

THE UNREQUESTED PORTRAIT

Hi, my name is Andrea, and today, I am going to tell you about that time I made a really weird and, at the end of the day, funny encounter at a restaurant here in Rzeszów.

So, let's start from the beginning. It was my first week as a volunteer here in Rzeszów, I was still trying to figure out the other volunteers personalities and were still in the "let's go out to eat everyday" mood (we then realized it was a better idea to buy some pasta and some pesto at the grocery shop or else, we were going to finish our money in the first two weeks of project, but that is another story).

After a quick debate, we chose to go at a local restaurant that has buffet, that place has a large variety of dishes so we go there often, because everybody always finds something of his (or her) liking.

So, we entered the eatery, and while we were in line to take the food, an -apparently- slightly drunk man approached us and greeted the three girls of our group - Yuki from Japan, Nasiiat from Kyrgyzstan and Mafalda from Portugal- with a courteous attitude and some kind words; he didn't speak English but he still managed to compliment them with an enthusiastic: "Beautiful girls" or something along those lines.

As fast as he came, he left and took a table not too far away from us; we honestly didn't pay that much attention to him, the girls appreciated the compliment and we continued our chit-chat.

So, we paid and we sat all together at a table, ready to enjoy our tasty food.

After 10 minutes of conversation, the man comes back to us with a paper in his hands... it was a portrait of Mafalda, the Portuguese girl!

Mafalda was a little shocked and reluctant to accept the portrait but the man insisted, he wanted her to accept the apparent gift. In the end, my volunteer partner accepted the drawing and took it from the man's hands, who even wanted her to sign it with her name!

Us volunteers all started to thank and celebrate the man for the kind "gift", but as soon as we began to do that, he started to make the gesture of money with his fingers.

We didn't really catch immediately what he was meaning by doing that gesture, and the more we didn't understand, the more his face was going from content and playful to rusty and annoyed.

He started to speak to us with an angry tone and, we don't speak Polish, but there is a word he said, that we all understood distinctively: "Kurwa", which is not really a word that someone who wants to be kind to someone else would use.

Mafalda was mortified and gave back the unwanted commission and, really funny thing, he didn't throw the portrait away, he rolled it up and put the it back in a little bag that he had with him, as to say that he would have found someone else who would have appreciated the "gift".

He kept on mumbling for a while but fortunately, the waitress heard what was going on, took our defenses and told the man to leave us alone and exit the restaurant, which he did.

We took a deep breath in and tried to comfort Mafalda, who was a little striked for what just happened.

We then finished our meals, thanked the lady who helped us deal with the man and left the restaurant, with the bellies full of food and one more memory to share with our family and friends.