

Amina

Sometimes just before Amina falls asleep, she can almost hear **Thunder** whinny at her from the closet. As if he is in there, scratching the door, his nostrils wide and his eyes rolling.

Amina can feel her legs tingling, she feels the steady rhythm of a good gallop, the rush in her guts and the smile on her lips.

On nights like this, Amina turns and pulls the blanket over her head. What would Thomas think if he saw her running around with a hobby horse. How embarrassing, how childish.

On evenings when her mother was working late, as she often did, Amina used to sit alone in their apartment and make accessories for Thunder. She misses the satisfaction of designing a finely detailed bridle. This January the concrete of the housing blocks, the grey sleet and the yellowish light seem extra gloomy. Amina turns on the TV and tries to focus on Paradise Hotel, so she can join the talk in recess tomorrow. But her thoughts are wandering, and her fingers are itching.

Amina was one of the pioneers in Danish Hobby Horsing. A star. Like Thunder, all the red rosettes are hidden away in the back of the closet. Amina is almost grown up, no longer a little girl, but a young woman in 8th grade. And young women do not play with hobby horses - not even if they would really love to.

Amina and her mom recently moved to town and for the first time of her life Amina has friends in school. She does not dare to think what they would say if she brought back her beloved black stallion. **Laura** from class is super cool and Amina is proud and grateful that she wants to be around Amina.

And then there is **Thomas**, the popular football player from her class. He sometimes smiles at Amina in a sweet way that turns all her bones to jelly. Amina is sure that if Thomas saw her ride around on a toy horse, he would never look her way again.

And yet Amina still wakes in the night to the sound of **Thunder** huffing impatiently. She opens the closet and strokes his neck. In that moment she decides on one last adventure. In the blue light of the PC screen she enrolls in *Riders Cup*, a big sporting event that will take place in three months. They need a decent closure, **Thunder** and her, she owes him that much.

Amina has noticed two of the girls from 7th grade who sometimes practice with their hobby horses in the housing block: **Olivia** and **Cecilie**. **Olivia** looks like a real talent, but she always looks so serious and sad - except when she is riding her hobby horse. Amina is sure that with her help **Olivia** could go far.

Cecilie shines with pure joy and pride when she rides her small robust hobby horse around and around; Amina feels the deepest respect and admiration for her. While Amina watches them from her window, she decides: She will invite **Olivia** and **Cecilie** to Riders Cup and offer to practice with them. There is one discipline at the Cup that requires three riders together - it would be just the thing for them. If this is to be her last Cup, she might as well pass something on. Something good. Some joy she can no longer use herself.

Amina in short:

- Retired hobby horsing pioneer
- Newcomer and liked in school. 8th. grader
- Helpful, empathetic and mature for her age
- Lives alone with her mom, who works a lot, but who always supported her interest in hobby horsing
- Seems more calm and confident than she really is

Relations

Thunder – Beautiful black stallion with a hot temper. Large, fast movements. Loves and misses Amina but can sometimes bolt or buck. Tired of being in the closet.

Thomas – Crush from school. Popular and a very talented football player. Seems to like Amina, even if they rarely speak.

Laura – The popular girl in 8th grade. Laura has welcomed Amina and helped her settle in. Amina is quite proud of being friends with her. Amina owes her a lot, even if she can be quite harsh sometimes.

Olivia – timid handball player and a great hobby horing talent. Olivia seems sad. Amina would like to help her follow her dreams. Olivia rides **Silja**, a playful white mare. Amina will not admit this, but it hurts a little that Olivia probably is a bigger talent than her.

Cecilie – A strong girl with a mind of her own. Amina would wish that she had some of Cecilie's courage. Amina wants to help Cecilie get ahead in the hobby horing scene, even if her red horse **Eyvindur** is made quite ineptly and Cecilie is not exactly a star. Cecilie might be too reckless for a proper dressage, which is a lot about dicipline.

Questions for Amina:

Some questions that might be interesting to explore for Amina during the game:

- Will she find the courage to act on her crush on **Thomas**?
- How far will Amina be willing to go to stay friends with Laura?
- Can you be popular in school AND ride a hobby horse?
- Is Amina serious about quitting after the Cup, when she has helped Olivia and Cecilie, or will she want to continue her hobby horing?

Olivia

'COME ON, Olivia!' 'Yees!'

The shouts fill the sports arena and ring in Olivia's ears. Then comes the hugs and the claps on her back from the coach and teammates, from mom and dad. Somebody lifts her up and shakes her 'till it almost hurts. She loses her breath. Olivia scored the killer goal in the handball match and her team has won yet another tournament. Actually, Olivia scored most of their goals. Recently she overheard her parents and the coach whisper about the youth national team.

