

Brigitte Endres / Vera Schmidt

**The Day my Guinea Pig Turned into a Detective Chief Inspector
(Der Tag, an dem mein Meerschweinchen Kriminaloberkommissar wurde)**

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 Children's novel

About the book

Unconventional and quirky children's novel with the potential for becoming a series

Valentine's parents work as undertakers. The firm is located in the family's house, and as a result the girl is used to seeing coffins and even corpses. Valentine is not even bothered about occasionally being picked up from school in the hearse. The only thing is, she hardly has any friends, probably partly because no one dares to visit her at home. That is why she is so much attached to her guinea pig, Copper, and often confides in Olaf, the guy who gets the bodies ready for the funeral.

One day, when she goes to see Olaf for a chat with Copper in the pocket of her hoodie jacket, a number of unfortunate accidents end up with the guinea pig being electrocuted and having to be reanimated by Olaf.

When Copper comes round again, the confused animal introduces himself as detective chief inspector Kilian Kasimir. The spirit of the dead man has taken hold of the guinea pig. Only Valentine can hear what the guinea pig is saying. Without further ado, Kasimir makes her his assistant; after all, he has a murder to solve. The inspector didn't die a natural death! Together, the odd team start their investigations and in the end discover that Kilian Kasimir was accidentally murdered because the parcel with the poisoned chocolates was delivered to the wrong address. The real victim was to have been Mrs Kasmer, an old lady whose housekeeper wanted to get at her money.

A quirky novel with a lot of humour.

Vera Schmidt (illustrator)

Vera Schmidt was born in Lisbon in 1974 and came with her parents to live in Germany when she was 2. She now lives in Stuttgart. Even while still a child, crayons and pencils were never safe from her and she was forever doodling and sketching on all sorts of surfaces or making flip books and illustrating short stories. With her distinctive style, she now illustrates reading books for Esslinger Verlag.

USP

A very special detective inspector: Mr Kasimir, the guinea pig
Quirky humour, suspense, unusual setting

Sample Chapter

I was tossing and turning in bed for ages before I finally went to sleep, only to have of all sorts of crazy dreams. Then I was woken by a groan I first thought was part of a dream. Then the groan gradually turned into a male voice that didn't fall silent when I opened my eyes and switched on the bedside lamp-

Now, I'm really not a timid person. I don't believe in ghosts or anything like that. But at that moment my blood ran cold. I apprehensively grabbed my glasses and looked round the room. I was aware that Copper was running round his cage, apparently full of life, but that didn't make me feel as relieved as it should have done. My brain had gone into alarm mode.

"What the devil ...!" I heard the voice say. "First that inglorious ending and now this!"

The funny thing was, I couldn't locate the voice properly. It seemed to be coming from somewhere in my head and that made me panic. This here was something completely different from what used to go on with little Henry. I may have been young at the time, but I always knew that little Henry was imaginary and danced to my tune. But I had no control over the voice I was now hearing. It was unrealistically real. I could hardly breathe. After all, psychiatric hospitals are full of people who keep hearing voices. Was I suddenly having schizophrenic hallucinations? "Hello?" I whispered.

"Tell me", I heard the voice say, "tell me it's not true!" I was too confused to answer. "I'm not a golden hamster!" The voice sounded desperate.

I broke out into a cold sweat. Whatever was the matter with me? And why was Copper running round his cage like crazy? Out of the blue, an absurd thought came into my mind but I immediately cast it aside because it was so ridiculous that schizophrenia seemed to me to be the lesser of the two evils.

Copper stopped at the side of his cage, sat up on his hind legs and whistled in excitement. "Am I golden hamster?" the voice said. "Come on, out with it!"

"Is-is that you, Copper?" I stammered.

"Cop? I hate being called Cop!"

"Copper", I repeated. "Copper is my guinea pig."

The voice said nothing. Copper did a complete turnaround, and then the voice said, "Guinea pig – that's not much better, either."

I was totally befuddled, just like when I came round again after my appendix operation. I climbed out of bed with wobbly knees and went over to the cage. "Copper!" I whispered. "Are you okay?"

The guinea pig came right up to the bars of his cage. His whiskers were twitching as if there was still electricity going through them. "Damn it all! I'm not Copper! I'm Kilian Kasimir. Retired Detective Chief Inspector Kasimir. – God knows, being murdered is bad enough, but coming back to life as a guinea pig is about the most unpleasant thing that's ever happened to me. And believe you me, I've been in a lot of nasty situations in my life."

I swallowed and looked round the room again. – Guess I was involuntarily looking for a ghost, just as I had often seen in films, with dead people appearing like projections, transparent and not physical but their human form nonetheless clearly recognisable. All I could see, however, was a guinea pig that was nervously twitching its whiskers. My mind was racing.

"The – the hairdryer", I stammered. "The electric shock ..." I faltered.

"An electric shock?" the voice in my head repeated. "Would you please fill me in with the details!"

As if in a trance, I began speaking while at the same time I was fully aware how ludicrous the whole setup was: I was talking to a guinea pig in the middle of the night.

When I had finished, Copper – or rather Mr Kasimir, which at the time I found difficult to accept – said nothing. "So that was happened", he finally said and ran hectically round his cage. "According to your story, my brilliant mind is in the unworthy body of a rodent and, as a result of a paranormal phenomenon, is communicating with an adolescent brat."

My blood boiled; the subject of adolescence makes my hackles stand up. "Hey, I'm nearly fourteen and you can thank your lucky stars that Copper has sacrificed his body for you."

"I can't remember being on first name terms with you." The voice in my head sounded annoyed. "Call me Detective Chief Inspector Kasimir, or at the very least Mr Kasimir!"