

The Hamburg Superdetectives · Book 1

The Hamburg Superdetectives

and the Shadow in the Speicherstadt

Book 1 · A Hamburg Adventure



READING EDITION · READING LEVEL 3

LINA STORM

a story told with Bennet and Sophia

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CHAPTER

The Houseboat on the Alster



It was one of those Hamburg mornings when the whole city seemed full of wonderful smells: water, fresh bread rolls, and the linden trees blooming along the Alster. A thin mist still hung over the Außenalster, and the sun was slowly drawing it aside like a

curtain. Gulls cried somewhere in the direction of the harbor. A lone rowboat glided across the mirror-smooth water.

At the edge of the Außenalster, tied to a little wooden dock, a houseboat rocked gently. It wasn't the biggest or the fanciest houseboat on the Alster—but it was definitely the most colorful. Its shutters were painted bright blue, its tiled roof fiery red. You could tell the white hull had been painted by hand: brushstrokes showed here and there. And on the chimney, a single word shone in gold letters:

DETECTIVES

Anyone walking past would probably have thought it belonged to a family whose children liked making things. What no one knew was that this houseboat was the headquarters of the Hamburg Superdetectives.

Finn stood on the roof. He was eight years old, with tousled light brown curls, and he was looking through the binoculars his grandfather had given him. About two years ago. Back then, they had been too heavy for him. Now he could use them perfectly. "Today is a great day for an adventure," Finn announced solemnly.

“You say that every day,” Mia called up with a laugh. She sat on a wooden stool on deck. Her two guinea pigs, Lulu and Rocky, dozed in her lap—Lulu with a purple bow on her head, Rocky with a tiny red bandana around his neck. “And most days, nothing happens.”

“Statistically speaking, that’s not correct,” Ben put in. He was just coming up the narrow wooden stairs from the cabin. “Last week, we found the librarian’s missing key. The week before that, Ms. Petersen’s lost hearing aid. And last month—”

“Ben,” Mia interrupted with a smile. “Those weren’t adventures. That was helping people.”

“Today is different,” a raspy voice whispered.

Everyone turned around.

Alva, the black cat, sat on the old bookshelf beside the cabin window. She had settled there without anyone noticing. She often did that. Her bright yellow eyes narrowed to slits.

“What’s going on, Alva?” asked Lia. She was seven and sat cross-legged on the deck, with Charlie, her fluffy red-orange cat, in her lap. Lia could talk to animals. More precisely, she could *translate* their voices—she heard what they were saying, even when

everyone else heard ordinary animal sounds. Whenever the animals said something important, she quickly translated it for her friends. Only Alva was different: everyone on the team could understand her when she spoke. But she preferred to speak in short riddles.

Alva closed her eyes and took a deep breath through her little cat nose. “Something mysterious,” she purred. “Last night at Wunderland.”

“At Miniatur Wunderland?” cried Ben. Hamsti-Hams, his tiny golden-orange dwarf hamster, perched on his shoulder with his inventor’s safety goggles on his head. “I was just there with my mom last week! What happened?”

Mia took out her tablet. As always, a folded street map poked out of the breast pocket of her teal denim jacket. “Here,” she said. “This was in the Hamburger Abendblatt news this morning.”

She tapped the headline.

She read aloud: *“Theft at Miniatur Wunderland. A tiny gold-plated ship has disappeared from the Hamburg model display. Mr. Krause is baffled. The alarm did not go off.”*

“A gold ship?” Greta asked quietly. At nine, Greta was the oldest in the group, and she was stronger than the others. When she had to, she could lift things that even grown-ups couldn’t manage—but that was top secret. No one outside the team knew. Greta only used her superpower to help, never to fight. That was one of her rules.

“Who steals a tiny ship? It’s not even as big as a thumb.”

Charlie opened her green eyes, looked at Lia, and purred in short, questioning sounds.

“Charlie says it’s important,” Lia translated. “Very important, in fact. And it’s not just about the ship.”

“What else, then?” Finn called down from the roof.

Charlie went on purring, more softly now.

“She says,” Lia whispered, “there’s something sad behind it. Something that doesn’t sound like an ordinary theft.”

Everyone fell silent.

Maili, Finn’s golden-brown dog with the white patch on his chest and floppy ears, jumped out of his basket. He gave himself a mighty shake, making his shaggy fur wobble, then let out one

short bark. The tiny gold detective badge on his red collar jingled softly.

“Maili agrees,” said Finn. “We need to go.”

Mia had already taken the big map of Hamburg out of the drawer beneath the wooden table. She spread it out on the deck and tapped a spot with her finger. “We’ll take the detective bike. With the shortcut through the Speicherstadt, we’ll be at the entrance in ten minutes.”

Meanwhile, Ben had put his most important piece of equipment on the table: his big brown leather backpack, with all its buckles and the little antennas sticking out. He quickly checked what was inside. Mini drone. Clue scanner. Powerful magnifying glass. A jar of super-sticky glue he had mixed himself from fir resin and honey. Also a little notebook, three different pens, and an emergency sandwich his mom had packed in a lunch box. You never knew.

“Ready,” Ben announced.

“Let’s go, Hamburg Superdetectives!” cried Finn, leaping from the roof onto the deck.

They ran off the houseboat and onto the dock. The sun was higher now, the mist had almost gone, and the water sparkled across the Alster.

They didn't know someone was already waiting for them at Miniatur Wunderland.

 QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 1

1. ***Do You Remember?***—Where do the Hamburg Superdetectives meet—and how can you tell from the outside that the houseboat is their headquarters?
2. ***Think It Through***—Why is Alva’s clue important—and what clues does the team find afterward that support what she said?
3. ***Imagine More***—What would you pack in your detective backpack if you were coming along?



END OF SAMPLE

What Happens Next?

The complete adventure, “The Hamburg Superdetectives and the Shadow in the Speicherstadt,” is coming soon in English—in paperback and e-book, in all three reading levels.

This Sample: Reading Level 3 · grades 3 and 4 · ages 8–10
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