

I trembled during my first kiss

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Marriage with Roger Fritz last summer. The birth of her daughter in October.

At the age of eight years, she started with theatre, at the age of twelve then with films. Is a normal life growing up as a "child prodigy" at all possible?

"Of course. I have to thank my mother because she was wonderful, very amicable. That's why I never really missed my father. At my confirmation, when I was fourteen, I had one wish. I said I'd like to get to know my dad because I had never seen him until then. So she drove me there and introduced me to my dad. I have a very good relationship with him now, but he's a bit of a stranger, of course."

A strong attachment to one's mother and the lack of attachment to one's father is the ideal breeding ground for a screwed-up youth. With Helga Anders, you don't sense much of that.

"I was only allowed to wear lederhosen, white boys' shirts, and sandals because I tore up everything else. I fought and wrestled with the boys and we played Cowboys and Indians. I was really into that. I was the leader and the chief. Weird because I was just not interested in dolls and the like. I was insanely messy, my school stuff looked horrible and I didn't want to wash myself either. So I was a horrible child. That changed when I was 12 or 13..."

During that age, things change for almost all girls. It is perhaps the most difficult time, the time of discoveries, of realisations and of saying goodbye to your childhood.

Helga Anders not only became tidy then, small things started becoming larger to the right and left under her white boys' shirt.

"So was I ashamed of that? On the contrary, I was incredibly proud of my breasts and went to my mum and said: 'Look mum, they're already growing'. I found it very interesting. The other was the physical changes when becoming a woman, which started with me at the age of 12 and caused me a lot of trouble the first few times.

But otherwise no problems with pimples or whatever else you get during those years."

For her confirmation, she not only wanted to get to know her father but also urgently wanted something for her small breasts. A bra seemed too mundane to

her. She had read something about booster pads and thought they were fancy. Her mother only laughed and gave her a size 1 bra. So that everyone could see it, Helga wore her tightest jumper over that small bra. Her teachers noticed the fine padding, as did her schoolmates.

And the boys noticed it. "As soon as you get to secondary school, the boy-meets-girl thing starts. I always got along well with the boys. Funny thing is I've never actually had girlfriends. I once raved about our German teacher. I revered her as much as I loathed our maths teacher. But otherwise there were no other women. I don't get along very well with girls today either. Well, as to the boys. I was madly in love with one, I still remember that today. He wrote something for me in my poetry album: 'Always practice loyalty and honesty...' And he drew me a heart with it. I guarded it like a treasure."

Learning about the facts of life was like a shock

For Helga, the inevitable moment approached when she was to receive her first kiss. No hearty kiss on the cheek, but a real kiss on the mouth.

After all, she was a film actress and surrounded by young heroes of cinema with eyes in their heads and blood in their veins.

"Back then, I still had an awful lot of baby fat. I only managed to lose it over the years when I stopped eating chocolate. Chocolate is good for your figure if you don't already have one."

Certainly. But what about the young hero of cinema? Wasn't his name Michael Ande, 17 and proud, who didn't just hold Helga in his arms on stage in the "Die kleine Komödie" (The Little Comedy) in Munich? Helga, who was fourteen?

"Yes, that's true. He kissed me. That's correct. It was not more than that one kiss. He took me home right to the front door after the theatre. My mum wasn't home then. We were deeply in love. At the front door, he suddenly took me in his arms and kissed me. My knees were shaking. I went into the flat and was completely silent. I was angry, I found it absolutely disgusting that he had

kissed me. Michael didn't understand why I was angry with him. Later I explained it to him and he laughed. 'When you're 16, he said, I'll kiss you again properly, and then you'll like it. With 16, he wasn't the one who kissed me but someone else. He did it in a very loving and beautiful way. And I thought it was nice.'

The fact that Helga found her first kiss disgusting has nothing to do with the fact that she knew nothing about love. She knew all sorts of things. However, Helga Anders did not get her knowledge from the studios, from books, or even from her mother who knew everything.

She had been wondering for a long time how babies are made.

"I knew the difference between girls and boys. You get to know this from those famous playing doctor games that all young children probably do. When I was about 10, a friend told us on the way to school: 'Yes, so babies are made as follows. Mummy and daddy cut themselves and let a little blood flow into a bowl; it is mixed after which mummy has to drink it, and she gets a child from it'. We thought what she said was very clever."

Oswalt Kolle knows differently.

Helga learned the correct way to make children from a 21-year-old acquaintance when she was about 11. She explained it very nicely, seriously and calmly. The result was surprising.

"When I heard that, I burst into a fit of laughter; I didn't believe it and said: 'That's not possible, you're just making fun of me. That's a load of rubbish!' Then I asked others who confirmed it. After I had come to terms with it, I asked my mother. She told me the same thing. But honestly, I was shocked at the time. One story in particular stuck in my mind for years. The acquaintance who explained the facts of life to me described what men have as 'male sexual organs'. This expression haunted me like a nightmare for years."

Theory one day became practice. No one who had anything to do with the then 17-year-old Helga Anders in cinema thought of her as an innocent virgin. Helga was on her guard like a silly



Helga Anders: "Roger and I will explain the facts of life to our children properly – so they are not shocked!"