



BERLIN'S GOLDEN DAWN

MEMORIES OF BERLINER DAYS (AND NIGHTS)

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C O N T E N T S

A JUNE BERLINER SUNRISE
BRANDENBURGER TOR

About youth, life and love

DAYS, NIGHTS


Random glimpses of the city and our
insights

BERLIN'S BLESSINGS
GOLDEN GLOW



BRANDENBURGER TOR

ABOUT YOUTH, LIFE AND LOVE



The first notes of that sentimental Spanish tune play on repeat in my head while we rush upstairs. **Unter den Linden's** morning breeze plays gracefully with the hair strands of four tipsy teenagers, whose genius idea was to watch the sunrise at **Brandenburger Tor** at 4-ish a.m. After a shisha and two drinks, I feel like in a movie as my heart pounds and I gasp for air. Just a few steps more. I barely remember how Helena and I managed to catch that U-Bahn after our hastened, imperative toilet stop at the station.

The cool air at **S+U Brandenburger Tor** exit caresses my cheeks. I feel warm inside (figuratively) because he is here and (literally) he gave me his sweater before. I know I'm stupid for feeling loved by a mere courteous act, but I can't help to do so.

"Te quiero cuando me destrozas... Te quiero con indecisión... Te quiero como tantas cosas... que no tienen solución."
(I love you when you destroy me... I love you hesitantly. I love you, like many things that don't have a solution.) - Sinceridio's lyrics explain.

I play the album every day while I shower because Leiva sings what I wish to scream at the top of my lungs. I just can't unfeel in a few days.

I don't feel hurt or bitter now, while chasing the sunrise. We laugh and shout random thoughts and observations, Helena almost falls down, Dani stops to help her and bursts into uncontrollable laughter. Guillem is the first to be welcomed by the orange, yellow, blue shimmer of the early Berliner June morning. We stand right in front of the iconic stone gate on **Parisplatz**. It's not even the fourth or fifth time we're here, but it's the first we really see it. Trying to catch my breath again, I lie down on the cold cobbled ground.

I sit up to do my chilly ears a favour. He is already looking at me with a light-hearted smile on his face. I look back right into his eyes. Dani and Helena are chatting in the background, but I only feel his dark-brown gaze anchored in mine.

I know well nothing will happen between us ever again... I don't want that either. I just allow myself to feel our bond deeply. I don't care anymore if it didn't work out. My life is starting. I'm capable of feeling, I'm in love, I'm free... Adrenaline pumps through my arteries. I could stand up and run meaninglessly through the arches, shout and let it all out on my hurried way towards Siegestsäule.

Even so, for the last time I set myself comfortable in this warm, "maybe-in-another-timeline" shared moment.



DAYS, NIGHTS

LANDING AND CRASHING

OUR "THIS-WILL-BE-MEMORABLE" GUT FEELING FLOATED IN THE AIR AROUND US (...)

Berlin was all about moments felt very close to the heart. Holding our passport and carrying suitcases, we landed at **Berlin-Tegel** flooded by excitement.

We had 10 days ahead of us in a foreign city. I had a huge crush on the boy I sat with in class, and was hoping our back-and-forth flirtation would become something meaningful. My whole friend group was there, joking and smiling. I felt blessed, joy poured out of my body through my gestures and rushed words. Even though we were tired and our clueless teacher Herr Pfeiffer got us lost twice, our "this-will-be-memorable" gut feeling floated in the air around us, so intense that other passengers could almost reach it with their fingertips.

"Oye Diana... Sé que no te sentará muy bien, pero no puedo callármelo. He escuchado a Almu hablar con él... sobre su novia. Sí, resulta que está con esta chica... oficialmente. Ya, yo tampoco lo sabía. Ven, ven aquí, dame un abrazo."

(Hey Diana... I know you won't be happy to hear this, but I can't keep it secret. I heard Almu talking to him... about his new girlfriend. Yeah, it turns out he is actually with this girl... dating. I didn't know either. Come, come here, give me a hug.)

On the second day, Dani's words hit me with the harsh realization that he and I wouldn't have any shared summer love story ahead. Okay. Of course I cried. Anyway. Deep down, I had known this wouldn't lead anywhere. I was just resentful because I got played on. I felt deceived, disappointed, irritated that he hadn't stopped flirting with me, which was disrespectful towards his new girlfriend.

"Tía, ya sabías cómo era. Más básico no puede ser."

(Girl, you knew how he was. He can't be more basic.)





DAYS, NIGHTS

SHINY MIRACLE

WE TALKED ABOUT LIFE AND LOVE BECAUSE PEOPLE ALWAYS DO SO TO FIGURE IT OUT (...)

After all, I wasn't surprised either. Deep down, it was obvious we weren't a good match. It hurt me anyway.

