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2013-14 Postcards

Postcards from Abroad

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12-15-2013

## Endings

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## Endings

12/15/2013



*The Last Supper*

*Endings: The final part of something, especially a period of time, or an activity.*

Somehow the definition of “endings” doesn’t quite sound right in the view of the last 3 and a half months. Sure, 3 and a half months is a period of time, and within that period of time there were many activities. However, the word “endings” leaves out the emotion. Movies end and books end, but life-changing experiences never end. They will continue to resonate long after the period of time is over.

My time in Seville was something that can’t simply be summed up in a few concise paragraphs, but I will attempt to share what I consider one of the most meaningful and hardest experiences I have ever had in my life. From the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, I was thrown together with a group of people from all over the US. Most of us strangers, we all quickly bonded into a large cohort without a problem. There are very few memories of Seville that I have that don’t include this wonderful group of people. Every day we shared classes and every night we shared adventures—trying out a new tapas bar, hunting down that one very specific orchestra, getting lost in a new barrio, or simply sharing a copa close to our homes.

Before I studied abroad, I didn’t understand that you would make a life where you ended up. I had it in my mind that it would be a giant vacation, an adventure that I would never fully feel a part of, more of an enthusiastic participant. I am pleased to share with you that I was completely wrong. You fall in love with the city and you fall in love with the people that you are with. You start to tell the difference between the tourists, the locals, and the students. You have your favorite parts of the city that you visit often, and you start a routine that you love. You build a life, no matter how temporary.

As my time in Seville ended, I packed up my stuff and my broken heart into a suitcase and tried to figure out the best way to say goodbye to this beautiful city. To be honest, there is no “best way” to say goodbye to the friends and city you love. You can only do your best. My best was one last meal with my friends and to look silently out at the city that has given me so much.

I wish I could give you a clearer picture of Seville. Like, what it is like to watch the lights sparkle on Guadalquivir every night, or to see the Christmas lights next to the Cathedral, or hearing the violins on Calle Tetuan late at night. It’s a city of light, music, and people that seem to enjoy life differently than Americans do.

Though sad that my time in Seville is over, now a new adventure starts. I will spend 3 weeks in Germany, perhaps picking up some German along the way, and then I make the journey to Alicante.

I have no doubt that I will continue to collect incredible memories and friends, but for now, I will reflect on what I have gained from Seville. Seville gave me more than amazing friends; it gave me something else that people tell you about when they return from being abroad for a long period of time—You gain a profound sense of self at a much deeper level. Though scared of messing up the language, or making a giant fool of myself, I have never been more confident in who I am, never have been more proud of who I am, and have never been closer to who I *want* to become.

While my time in Seville sits concisely in between September and December of 2013, the memories, the friends, and I—this new version—will continue. Something this momentous doesn’t just end like a book where you turn the last page. Something like Spain will live in my veins and memories and will affect everything that I do for years to come.

Do you understand what I mean about the word “endings”?

Jory Gibson