Olivia no longer remembers why she loves to play handball. It is something she just does, because it is who she is. Who they want her to be. Mom and dad. Practice, diet regimen, game schedules, they run it and Olivia picks up the ball and shoots. Olivia knows it's in for a penny, in for a pound, keep your promises, and it's unfair to quit when others depend on you. Olivia knows how to grit her teeth.

When Olivia is not doing her homework or playing handball, she practices with **Cecilie**. **Cecilie** is a girl with a mind of her own. She lives in the big gray housing blocks, some distance from the neighborhood of single family houses where Olivia lives. Olivia is never happier than when they practice hobby horsing. She knows she is good at it. Really good. It is her strong discipline, body control and ability to focus, that make up her advantage.

Her white mare **Silja** is a dream. She always gives her best for Olivia. She is tender, forthcoming and devoted. **Silja** also has a playful and curious side to her, one that loves contact and attention. When they ride, **Silja** prefers to be in the lead and sometimes bucks in pure joy. When Olivia can ride **Silja**, she smiles. It feels like a warmth beginning in her belly and spreading all the way to her fingertips and toes.

Cecilie discovered that the new girl in 8th grade, **Amina**, took part in building the whole hobby horse community in Denmark. **Amina** is known for riding her beautiful black stallion **Thunder**. It is amazing that she just moved into the housing blocks where they practice. Olivia would love to talk to her but has yet to find the courage for it. She wonders why she has never seen **Amina** ride her **Thunder**; then it would be easy, because **Silja** would just whinny and run right up to them to talk.

Cecilie and Olivia has found a big hobbyhorse event, *Riders Cup*, which will be held in three months. Olivia would love it, if not for the fact that it is the same day as a big handball cup.

Olivia might be able to make both events, but she doubts that either her coach or her parents would accept her spending her precious energy on "playing horse". Every time Olivia thinks about it she feels sick and gets a tight knot in her stomach. She has no idea how to tell them, or how to make them understand that she needs to ride **Silja**. Mom and Dad have not even met **Silja** yet. Olivia's worst nightmare is disappointing people or making them angry. But she also knows that without **Silja** she would be totally numb.

If only Olivia could be as fearless as **Cecilie** or as cool and confident as **Amina**, everything might be different.

Olivia in short:

- Hardworking handball player who tries to please everyone around her
- Good at sensing and understanding people around her - but not herself
- Socially anonymous in school, but good at schoolwork. 7.th grader
- Very talented at hobbyhorsing

Relations

Silja – Curious and adventurous white mare. Good at hobby horsing. More brave and extroverted than Olivia and can sometimes give her a loving nudge with her soft nuzzle when it is needed most.

Dad and Mom - Huge handball enthusiasts with big dreams on behalf of Olivia. Own a single-family house, middle class. Love Olivia above all. Olivia hates to disappoint them. They do not know that Olivia is hobby horsing.

Cecilie – classmate and hobby horsing-partner. Lives in the housing blocks. At first glance she seems devil-may-care and strong, but Olivia notices that the mask can slip, and that behind that there is a much more vulnerable Cecilie. Cecilie rides a stubborn, tough ginger horse by the name of **Eyvindur**. Cecilie's insisting on "being herself" can sometimes be a bit much for Olivia. It would be so much easier to be Cecilie if she would just fall in to line occasionally.

Amina – hobby horsing star. Recently moved into the housing blocks. Olivia has not yet seen her ride. Is one class above Cecilie and Olivia. Seems cool and confident, but also nice. Olivia would like to get to know her and maybe learn from her. She is famed for mastering her fiery stallion Thunder. Olivia isn't quite sure if you can trust Amina, she might be just as nasty as some of the cool girls from 8.th that she hangs with?

Laura – Popular and harsh girl from 8. th grade. Is bullying **Cecilie** but is friends with **Amina**. Laura never really took any interest in Olivia except for a few stupid remarks.

Questions for Olivia

Some questions, that might be interesting to explore for Olivia during the game:

- Will Olivia find the courage to talk to dad and mom about hobby horsing, and will they understand?
- How will Olivia solve the challenge of *Riders Cup* and handball cup on the same day?
- Can Olivia be both an elite handball player and a ride a hobby horse, or will she have to choose? What will she choose?

Cecilie

Cecilie lets the spittle and the harsh words run down her face. It feels like the spittle is freezing on her cheek. She holds her head high and fights back the tears. Cecilie resolutely mounts **Eyvindur** and trots home, the wind biting her face. The humiliation gradually dissipates as her boots rhythmically beat the gray sleet. At home Dad praises her for being herself, for being strong and not bending to group pressure. Sometimes Cecilie hates him deeply for all his alternative bullshit. She feels like screaming at his naive hippie-face.