My best friend Irene picked me up from my self-pity hole and took me to an African festival at **Alexanderplatz**. Eating spicy chicken curry with rice next to her, the bass rhythm of bongos and my new pair of baggy purple trousers with elephant print softened my bruised chest. We talked about life and love because people always do so to figure it out (unsuccessfully). The flea market setting conveyed that familiar feeling I needed. Among the vibrant stands, the laughter, the warm smiles of friendly strangers... the ambiance hugged and sheltered me.

At the same time, there were the huge shopping malls around me, full of life and rush. The 250m-tall **television tower** reflected the sunset rays, bathing its dome in orange. I caught a glimpse of the Pope's Revenge in bright white, that cross-like shape the tower accidentally mirrors, particularly annoying for the communist East Germany government ruling over the city. A convenient destiny joke, God smiling at the East Berliners during the painful separation years. Although I don't believe in any religion, I sensed his presence in that view, too. I felt genuinely lucky.

I didn't speak on the way back home as I just realized being in this vibrant city and sharing time with these people was simply a miracle.

The next week proved me right. We dived into Berlin's culture and history during the days, and lived the city in the nights.





DAYS, NIGHTS

*BACK IN TIME, BACK AT THE
PRESENT MOMENT*

**"MY HURT FEELINGS SAW
METAPHORS EVERYWHERE, EVEN
IN THE RADIANT BLUE
AFTERNOON."**

We sat on a wall and waved our hands in the air after a bike tour. Twenty sweaty teenagers climbing up on the 3-m graffitied high wall at **Mauerpark**, helping each other up. It wasn't the Berlin Wall and we hadn't been set apart for 40 years, but our hearts felt whole, united and free reliving a thousandth bit of the city's history in our skins.

Planes crossed above our heads, drawing cloudy white lines on the blue canvas. I thought about the Rosinenbomber, the aircraft bringing food supplies to West Berliners during the 1948 Soviet Berlin Blockade.

Some of the pilots started to throw tiny packages containing chocolates and candy to cheer up the little Berliners too. Their kind actions were the ones that gave the nickname to the operation.

I got goosebumps daydreaming about their cute smiles and giggles lightning up a grey Berliner noon, even if the day was bright and warm. I barely spent a few seconds thinking about my fear of heights. In fact, I had doubts a few minutes ago about actually wanting to sit on the narrow cement block, 3 meters above the ground.

Most of the boys were already on the site when our girl group arrived, and only him hyping me up gave me the final impulse to join them. Anyway, I hesitated too long to sit next to him in the row. My hurt feelings saw metaphors everywhere, even in the radiant blue afternoon.





DAYS, NIGHTS

12 A.M

"WE GAVE OFF THE RECKLESS YOUNG VIBE ANYONE COULD DISRUPT."

We got lost and found our way back to the hostel, several times. Somehow that independence was teaching us to become (still irresponsible) adults.

We put our pyjamas on top of shirts and night dresses. Some were even spraying perfume on themselves. It was undeniable we weren't staying at the hostel for the night while we signed pretending we would.

The teachers were well aware, our playful smiles and giggles gave us away. Herr Pfeiffer and Frau Vosseler didn't care anyway, they smiled back and wished us a good night's sleep, although they saw the dark circles under our eyes at the morning activities.

We were simply learning to take bad decisions and creating stories for ourselves, experiencing our freedom and fooling around with it. We gave off that reckless young vibe anyone could disrupt. In a foreign country whose language we spoke fluently, we were eating up the world.

Gonzalo and Dani freestyled on the tram on the way to the party. We couldn't find anything open, as it was Sunday night. Our friend group ended up playing drinking games at Peter's, next to the hostel in a quiet, discreet neighbourhood almost in the city outskirts, between **Lichtenberg** and **Hohenschönhausen**.

Fruity, sweet "San Franciscos" got us tipsy. The owner served us extra shots on the house.





DAYS, NIGHTS

*RUNNING FROM THE POLIZEI,
LITERALLY*

I FELT RELIEVED THAT WE DIDN'T LIVE IN 1970S EAST BERLIN (...)

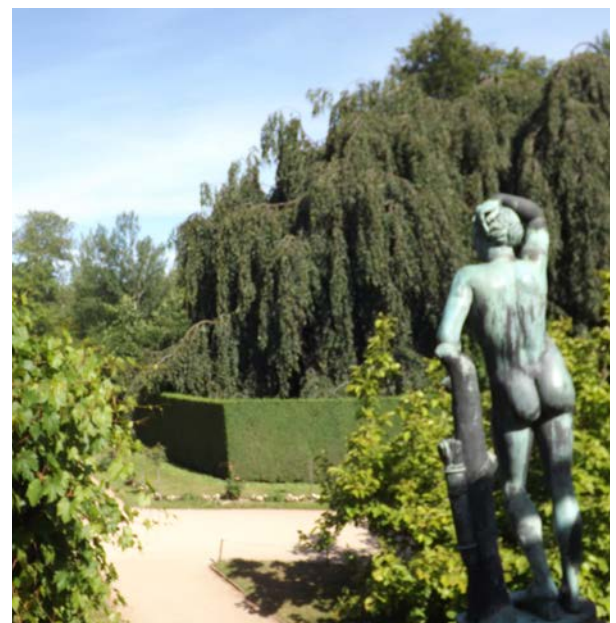
On a Tuesday at dawn, the police got a call complaining about a noisy group drinking beer and dancing in the park. The students (us) ran in front of the cars. Polizei was understandably strict at first:

