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## Pinch Me, Am I Dreaming?

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## 2014-12-01 Pinch me, am I dreaming?



*The view from the window where we stayed in Grindelwald*

I'm in France.

Quelques fois (erm, sometimes) I catch myself, and I'm simply amazed by the fact. I feel that, daily, I take it for granted—it's become, so to speak, my new normal. I have a routine. I get up every morning, take my bus, pass my classes, maybe to go the market or the Cours Mirabeau, take the bus home, have dinner, and do my homework until I can't think anymore. There are so many things that have ceased to be different or challenging.

For the most part, I think I've figured out the bus system. I sort of know how to bavarder (joke/talk) with my host parents, and, as I recently figured out, I still make mistakes occasionally but they don't really bug me anymore. When I first arrived, I felt like I couldn't do anything right—couldn't open the doors, couldn't close the shutters, couldn't help but feel small when my host mom reprimanded me for forgetting to turn out the lights. But a few weeks ago, something new came on the horizon - the heater! Previously, it wasn't cold enough, but then it got to the point where I would be doing my homework, wearing two sweaters and my flannel pajamas and I was still cold.

Even trains don't really faze me anymore. After taking so many over vacation, I think I've been pretty well broken in. Speaking of trains, can you guess where I am right now?

Yup. On a train. Going back to Aix. I just finished up a weekend visiting my old host family again in Saint-Étienne—the ones I think I wrote about a couple of journals ago, before vacation, the period that I actually forgot to write about.

The semester is winding down, and finals are winding up. Less than a month left! And yet so much to do. If I may say so, ooh la la! French people actually do say this (and now me too), but much differently than the stereotypical (oops—stereotypical) French person. Instead of something frilly and silly, it's more of a sigh, almost expressed like "OOoohh great..." with a meaning closer to "oh my."

And oh la la indeed! I have a feeling that whether or not I like it, the rest of this semester is going to fly by. And then I'll be, oddly as it is to say, back in the States!

Michaela