

Are you a chicken or less?

September 2008: The polish guy was standing up, face red, shouting like a madman, verbally abusing our hostess and nobody did anything to stop him.

This took place in the Italian village of Massa Lubrense where seven members of Mirca had been invited to stay for a week, experiencing great cooking and interesting meetings with locals. It was a time when we were able to do a show together.

All this thanks to our hostess. So why was this polish guy shouting at her in front of all the rest of us, in her home? Why indeed?

He was upset because something she said. It was a misunderstanding and he thought she had been disrespectful to him. It was not so.

He got up, face red etc. And he verbally, violently attacked our hostess. This went on and on, while our hostess looked more and more intimidated by the force coming from this polish, angry man. It went on and it was a disaster to watch.

At the table there were me, my wife, our hostess. There was also the fiance of our hostess, an Italian. He was sitting next to our hostess to her right, and he was shrugging his shoulders, saying nothing, doing nothing.

Next to the polish guy there was an american woman. She tried to speak, I saw her, but she was way too soft to even be heard through the noise.

Next to her was a swedish, older man. This guy used to be a friend of mine. I was also watching him, as I was sitting across the table. He did not say one word, didn't move a muscle all through the verbal abuse. This former friend of mine was numb looking.

To his right sat another friend of mine, from Sweden also he. We used to do plein-air together before this week in Italy. He was much like the other swede, nothing happened. He did nothing to defend our hostess, a woman being abused in front of her dinner party.

My wife was sitting to my left and next to her there was a Bulgarian couple. The woman was also, like the american woman, trying to interfere, but she was not heard as the polish man got louder and louder as

anyone tried to talk some sense into him. The Bulgarian man did nothing.

My wife had also tried to get through to the angry man but failed and as the noise increased she whispered to me: "You have to do something." And this was also my own conclusion, so I got on my feet and confronted the guy. "You stop!"

And as he kept going, now attacking me verbally, I repeated this "You stop!" and actually, eventually I got through to him, through his wall of emotion. He finally knew that I wouldn't back away from his abusive behaviour. There was one point where I thought maybe he would raise his fists, in which case I would have been prepared. But he didn't. He slowly withdrew and got back on his chair, shaking with fury.

The following day I was approached by our hostess and the american woman; they both told me they were grateful for my action.

The Bulgarian couple said that they were used to this kind of events from their home country and that it wasn't such a big deal.

The other three men said nothing, not to me at least, and I didn't bother to talk to them about it. Truthfully, I was surprised that at least the fiancee did nothing to defend his girlfriend. I couldn't help but to feel a little sad about these cowards sitting still while a woman had to face this bad behaviour on her own.

The rest of the stay went by: It was a bit cold between me and the pole, this was obvious.

Getting back to Sweden, after some time, my friend in plein-air complained about how I had handled the situation at the dinner table and he hinted that he was not the only one who was critical.

Conclusion:

There are men and there are chicken. And the chicken will do nothing themselves, they might complain about the action of real men. This puts them below chicken.

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