

Our Waiter: Steve Fuger

He swished across the restaurant, arms outstretched in greeting, swirling chairs from the nearest table, "Sit! Sit!"

"May we sit over there?" asked Ron, "by the window?" a window with a view over Athens.

The waiter stiffened, levelled Ron with a stare to petrify a Greek god, and hissed: "Sit here! Sit there! Sit anywhere!" windmilling his arms to encompass the largely unoccupied dining room.

We sat by the window and, bowing to the children's food preferences, ordered non-Hellenic schnitzel, chips and peas, juices for them, wine for us. And our tragedian flounced off, punching open the swing door into the kitchen. Moments later he elbowed his way out through the opposite wildly swinging door, bottle of wine, corkscrew sprouting from the top, in one hand, index finger of the other embedded to the first knuckle within a nostril. Extracting the finger, examining it, he pulled the cork and wiped said finger around inside the neck of the bottle, all the while heading in our direction, and me praying mightily that this was not our wine. It wasn't. But what occurred behind swinging doors, I chose not to dwell on.

Plates were dealt, as from a deck of cards, dramatically with talented precision, thump, thump, thump, thump, around the table. Drinks delivered with aplomb. The children riveted. To them and me our star-turn feigned sympathy; but to Ron?... he would pause, nailing him with that withering stare.

Cue the platter, aloft on fingertips, the food in place by centrifugal force as he waltzed around us. To me: schnitzel, chips and peas, aesthetically arranged, gravy poured artistically with flourish. The children agog, fussed over by their personal showman. Then Ron:

He approached, stopped, stepped forward, and placed the schnitzel in the middle of Ron's plate. A pause, a heartbeat, a stare, and a pile of chips landed on top of the schnitzel. That pause, that heartbeat, that stare, before an avalanche of peas tumbled down the chip mountainsides. Collectively we held our breath as he wielded the gravy boat: a low lava-trickle over the peas, then more, a deluge, the

gravy boat rising to full arm's height, still pouring, descending, emptying, and tilting away with a resounding cymbal finale against the serving platter.

Inclining his head to Ron, our tragicomedian bowed, spun away and swanned back through the swing door into the kitchen.

"I think you upset him" I said.

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