It is hard to not give a damn when you actually do. It is hard to be strong, when deep down you feel small and in need of a hug. It is hard to be who you are, when you do not know who that is.

Cecilie turns on some loud hard music and throws herself on the bed among old socks, creased homework, and untidy blankets. She buries her head in **Eyvindur's** rough mane and let's go. After a while she is ready to wipe away the snot and tears. She digs out needle and thread and begin to mend **Eyvindur's** left eye. It droops a little. Actually, all of **Eyvindur** is made a bit ineptly. Cecilie never really had the patience or neatness for needlework that nice girls have. But she loves him anyway. He is the most stubborn creature she knows, he never gives up. **Eyvindur** is not beautiful, and Cecilie is not the born hobby horse rider, but together they have something. Tough, proud and invincible. The two of them against the world.

Yet sometimes Cecilie considers giving **Eyvindur** an early retirement in the basement. She wonders if the small ginger hairball hobbyhorse really is worth all the bullying? The tears. The anger, the feeling of inferiority, of being an outsider. Cecilie doesn't want to think about it.

If Cecilie stopped being a freak on a hobby horse, she might get friends in class and be accepted. Maybe she could move in with **Mom** in Copenhagen and get a fresh start. **Mom** would know how to act and dress to fit in. A dangerous and alluring thought that makes her both dizzy and breathless. She glances at **Eyvindur** with both love and melancholy. Lately Cecilie has felt tired to the bone, she does not know how much longer she can go on.

Fortunately, Cecilie has **Olivia**. **Olivia** is a handball player and spends most of her time on that. But Cecilie has got her to do hobby horing too. Together they are considering a big event in three months: *Riders Cup*. **Olivia** is really talented at hobby horing and really happy when they are together, but the rest of the time she seems really sad. Cecilie does not envy **Olivia's** hard life, it must feel like one long PE lesson.

Recently **Cecilie** discovered that **Amina** just moved in to the housing blocks, which is amazing. **Amina** was a big inspiration to Cecilie, she was one of the people starting the whole hobbyhorse community in Denmark. **Amina** is in 8.th grade and both cool, popular and sweet. Cecilie wonders why **Amina** does not get bullied with her hobby horing. Maybe **Amina's** classmates don't even know. No matter what, Cecilie would love to get to know **Amina**.

Cecilie – short

- Strong, brave and devil-may-care- but also vulnerable, insecure and somewhat lonely.
- Bullied by the pretty, popular girls from school and the tough kids from the block.
- Her dad always encourages her to be herself, which Cecilie sometimes tires of, and sometimes appreciates.
- Cecilie's mom moved when Cecilie was young. She is a smart career woman living in Copenhagen.

Relations

Eyvindur – A lot like Cecilie; stubborn, brave and persistent. Cecilie's great strength comes from Eyvindur. He can be cheeky, lazy or refuse to move. He is not a pretty sporty hobby horse but has his own forward charm.

Olivia – Hardworking handball player and hobby horse talent. Classmate in 7th. grade and Cecilie's only real friend. She lives in the the single family houses a short distance from the housing blocks. Cecilie would love to lend Olivia some of her courage and strength to draw a line, but she knows it will only work if it is on Olivia's own terms. Olivia rides Silja, a beautiful white playfull mare. Deep down Cecilie sometimes think it is unfair that Olivia has so many talents, good grades and normal parents. Sometimes Cecilia feels like shaking her. How can one be so sad and timid, when everything comes so easy?

Amina – Newcomer. Popular and pretty girl from 8.th grade, who pioneered Danish hobby horsing. Cecilie would like to get to know her and wonders why she has not seen Amina practice hobby horsing around the blocks. Amina is riding the famous black fiery stallion **Thunder**. Even though Cecilie would like to be friends with Amina and practice with her she cannot help to fear that Amina will be very dominating.

Laura – Popular girl in 8th. grade. **Amina's** new friend and one of the girls who are bullying Cecilie. Arrogant and condescending.

Dad – Single dad, hippie type who loves Cecilie above all else. He is very proud of her. Wishes that Cecilie will keep on "being herself" and has raised her to not yield to anyone or anything. Cecilie fears that he will be disappointed if she becomes too dull and normal.

Mom – Left Dad and Cecilie when Cecilie was very young. Confident, smart career woman. Lately she has taken more of an interest in Cecilie, and they often speak on the phone. Cecilie misses mom but also feels abandoned by her.

