

Happily Ever After Germany

Most people think it's amazing how I always get to move to new countries. Of course I love the adventure, but it has its hardship to never stay in a place longer than three years. Living overseas as a diplomat family has shaped my personality a certain way. I lived in the Philippines since I was two months until I was two years old. I don't remember my time there so I don't feel attached to the Philippines. Then for the next two years I resided in New Zealand. During my time there I got a sense of my roots because all four of my grandparents from Texas came to visit. No matter where I go, I will always have a "home" because I will always have my family.

With strong family roots in Texas, I used to think of myself as an all-American girl right down to my cowboy boots, but I'm not. A huge part of me belongs to Germany. I lived in Germany from age five to age eight, and during my time there, my sense of identity changed forever.

Hamburg became a second home for me. I have plenty of fond memories of my time there. I still remember riding the train to school with my dad every morning. Oh, the scent of freshly baked bread as my dad and I passed by the bakery on the way to the train station! The farmers market on the week-end was another source of culinary delights with the smoky aroma of grilled brats filling the air. Yet another one of my favorite routines was the weekly visit to the public library. Surrounded by an endless collection of books, I've always found the sense of peace and solitude to be comforting. Libraries have always been my safe haven everywhere that I've lived. I can just close my eyes now and feel myself transported back to Hamburg.

As a book worm, certainly crucial to the development of my identity was the beginning of my formal school education in Hamburg. I attended a local public school in Othmarschen where the teachers and the other students there happily embraced me as the only American. With their support and kindness, I blossomed. I had always been passionate about art, and the German teachers helped me to improve my skills. Additionally I discovered a hidden passion of mine: acting. The teachers were very encouraging, and I continue to be active in theater today. I also made a breakthrough in ballet at Lola Rogge Schule and started to get a better feeling for what my body could do. When I'm on stage for ballet and theater, I feel like I'm supposed to be there, very much at home.

Our entire family was also very much at home in the cozy neighborhood of Blankenese. From the window of our yellow house on Oesterleystrasse, we had a lovely view of the Suellberg Schloss. We enjoyed strolls along the Elbe River and outings to the fabulous gelato shop near the train station. Our family also became immersed in German culture, and now going to Christmas markets and attending performances of Hansel and Gretel have become an annual tradition for us.

Currently I'm in the 7th grade, and having been continuously educated in the German school system since pre-school, I have developed a bit of a German mentality that can be observed in my stamina for swimming; my acumen for math, biology, and physics; my appreciation for opera and ballet; and my love for space science. I have been attending space camp at the von Braun Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama, for the past several years. Germany is still an important part of me even though I don't live there anymore.

I would like to finish my Abitur in Germany and hope to attend a good German university. Even my future ambitions continue to be shaped by my attachment to Germany, a stamp in my passport which has been transformative in shaping my identity. My fairy tale story is that of a little American girl who once upon a time went to Germany, and whose destiny then became forever profoundly changed. I've become a magical creature who can thrive in the world of all things American and who can also transform to inhabit the world of all things German, my happily ever after ending!

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