



My name is Jess, and I am currently in my final year at Warwick, studying for a BA in German Studies. I have been learning German for just over 10 years now but undertook a Beginner's Course in Spanish during my first year. The inspiration behind my story was brought about after a very close friend of mine unfortunately passed away whilst I was on my Year Abroad in Würzburg, but the people who I had met were absolutely brilliant and helped me through this very difficult time. It was during October last year, when my friend took me to visit the local vineyards and I was absolutely blown away by it all. Being there, surrounded by all this beauty, I experienced a memorable moment of serenity and happiness.

11. The vineyards of Würzburg (KS4 & 5)

Jessica Woodward

"I've always liked the vineyards best in autumn."

In the late afternoon sun, my new friend Simone is the perfect picture of comfort.

"They are beautiful all year round, but in autumn they have a special charm."

I understand what she means, as the world around us looks simply magical. The vineyards of Würzburg are cast in an extraordinary and delicate light of scarlet, orange and gold, and the colours dance in the soft November breeze. I close my eyes and welcome the cool air as I breathe in the wondrous fragrance.

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Perhaps for some people the autumn months are associated with the inevitable arrival of a dark, miserable winter: cold wet weather, shorter days, and longer nights. But for me, autumn is like a second spring, because the world is once again transformed into a rainbow of radiant colours.

The sky above is azure and brings a lightness to our steps as we walk through the fields. Every now and then we stop to take a photo, alternating between happy carefree selfies and dramatic panoramas of the fantastically beautiful city below. Simone could be a professional photographer, with her modern camera and strands of red hair escaped from her chic French béret, perfectly matching the rich, autumnal hues of the vineyards. Her camera clicks endlessly and her eyes radiate joy and passion.

I've been in Germany for a month and in the last few days life has become quite difficult: the endless worries as a result of the Corona pandemic along with feelings of homesickness and the loss of a good friend in England. Grief is an emotion I have never experienced before, and both my head and my heart felt overwhelmed by it. But the hardest part is having to struggle with these difficulties without the support of my family and friends, combined with the knowledge that I can't just go home. This is not to say that I have not managed to cope, because I have coped. I was very lucky to be surrounded and supported by my new friends and maybe we got on so well because we were all in the same situation. We lived abroad during extraordinary circumstances and had to make the best of it despite all the difficulties. These wonderful people kept me healthy. It was because of them that I managed to keep a clear head and get through those difficult times.

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As cheesy as it may sound, I have never loved these people more than at the moment I am standing here looking out at the beautiful vineyards that surround Würzburg's old fortress. Here among the rustling autumn leaves, coloured like scarlet and gold, amidst the fresh November breeze and bathed in hazy sunlight, I feel at home. I feel comfortable and safe. I am full of hope and for the first time I have a clear head because I feel better. I know that everything will be all right in the end.

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version)

QUESTIONS:

- 1) What is your favourite season and why?
- 2) Do some research on Würzburg: whereabouts in Germany is it situated? What is it like?
- 3) The story talks about the value of friendship. Can you give account of a time when you've had to depend on friends?