

## **Erfurt Exchange 2006/ZDF**

### **Item 1: Trixi, the flea**

Trixi wasn't just any kind of flea. Trixi was a dog flea; she lived right inside Fips the mutt's ear. Right in there where his fur was soft, warm and cuddly. Trixi felt at home there. Trixi loved to whisper funny things in her friend's ear. And she was pleased when Fips did just what she wanted. For example, sliding down the giant slide at the playground or swinging so high that Fips' ears touched the trees.

"No respectable dog would do that," thought the other dogs. They stood looking on in surprise and they all agreed, "Fips must have a flea in his ear." Some of them were even envious of Fips, because unlike them, Fips was always so happy.

One day, Fips rolled in the mud. It was wonderfully sticky and smelly mud. Trixi couldn't get enough of it. Enthusiastically, she burrowed around in Fips' fur.

At home, Fips left muddy footprints across the living room carpet. Tim came running in immediately. He had war paint on his face and feathers on his head. "Fips! What have you gotten into? You can't come to the Carnival parade like this! Go! Get in the shower!"

Trixi hated water. She held on to Fips' fur and screamed in Fips' ear, "No, I'm not a water flea! I'm a dog flea!" But it was all in vain. The water rained down on her.

Tim tried the new dog shampoo. The mountains of foam marched relentlessly towards Trixi. They covered her and suddenly she was floating through the air in a shiny soap bubble. "Help me! I want to get out of here!" The soap bubble smelled revoltingly of apple and lemon. Trixi couldn't stop herself; she sneezed powerfully. Bang!

The soap bubble burst. In the same moment, a torrent of water caught her and rinsed her down the drain. Trixi was in darkness. Like on a slide, the flea was swept down an endless pipe gasping for air.

A hard landing ended her fall. She was swimming in the sewer, deep underground.

The water sloshed over her head. With all her might, she managed to grab a piece of straw that was floating by.

Trixi pulled herself up. With a death-defying leap, she then managed to get into a crack in the wall. It smelled really nice there, like rotten eggs and stinky cheese. "Fips! Where are you?" called Trixi. She missed her friend's warm and cuddly fur.

Meanwhile, Fips had run out of the house, soaking wet, to look for Trixi.

The sidewalk was full of knights, princesses, mushrooms, pirates and clowns. They were all waiting for the Carnival parade. Fips pushed himself through the crowd onto the street and sniffed at a manhole. "Where are you, Trixi?" he barked. "Where are you?"

Trixi heard Fips' barking. Excited, she climbed up the cold, damp stone wall.

"I'm coming, Fips! I'm coming!" But in the same moment, the Carnival parade came around the corner.

Tim was the first to see the parade coming and pulled Fips out of the way.

When Trixi got out in the open, it was too late. Fips had disappeared! Instead, a giant piece of candy was flying straight for the flea. "Help!" called Trixi and escaped into a knight's pants. She felt safe from flying candies there.

A princess was singing and dancing next to the knight. She shoved him. "Don't look so glum, Paul. Dance! It's Carnival!"

"I can't dance."

"Everybody can dance," she yelled. "It's very simple! Look! Left leg, right leg ..."

Trixi started to move inside the knight's armor. "I have to get up top," she thought. "I can see where Fips is from up there."

The knight squealed and started hopping around. "Hey! Now you've got it!" called the princess."

"I'm not dancing," he cried. "I'm all itchy and scratchy! Like I have fleas!"

Trixi didn't care. She pulled herself out onto his helmet and looked for Fips. But he was nowhere to be seen.

Everywhere were Carnival floats and candy and people singing and dancing. There! Despite all the noise and music, Trixi could hear Fips' loud, unmistakable barking. "Trixi, where are you? Where?"

As fast as she could, Trixi jumped from a mushroom to a pig to a pirate to a clown and onto a parade float.

On top of it stood the Carnival Prince throwing handfuls of candy into the crowds.

Trixi jumped onto his neck. She could finally see Fips from here. "Fips!" she called. "Here I am! Here!" Trixi's voice was much too soft.

But Trixi was a flea and fleas can really bite. So she bit the Prince in the neck with her teeny-tiny mouth and he started screaming like a fire-department siren.

People laughed and clapped. A clown called out, "Did someone pour itching powder in the Prince's shirt?"

But Fips immediately knew what had happened. Trixi had bitten him!

In a rush, he pushed and shoved his way through the people and leapt onto the Prince's float. The Prince was so surprised that he fell over. "Fips! There you are!" cried Trixi, overjoyed. "I'll never leave you alone again!"

"Me neither," said Fips. "The next time we have a shower, you'll have to tie yourself down."

"Yes," said Trixi happily, "you do have enough hair!"