

MARIANNE ARPIN

**HIGH SCHOOL
LOVE SONGS**

Planet Girl

Hello, Lincoln High

Way too early. Way, way too early! I don't have to get up until 7:00, but here it is, 5:45 in the morning and I'm sleepless in Seattle. Or to put it another way, wide awake in Seattle.

It's the first day of school. I've been waiting for this a long time. I arrived here with my parents on June 30 and now it's September 9. These American summer vacations go on forever!

I'm Amy. And I'm a strange sort of hybrid creature; I'm American, but I've never lived in the United States before. My dad is an opera singer, so my parents moved to Germany before I was born. That's where all those **would-be** Pavarottis go to find work. We live in Bonn. My mom is a teacher at the international school in Bad Godesberg. I started going to that school when I was three, and now I'm 13 (almost 14). My mom has a year long **sabbatical** in Seattle, where our relatives are. So now, for the first time, I'm living in the USA, and today I start going to an American high school. And I am terrified!

At least Uli will be there. Uli Schroeder is my boyfriend, my first boyfriend. And yes, you guessed it, Uli is German! Small world **indeed**. His family is living next door to my



+++ way – viel +++ would-be – Möchtegern +++ sabbatical – Sabbatjahr
(ein Jahr unbezahlter Urlaub) +++ indeed – in der Tat +++

Aunt Laura; his dad works for a German telecommunications company. He has the most adorable twin brother and sister (at least I think so, but I don't have to live with them). I'm their favorite babysitter. That's how Uli and I met. I didn't like him at first, but that's because he is shy and he seemed unfriendly. Uli loves basketball and he's a really good **artist**. He's tall and he has curly brown hair and brown eyes. An older man. I will be starting ninth grade today, and he's in tenth. I think he's more worried than I am because his English isn't so great. But I have been helping him with that (between kisses!).

Just thinking about Uli makes me really happy. We had fabulous three weeks together, after he finally got back from basketball camp. Three weeks of walking in the park together, kisses, visiting the zoo, kisses, romantic evenings at the beach, kisses ... and now, it's back to the **grind**. School, that is.

My family was living with my Aunt Laura for a while, but now we have our own house. It's about ten minutes walk from Aunt Laura and the Schroeders.

A big American dream house, with walk-in closets and huge **appliances**. It's really nice, in an American movie sort of way. But I miss my room in our apartment in Bad Godesberg, and I miss my friends and right now, believe it or not, I miss my school! I know everybody there, I know where everything is. And it's not very big. But Lincoln High School has more than 1000 students. There are more than 300 in the ninth grade alone!

*** *artist – Künstler/-in* *** *grind – hier: Schinderei* *** *appliance – Haushaltsgerät* ***

To say I'm nervous would be putting it very, very mildly. I've been trying different outfits all week; I thought I had made my final decision last night, but now I'm not sure again. First impressions are SO important! You say so much about yourself through your clothing ... and your hair and make-up. I'm a sort of average size, not too thin and certainly not fat, and I have blonde hair. I just got it cut. I want to color it, but my mom says not until I'm 15. My parents are so strict! Things are different now, but they don't seem to notice. I may just sneak off and get my hair colored sometime. Hah! That would serve them right, it would be too late!

So now it's 6:00. I had a weird dream last night about the new school. I went to summer school there, so I know what it looks like, but in my dream, it was a giant **gingerbread** house, like in "Hänsel und Gretel". Uli and I were holding hands, walking up to the front door. I was wearing a Dirndlkleid (I know, I'd rather die!) and Uli was wearing Lederhosen (as if!). The front door was a giant Mandel-spekulatius. The door opened up, and we could see the principal of the high school. At least it was his face, but he had the body of a witch. He was smiling a wicked, witchy smile, and waving us inside. We got close enough to the door that I could see the candy stuck to the outer walls of the school. Uli was reaching for a big red gummi bear, and then I woke up. I'm not sure if I will tell him about the dream, but he did look cute in the Lederhosen. He has great legs!

