



by Annette Pehnt
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Children's & Young Adults'

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Annika and Her Mysterious Friends

Annika und die geheimnisvollen Freunde

review

Annika is ill. Her parents do everything they can to cheer her up but the only person who can regularly get her out of her low moods is her aunt Billa, a loud, eccentric character, full of quaint expressions, passionate about nature, and the possessor of an allotment (Annika calls it 'the jungle') which is completely overgrown and a haven for birds and wildlife. When she was well she would sometimes sleep out there. Now, in bed, she longs for those nights again. And suddenly she gets a surprise.

The little creature that appears to her is probably about her height, with a big round belly and gnarled, mud-covered hands. He introduces himself as her garden friend and they fly to the most beautiful garden where everything seems to be in full bloom. She suddenly wakes up and her mother tells her she has been dreaming. But just as she is about to fall asleep again she sees two round green lights shining in the darkest corner of the room – the comforting, big green eyes of her gardening friend.

A lovely fantasy, a perfect read-aloud novel for younger children, and a possible pick-me-up for children who are ill themselves.

about the author

Annette Pehnt was born in 1967 and is the author of novels, short stories and children's books. Her first novel, *Ich muß los* ('I Must Be Off'), won several awards including the Maria Cassens Prize, and

Pehnt received the prestigious Jury Prize at Klagenfurt for an excerpt from her second novel, *Island 34*. Rabea und Marili, Annette's first children's book, published in 2006, also won an award.

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