow the young people. Right, and have fun.”

Nora gave her brother a nudge – and off she trotted again.

The litter-picking group set off again too.

Lene tucked the bin bag under her arm, overtook Mats and Ole with long strides, and bent down to fish a plastic bottle out of a tangle of seaweed. As she stood up again, she heard Ole say, “Mate, you don’t need to put on a show here. The girls think you’re great just the way you are.”

“Oh, really?” Mats laughed. “Which ones, for example?” Once again, a tingling sensation spread through Lene’s stomach, but this time it wasn’t a crush – it was sheer panic.

Any minute now! Any minute now, Ole would blurt out her name and tell his mate everything: that Lene had been staring at him constantly for at least a month and had been taking photos of him like a madwoman whilst they were dancing earlier. But then something far worse happened.

“That one,” said Ole, pointing diagonally past Lene. Just a moment later, the beach blonde, who’d given Mats his sunglasses back, leapt towards him, snatched his bin bag without asking and said:

“I’ll give you a hand, OK?”

“Er, yeah, okay,” stammered Mats. And it seemed to Lene as though he was blushing a little.

“Cool!” cried Ole. “Then we’ll be done quicker.” That was true, but Lene’s good humour was gone.

She waited for Elsa and Amba, who had fallen a few metres behind.

“Shall we get out of here?” asked Lene. “I’m sort of not in the mood anymore.”

“Because of Mats and that girl?” replied Elsa.

“Nah... I don’t know...” Lene dug her toes into the sand.

“Actually, I don’t even think he’s cute anymore.”

“Well, what a stroke of luck,” said Amba.

“He’s a bit of a dimwit anyway,” said Elsa.

And Amba added: “Then the holidays can finally begin. I’ll ask Mr Yilmaz if we’re allowed to call it quits.”



She dashed off, her crop top fluttering like a little flag in the wind. Lene tied the bin bag shut, but couldn’t resist glancing over at Mats and the blonde girl one last time. The two of them were kneeling side by side in the sand and seemed to be finding something absolutely hilarious. The very next moment, Amba was already back.

“We can. We’re supposed to leave the bin bags by the bins at the beach entrance. They’ll be collected later.”

“Bye!”

“Bye!”

“Have a lovely holiday!” the girls called out to the others. But Mats was so engrossed in his conversation with the beach blonde that he must have had herrings for ears, because he didn’t even notice Lene leave. And she made up her mind then and there to forget that fish-head as fast as possible.