Uli and I are meeting at the bus stop at 7:45. So I have

*** gingerbread – Lebkuchen ***

loads of time to get ready. I'll need it, in case I change my mind again about what to wear. Earlier this summer, I found a lot of great stuff in my grandmother's basement. She saves EVERYTHING, so some of it is **bound to** be good. With a professional musician and a teacher for parents, we're not talking about **big bucks**, so it really has been helpful to have those closets to **dig around** in. All of the clothes that my mother and my aunt wore in high school are in there. They are all back in style now. There were three pairs of **bell-bottom** jeans that fit me perfectly, a wonderful classic jeans jacket, a **fringed** leather jacket and a matching handbag, and lots of **peasant** blouses and short dresses. I got more new clothes at the mall this summer, but some of my favorite things are from grandmother's house.

So now I've got to do my hair. The new cut is **layered**, so in the front it's about chin length, but it slopes down on the sides, and it's pretty long in the back. It's blonde (not black, like I want it to be), and it has some natural waves in it. Sometimes I pull back the front part, but I think for today, I'm going to leave it down. I might need someplace to hide!

It's time for make-up. I wear mostly eye make-up, eye shadow and eyeliner and mascara, and just a little foundation and lipstick. My make-up usually takes about ten minutes to put on, but I'm a little shaky now, so it takes a bit longer.

*** to be bound to – müssen *** big bucks – ein Haufen Kohle *** to dig around – hier: herumstöbern *** bell-bottom – mit Schlag *** fringed – mit Fransen *** peasant – Bauer(n-) *** layered – stufig ***

“Amy, are you ready? You’d better hurry, or you won’t have time for breakfast!”

So who could eat breakfast? My stomach is in **knots**. I grab my purse and my school bag and go into the kitchen.

“Just juice today, Mom,” I say.

“Well, at least take something with you. You’ll get hungry later on.”

I look around for something, take two bananas from the fruit bowl and put them in my bag. Then I see the newspaper on the table. I always check my horoscope on important days like this. Let’s see, Virgo (that’s “Jungfrau”, since my birthday is September 13). “Be very careful, think before you act. Your new project might seem to start out badly, but in the end, all will be well.” “Be careful”, that’s a good advice. I don’t like the part about starting out badly, but “all will be well” sounds OK. I’ve got to head out now to get to the bus stop on time.

“Have a good day, Amy!”

“I’ll try. See you later!”

The bus stop is half way between Uli’s house and mine. My heart starts to beat faster when I spot that curly brown hair. He’s **pac**ing around the bus stop sign. He must be even more nervous than I am! I hurry to get to the bus stop.

He bends his head down to give me a quick kiss.

“I woke up really early, and couldn’t get back to sleep.”

“I didn’t sleep much at all,” says Uli. “Those basketball team try-outs are next week, but we start working out together tomorrow to get ready.”

*** *knot* – *Knoten* *** *to pace* – *gehen* ***

“You’ll make it! You’ve been practicing all summer.”

“Yeah, but some of those other guys have been playing on teams for years,” Uli says **glumly**. Uli speaks English with a slight German accent. I think it’s cute, but it embarrasses him.

The bus pulls up, and we get on. It’s crowded at this time of the morning, so we just move to the back and hang onto the same **pole**. There are a lot of people going to work, but I also see some kids that look about our age. A couple of girls are standing near us. They are talking loudly and giggling a lot. I see them eyeing Uli. Hands off, he’s taken! Just to make sure they get the message, I move my right hand on the pole so that it is on top of his. So there!

Lincoln High School is a big **two-story** building, surrounded by sports fields. We walk toward the main entrance. It’s a noisy group, with kids greeting friends they hadn’t seen in many weeks. Everyone is so **BIG!** I’m used to a school where all of the grade levels are together, and there are only about 60 students in each grade level. This is a typical American high school; there are only grades nine through twelve. So I’m one of the youngest, and it makes me feel really small. I’m glad that Uli is with me, at least for a few minutes at the start of the day. I need the protection! And it makes me feel great, starting my first day of ninth grade with a boyfriend. A tall, good-looking boyfriend.

“Well, I have to go. Meet you by the cafeteria at lunchtime!” says Uli. Then I’m alone.

*** *glum* – niedergeschlagen *** *pole* – Stange *** *two-story* – zweistöckig ***