



Hi! My name is Mubo and I study German and Economics at the University of Warwick. I have been lucky enough to learn many languages during my studies, including Latin, Spanish, Italian, Turkish and Korean but I can really only speak German and English. My year abroad in Cologne, Germany inspired this story. Cologne is the home of Karneval and I experienced many differences in cuisine when I was in Germany, therefore inspiring the pretzel bit. I hope you enjoyed my story.

## 12. Carnival in Cologne' (KS3-5)

*Mubosola Olayinka*

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Germany, Cologne Bonn Airport, local time 7pm..."

I am finally in Germany. When I decided to learn German in fifth grade, it would never have occurred to me to simply travel to Germany for a few days. While I started out learning German lying relaxed on my bed, the Corona pandemic helped me understand that learning a language involves more than mastering vocabulary and grammar. It is equally important to understand the culture and people of a country.

Keyword culture: Germany is not only the home of sausage, chocolate and sauerkraut, but also the home of carnival!

"... On behalf of EasyJet Airline, I would like to thank you for flying with us. We wish you a pleasant stay!"

## FRENCH

As if in a trance, I stepped off the plane and drifted with the crowds towards the exit.

The next day was the first day of carnival. Of course, I had heard about the famous German pretzels in my German studies. When I saw the first pretzel stand, I immediately joined the queue of waiting Germans to also buy one of the coveted pretzels. Meanwhile, the people around me were talking excitedly in confusion:

"Please Greta, don't run so fast! I have to stay with your brother, so please be a good girl".

"2 €, please."

"But mum, I want to play with the other children. Carnival is no fun if I have to stay with you, and I'm not a baby anymore!"-

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Suddenly I was jolted out of my thoughts, "You there! Do you want to buy something or not? You're scaring away all my paying customers!" I had been so distracted by the conversations around me that I hadn't noticed that I was next in line.

"I'm sorry, can I have two pretzels? One with white chocolate, the other with cinnamon and sugar." He stared at me in confusion.

"I don't know if you've noticed, but we're here in Germany, not somewhere else, and in Germany pretzels are salted," the pretzel seller said with a slight roll of his eyes.

## FRENCH

I froze and tears came to my eyes. After a few seconds, I felt a hand on my shoulder, gently guiding me away from the crowd.

"Are you all right?"

A tall figure stood in front of me, his entire face hidden behind a black Batman mask except for his dazzling auburn eyes.

"Um," I finally found my voice again. "Thank you for your help. This is my first time in Germany, completely alone here, and I already miss English politeness."

"Ah, I figured you were English because of your Queen Elizabeth costume." I blushed. "As for rudeness, I admit that English people are sometimes taken aback by German directness, but please don't pass your judgement so quickly yet," the mysterious boy asked me. He took off his mask. He seemed to be a little older than me. I was surprised. If I had seen him next to the pretzel vendor, would I have judged the vendor to be friendlier?

"My name is Joshua. If you would like, you could accompany my friends and me. It would be my pleasure to show you everything Cologne Carnival has to offer."

**QUESTIONS:**

- 1) What's your favourite pretzel flavour? What other street food do you like?
- 2) Do you think this story has a lesson to teach us? If so, what?
- 3) How does the author create a sense of atmosphere?
- 4) Continue the story: what do you think happens next?