

Why did I move to Scotland?

One day it became clear. I came to the realisation that the plot of my life just did not make sense anymore and I needed to live a life from a new perspective. In that moment of time, I knew it was time to go. I had the decision to either move to Scotland with my mother, stepfather and brother or stay in South Africa and live with my father and stepmother. This was a decision that would change my life tremendously and I knew leaving the rest of my family and friends was going to be strenuous. But I was torn between having this nostalgia for the familiar and then an urge for the foreign and strange. I made the decision to pack up my entire life and make a fresh start.

The difference between a typical life and an extraordinary one is in my opinion a matter of perspective. I pulled the curtains. Looked outside my window. And I became aware that this is a fascinating world full of places to discover. I am going to miss going on a safari and travelling down dusty dirt roads without a destination in mind, while trying to spot animals. I will long for the days I hiked up mountains with my grandfather and screaming out into the void. I will yearn playing in the sand with my cousins when we went to the beach. My heart will ache for the times I slept under the stars in the woods on our family camping trips. I remember my father would tell me stories of when he was a teenager whilst sitting by the crackling fire. I will miss making memories. However, I decided it was time to alter my own perspective on life and risk absolutely everything for the smallest chance that something amazing could happen, by moving to Scotland.

I was born in South Africa and lived there for thirteen years until I moved to Scotland three years ago when my mother was offered a job. My parents got divorced when I was six years old and I lived with my mother and saw my father on weekends. I had a nomadic lifestyle mainly because my mother loved to move and experience living in different towns in South Africa. In total, I have lived in six different houses and attended six different schools all within South Africa. Therefore, being the new kid on a regular basis gave me the opportunity to gain a

lot of confidence and I believe my mother played a major role in my desire to experience a new perspective on life. My father and I have always had a strong bond and saying goodbye to him was onerous but he said, "I don't want you to spend your whole life never being able to see the rest of the world."

About a month, before I climbed on a plane to Scotland I considered staying with my father but he and my mother knew that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity. So, after many late nights of me on the phone to my family and friends they all said the same thing, "We are going to miss you so much but it's your decision if you want to stay or go." I decided I was going to go and start a new chapter in my life. I left my school, said my goodbyes to all my friends and family, packed everything I owned into cardboard boxes and put them all in a gigantic shipping container as my mother was not leaving anything behind. I inhaled the future and exhaled the past.

Scotland was very admirable from the moment I stepped off the eighteen-hour plane journey. The old buildings and green hills were so breathtakingly beautiful. The scenery looked like something from a postcard and the buildings were old and vintage. However, the weather was nothing like I had ever experienced. The rain pelted down from the sky and grey clouds grew ominously with high winds blowing my hair in all directions. We settled in very quickly and our shipping container with everything we owned in it arrived safely a day after we did. We unpacked everything into our new home and that was the start of a wonderful adventure. My first day of school was exciting. I could reinvent myself and that is exactly what I did. I made friends instantly and everyone was incredibly welcoming, I also was asked so many questions. People were so interested in listening to my story. I had people ask me, "So, what is South Africa like? Besides the gorgeous animals what are the people like? Isn't it dangerous? Tell me do you have a pet lion?" My response was you cannot describe South Africa without talking about all the animals, beautiful sunsets and the lush green landscape and sweeping savannahs and the kindest of people but unfortunately, I do not have a pet lion.

I keep in touch with my family and friends and I fly back twice a year during the holidays to see my father. This means I get to see my family again whilst being able to pursue grander ambitions here in Scotland. I can guarantee myself of getting an excellent education and I am fulfilling my dream of living in a foreign country and experiencing a new perspective on life.

Even to this day, no matter the time or place, I am always lingering in my own thoughts. Which are twirling around like loose specks of dust in the light – blurring my focus and demanding my attention. I think about how I will never be totally at home again because part of my heart will always be in South Africa. I guess that is the price I have to pay for loving and knowing people in more than one place.