

## Erfurt Exchange 2006/ZDF

### Item 2: Tino, the softie

Tino is a softie. At least, that's what everyone says. And Tino believes them. When the other children skate on the new half-pipe, Tino stands off to one side and watches, thinking, "I'll never be able to do that!" The others think he never will, too, and laugh at him.

Big Lorenz is the strongest kid. All the children look up to him. But Tino is afraid of him. Really afraid. "He's much stronger than I am!" he thinks. The other kids think so, too, and they laugh when Lorenz goes up to him and messes up his hair. The only one who doesn't laugh is Mareike.

Mareike lives in Tino's building. She just moved in recently. Tino has never asked her if she wants to play with him. "Because she'd never want to!" he thinks. And he knows why. Mareike thinks he's a softie, just like the others.

Mareike likes better to play with her big, spotted dog, Wuschel. He's a giant. Even the other kids are afraid of him. Tino more than anyone! "You can only be my friend if you're friends with Wuschel," says Mareike.

Tino walks sadly down the street. He wishes he were as brave as the others. Then he'd have lots of friends, the kids on the playground and especially Mareike. But Tino is afraid.

Suddenly, a strange hat flies into his face. It's bright and funny looking. Whose can it be?

Tino walks past a newsstand. Two men are standing there talking. "Have you heard?" asks one. "Maxischlendrian the magician has lost his hat."

"A real magic hat?" asks the other.

"Yes! It grants wishes!"

Tino stands rooted to the spot. A wish-granting hat? "Man!" yells Tino. "I found something great! This must be the famous magic hat!" But what should he do with it? He should probably give it straight back to Maxischlendrian. He must need it, right? A magician without a magic hat isn't a proper magician anymore.

"No," thinks Tino. "First I'm going to try it. I can always give it back later. If this hat can really do magic, I can wish myself anything I want!"

Slowly and carefully, Tino puts the hat on his head.

Right then, something big and soft bumps into him. The soft thing goes, "Woof!" Oh no! Wuschel is standing in front of him. He stares at Tino with big eyes. What should Tino do now? Run away? Scream for help?

But isn't Tino wearing the magic hat? Quickly, he wishes not to be afraid of big dogs. Especially not of big, spotted dogs named Wuschel. Carefully he scratches Wuschel's fur. "Well, Wuschel? You like that?"

Mareike watches the two of them. She'd never had expected this from Tino. He's really brave! Tino is amazed, too. With the hat on his head, he's not afraid anymore. He goes over to Mareike. He asks her if she wants to play with him. Of course she does. "But what kind of ugly hat are you wearing?" Tino shrugs. "Found it," he says quietly.

Later, Tino stands at the edge of the half-pipe wearing his inline skates. The other kids are practically falling over laughing. "What's that thing on your head? Is that your new helmet? Or is it to scare the birds?"

Tino isn't put off. "I wish I could skate!" he whispers. He steps out onto the half-pipe and starts skating. Lo and behold! He's a little unsteady, but he gets better quickly. He can even brake! The other kids can't believe their eyes. They skate around him, cheering him on. "You can do it, Tino!" They call. "Super, Tino!" He waves happily to Mareike.

In that very moment, Big Lorenz arrives at the playground on his mountain bike. He plants himself in front of Tino. "What's that stupid thing on your head?" Tino wishes he were really strong and not afraid of Lorenz. He wishes he were 35 times stronger than him. At least! "If you don't leave me alone," he says calmly, "then I will let the air out of your bike tires every day for a year!"

Big Lorenz is dumbfounded. He stares at Tino. The other kids are totally silent. No one had ever dared do anything like that before. Lorenz thinks for a moment, then ... Then he turns around and leaves. He just leaves. The other kids are thrilled!

Tino finally has friends! And all because he was lucky enough to find the magic hat. "There it is!" he hears a voice calling. "My beautiful new hat!" A woman runs up, excited. "I thought it was gone forever!"

Tino doesn't understand. "Is this your magic hat?" he asks.

"What magic hat? No, this hat can't do any magic." The woman gives Tino five euros as a reward for finding it.

Tino pauses, then shakes his head. "What do I need a magic hat for? I am brave the way I am! And I have lots of friends. And Mareike."

Then he treats Mareike and Wuschel to ice cream. A five-euro ice cream with chocolate sauce and Smarties on top.