

Stitched up!

Jetzt, da Frankreich sich angeboten hat, Großbritannien den Teppich von Bayeux zu leihen, meldet sich eine Frau zu Wort, die von dieser Entscheidung direkt betroffen ist. Von M. SIMONS

MEDIUM AUDIO

It's a boring life being trapped in a tapestry — although, strictly speaking, it's an embroidery. Millions of people know who we are. I, though, know just the other figures stitched in around me. It's not as if we live only as long as the people who come to look at us. I was embroidered in 1072 and have been hanging around — literally — in Bayeux since the 15th century. What's more, unless someone starts a fire or there's a war, I will be stuck behind this glass for the foreseeable future.

It's not all bad, of course. If you live in a tapestry, you don't get tired or hungry or feel pain. Best of all, though, once the visitors have gone home and the museum has closed, you can relax. I stretch out and chat to the knights hanging around my husband, Edward — that's King Edward to you. Naturally, none of us in the tapestry is real. We are just images of people. But I got lucky as Edith of Wessex. I might have been one of the soldiers, about to have my head cut off or something just as awful. No, to begin with, I was happy to be Edith, but it can be a bit lonely. There are only a couple of other women in the tapestry, and they aren't close enough to have a chat.

My husband is OK, but he knows he's dying, and it's like an extreme case of man flu. All he ever talks about is how much he is suffering. Sometimes I wish they had stitched him dead — as he is in the picture below — so that I could get some peace and quiet. He is better company than the soldiers, though. They love their weapons and, at night, they run about shouting "Attack!" and trying to kill each other.

After almost 950 years, it's pretty irritating.

The other day, there was a girl standing in front of the tapestry. She was really young and was wearing a T-shirt that said "the future is female". I thought, "Lucky you!" The men trapped in here with me can't harm me, but most of them are so boring.

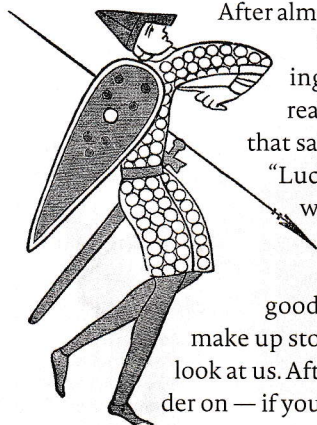
The great antidote to this is a good story. In the early years, I used to make up stories about the people who came to look at us. After dark, we'd sit up, and I'd embroider on — if you'll excuse the terrible pun — bits of

stories that I'd picked up. If a couple stood looking at us for long enough and we could hear their conversation, I'd spin it out for weeks — months even. Figures from other parts of the tapestry would move up as close as they could to listen. I do like a happy ending, though, and if you're telling a story to men, there has to be quite a bit of action. They got sick of what they called my sentimental stories and went back to fighting each other.

Now I concentrate on trying to keep up with the world on the other side of the glass. It's amazing what you can pick up. I have years and years of fashion trends in my head, and I can't say I like the direction it has been taking over the past 20 years. Whoever invented Lycra deserves an arrow in the eye. Talk about common!

I have been following the development of technology, too, although I'm not sure why people need to text when they are standing in front of the Bayeux Tapestry. I mean, what could be more exciting than the story we tell?

Then, a few months ago, I managed to read a headline that said we were being lent to England by the French government. Lent, my foot! We're going home. After all, we were stitched over there. Why do you think my English is so good? I'm really excited! First, we might get to see some celebrities. I've been dreaming of Emmanuel Macron for weeks. Actually,



antidote ['æntɪdəʊt]
• Gegenmittel, Gegengift

embroidery [ɪm'brɔɪdəri]
• Stickarbeit

foreseeable [fɔː'siːəbəl]
• absehbar

knight [naɪt]
• Ritter, Edelmann

literally ['lɪtərəli]
• im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes

Lycra ['laɪkrə]
• Elastan

man flu ['mæn fluː] ifml.
• Männergrippe

my foot! [maɪ 'fʊt] ifml.
• So ein Quatsch!

pretty ['prɪti]
• hier: ziemlich

pun [pʌn]
• Wortspiel

spin sth. out [spɪn 'aʊt]
• etw. in die Länge ziehen

stitch in [stɪtʃ 'ɪn]
• hineinsticken

tapestry ['tæpɪstri]
• Wandteppich

text [tekst]
• SMS schreiben

trapped [træpt]
• gefangen

unless [ən'les]
• außer, wenn nicht

he has been to see us before — once, many years ago. He and Brigitte were so in love, standing looking at us, then kissing, then looking back at us. Very sweet!

I'm not sure which British celebs we'll see. British politics is in a real mess at the moment, so who knows who will be prime minister then? But maybe there'll be some actors and even some royalty present when we are unveiled in the UK. It would be great to see Meghan and Kate up close. Now those are two style icons of whom every woman should take note.

I'm a little worried about the transportation when they send us to the UK. We are all very delicate, as you can imagine. I hope they don't tear me. On the upside, if I did get damaged, perhaps they could replace that horrible yellow of my dress. The colour does nothing for my complexion.

My biggest wish, though, is that moving us away from this sleepy place will give us more access to the world in general. At the moment, most of our information comes from reading over the shoulders of the museum wardens as they sit around waiting for the museum doors to open. Jacques reads *L'Équipe*, which is worse than useless. Marcel usually comes in with the local newspaper, and he sits directly in front of me. Unfortunately, he's always picking his nose. God knows what he's got up there. It certainly keeps him busy — and as he moves his arm about, he keeps covering up bits of text. It's most frustrating. Back in the days when we were stitched, I could have had him garrotted.

I'm hoping for a more educated type of warden in the UK. If there was only a way to ask visitors to bring a newspaper and hold it so that I could just take a quick look at what's going on. Digital media are for the most part unreadable. I will have to rely more on the spoken word. That could make the next 950 years very tiring.

celeb [sə'leɪb] *ifml.*

► Promi

complexion [kəm'plekʃən]

► Teint, Aussehen

delicate ['delɪkət]

► empfindlich

garrotte [gə'rɒt]

► erdrosseln, garottieren

pick: ~ one's nose [pɪk]

► in der Nase bohren

tear [teə]

► zerreißen

tiring ['taɪrɪŋ]

► ermüdend, anstrengend

unveil [ˌʌn'veɪl] ► enthüllen

warden ['wɔːdən]

► Aufseher(in)