"- Personalausweise."
(IDs)

Our Spanish IDs and embarrassed, troubled red faces awoke their compassion. We explained in German we were just looking for some fun during our time here, and they just advised us to be more intelligent about the party spot we chose. They were almost smiling while reprimanding us. I couldn't help but remember the neighbourhood we were in, next to the former **Stasi prison Hohenschönhausen**. I felt relieved that we didn't live in 1970s East Berlin because we wouldn't have spent the night in our rooms, but most likely in a prison cell.

Nevertheless, our most epic, successful illegal action was jumping off a fence to enter a club from the back. It's not that we wanted to save the entrance's cost, it was in fact free. The security guards were just asking us for a +18 ID card we didn't have.

That night, we danced to Jamaican beats.





GOLDEN GLOW

LONGING FOR FREEDOM

*"Du hast gelernt, was Freiheit heisst, und das vergiss nie mehr."
(You learnt, what freedom is, don't forget it ever again)*

I read this quote at the **East Side Gallery**. Among the outstanding works of art, it was just a phrase written with a black marker, apparently irrelevant.

It made me think of my friend group, and the city itself. We were experiencing the openness of life for the first time.

Berlin had been under Preussen's severe rule, managed to imagine a glimpse of freedom during the convulsed Weimarer Republik... Strangled by the Drittes Reich, bombed and shattered during WWII. Rebuilt by the Trümmerfrauen, torn apart by the Soviets and the Allies for 40 years.

Since the 9th November 1989, Berlin could get to know full democracy and freedom, although it still had to wait until 1990 to experience it as a reunified country.

Images of the glass dome of the **Reichstag** crossed my mind: once burned down, reconstructed, taken by the Soviet army, now a seat of the Parliament, mirroring the past but focused on the future.

The memory of **Sachsenhausen concentration camp**, its emptiness... gave me shivers. Deadly silence.

No doubt they can't afford to forget freedom once again. We couldn't either.

**"DU HAST GELERNT,
WAS FREIHEIT
HEISST, UND DAS
VERGISS NIE MEHR."**

GOLDEN GLOW

EMERALD HORSES

Among the chaos, sleep-deprived and wrapped up in teenager hormones, we sit admiring the immense **Brandenburger Tor**. My head still feels dizzy due to the shishas we ordered at the Turkish pub in **Kreuzberg**.

A flash of his face very close to mine among the dense smoke. He had whispered something in my ear:

"- A los dos nos apetece lo mismo, ¿no?".

(We both fancy the same, don't we?)

His right hand on my crossed legs. The smoky environment confused me. Did he really say that? Wasn't he in a relationship?

I felt lightheaded and pulled away. That was so wrong I got nauseous.

Hectic life realizations cross my mind: there is only one year of high school left, and a whole life awaiting ahead of me.

- I have no need to be in a relationship.
- I'm fulfilled and working on myself.
- I already feel life loves (me) us, as it is blessing us with this heart-pounding experience.

Immortalizing that frame of time and condensing these sensations to remember in the future, the sun surpasses the horizon and tells us to go home.

We turn our backs to the Tor, the emerald horses pulling the carriage, coming to life, flying over the gold glimmer of the sun blending with the imposing columns and arches.

**(...) THE SUN
SURPASSES THE
HORIZON AND TELLS
US TO GO HOME.**

A German flag with horizontal stripes of black, red, and gold flies from a tall pole. Below the flag is a stone building with arched windows and a decorative cornice. The sky is overcast.

GOLDEN GLOW

BERLIN'S BLESSINGS

Helena and Dani sit in front of Guillem and me in the tram. She proposes plans to stay awake until our first activity in the morning, as we have barely 2 hours left. The tram's rhythmic sway cradles us in the Berliner dawn.

"- Va, que no me voy a poder dormir ahora. Vamos a otro sitio, a dar una vuelta o...."

(Come on, I won't be able to sleep now. Let's go anywhere else, go for a walk or...)

Wrapped up in her grey plastic hood, she falls asleep on the same tram a few minutes later, leaning into Dani who also closes his eyes. Guillem puts an arm around me too, and the restlessness starts to slowly fade. The stops names on the screen look blurry. I lean on him too.

The city wakes up as we pass by, all the places where we lived the memories we would treasure from then on, bathing in gilt daylight. My heart feels full of love, I reflect on how grateful I am.

I try to grasp as many details as I can, to record in my head the background noises of people entering and exiting the wagon, Dani sighing, the warmth between Guillem's shoulder and my cheek. I close my eyes to travel back to the gate's golden glow.

**"THE TRAM'S
RHYTMIC SWAY
CRADLES US IN THE
BERLINER DAWN."**