Questions for Cecilie

Some questions that might be interesting to explore for Cecilie during the game:

- Will Cecilie move away from Dad and begin a new life in Copenhagen after *Riders Cup*?
- Will she continue hobbyhorsing?
- Can Cecilie get the better of Laura and the other bullies?
- Can Cecilie satisfy both Mom and Dad and make them understand her?

Overview 4: Dressage

What is dressage in real life?

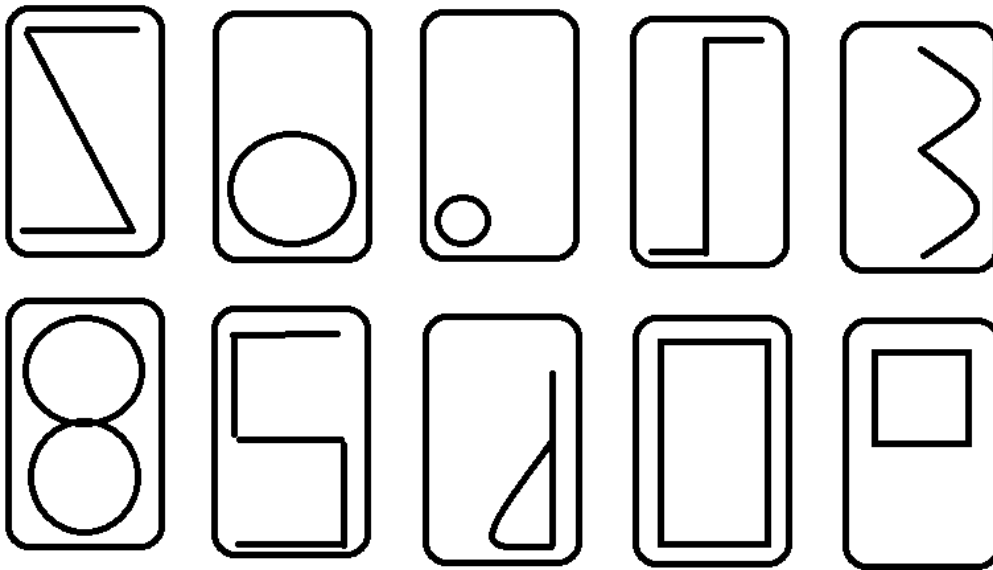
In dressage the focus is on the gaits of the horse and the collaboration between horse and rider. You ride “figures” in different gaits from a predefined program with different levels of complexity. One or more judges grade how well you execute the program.

What is dressage in the game?

In the game the girls compete in a special discipline invented for the scenario. They will ride three together in figures and gaits on the course. The characters will be judged as a team in *Riders Cup*. Practice is therefore to rehearse the gaits: walk, trot and gallop. And to plan the dressage program: i.e. chose which figures and gaits to ride.

It is up to you if one of you are to ride in front, or if you ride side by side. You are very welcome to be creative; there is no right and wrong. The *Riders Cup* itself will be played as a narrated scene, so you need not focus on creating a finished program - but instead on making some good practice scenes that showcase the characters and their relations.

These are some examples of dressage figures. You are welcome to make up your own.



Gaits.

Walk – slow pace. Walk normally, play with how elegantly, how light or heavy your horse walks and vary the speed.

Trot – medium pace. Lift your legs up and down. Looks a little like running with knee lift. Play with high/low, light or heavy lifts. Vary the speed.

Gallop – Fast pace. Jump ahead with one food in front. A little like hopscotch, play with big or small jumps and vary the speed.

