

Elbe-Parey -- A Tale Of A Scandalous Baroness In Saxony-Anhalt

The ability of a writer to take a real-life story and turn it into a work of fiction is part skill and part art. And one author who managed to do that was Theodor Fontane who loosely spun a tale of a real Baroness from the town of Elbe-Parey into one of the greatest German tales of all time.

The fictional story is Effi Breist, whereas the real story is that of Baroness Elisabeth von Ardenne. The fictional account talks of sex and adultery of a woman married to a man almost 20 years her senior.

The real Baroness, married to a man less than 10 years older, is also awash in scandal and adultery at the dawn of the 20th century.

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What's the point in me bringing all this up?

Simple, because the real Baroness lived here at the Schloss Zerben (in one of Elbe-Parey's seven villages). The castle is quite graceful, built in a Classicist style of the 19th century. Sorry, no medieval ramparts, Renaissance accents, or ornate Baroque architecture at this schloss.

While you're here be sure to stop by the *Dorfkirche*, originally of Romanesque design but updated and remodeled in 1753.

You think you'd be saying goodbye to Baroness Elisabeth von Ardenne, but over at the Baroque Trinity Church (built 1690s), you'll find the Plotho family crypt.

Oh, did I forget to mention that Elisabeth's birth name was Elisabeth von Plotho?

We do get to leave the Baroness behind as we make our way to Elbe-Parey's other villages.

In Bergzow the Village Church might look a bit decrepit, but that's all part of its 12th century charm. Who cares if its tower looks a bit off, it was destroyed during [World War II](#) and again by lightning in the 1960s.

Derben's also got a Romanesque, medieval church from the 14th century. Right outside is a monument to slave laborers who died here in the 1940s.

Ferchland is one of the oldest villages, dating to around 2,600 B.C. Its more modern sites include a village church and those half-timbered houses that Germany's so famous for.

It's another Romanesque church in Hohenseeden, but you'll want to be here for its 3-day Horse Festival every summer and its Animal Farmer's Market on the 2nd Saturday of every month.

They aren't the only events that go on in Elbe-Parey. How could I ever leave out the *Bauernmarkt* (Farmers Market) every month, the *Zwiebelmarkt* (Onion Market) in early October, and the *Winzerfest* (Vintage Festival) soon afterwards.

While I might not be a skilled story teller like Herr Fontane, I hope I told you the true tale of Elbe-Parey and some of Baroness Elisabeth von Ardenne's tale.