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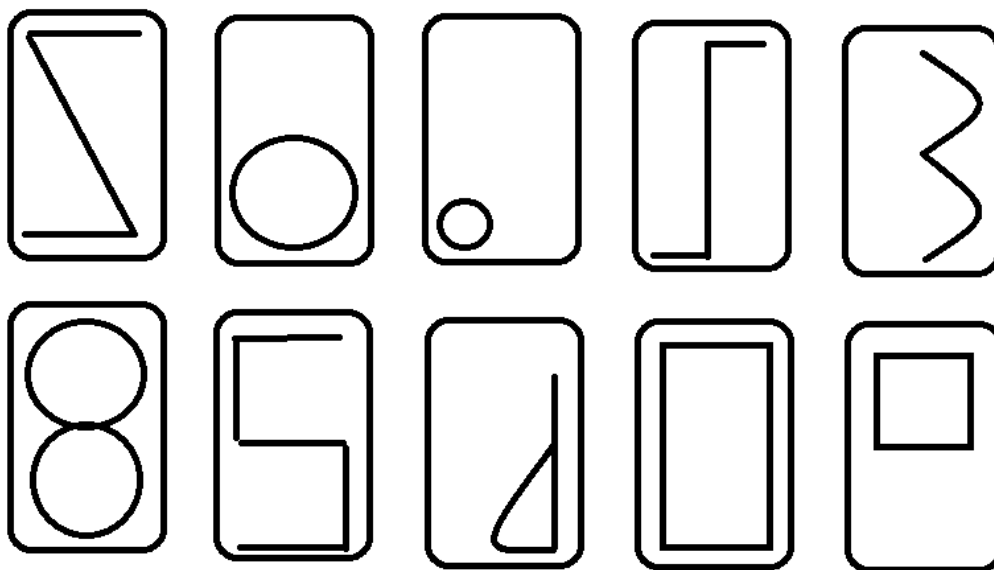
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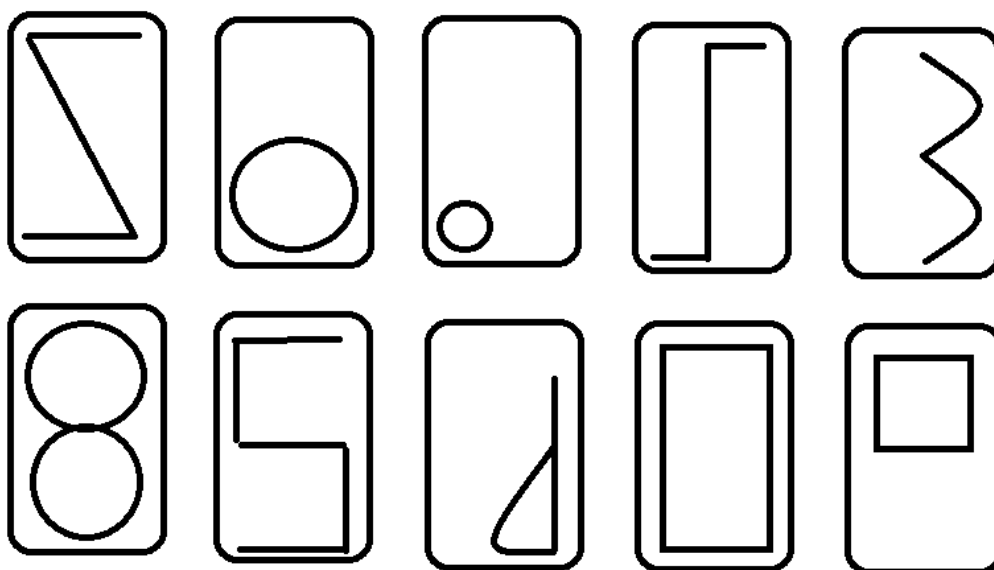
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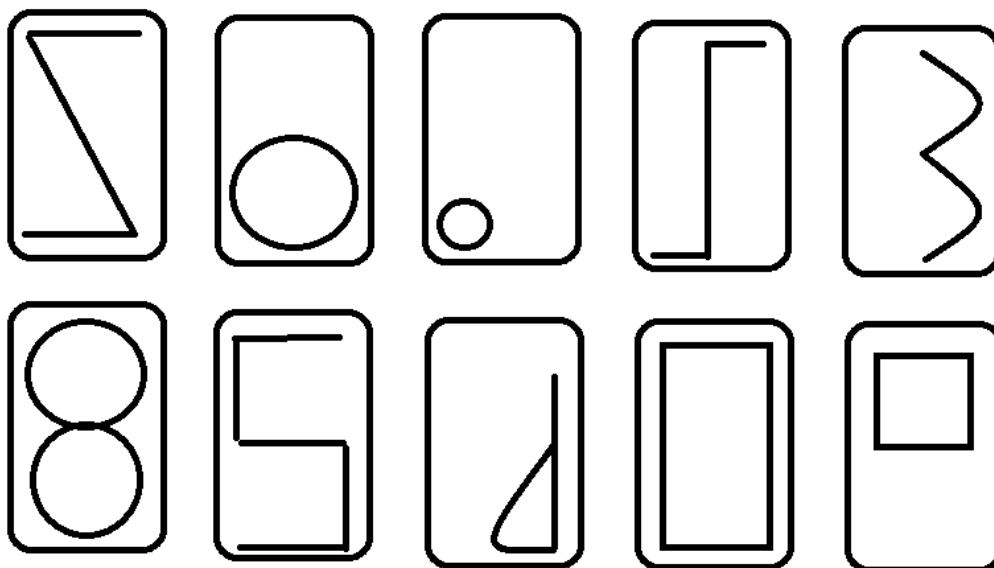
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