

THE MARTIN FAMILY

Carmenstrasse, 48

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SWITZERLAND

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Dear Reader,

I hope that you are happy and healthy. We've had an exciting week. It began last Friday.

"Are you asking me for a *date*?" Nazy inquired as we drove home.

"I'm suggesting that we have dinner. Out. Tonight."

"That sounds like a date..."

"It is dinner at a restaurant."

"So? You don't like my cooking?"

It was, I hoped, dinner soon. It was Friday night and we were already in the car. I was hungry, but we needed to book a table. Nazy's eyes *sparkled* as she pulled out the latest **GUIDE TO ZÜRICH**. She read reviews and telephoned for reservations.

"Ausgebuched?" Nazy repeated (again). "They're completely booked," Nazy explained after ending the conversation with...

"Wasn't that your fifth choice?" I asked. "We're not good at efficiently booking a table."

"**We're** not good? **You** didn't suggest eating out until..."

Luckily, Nazy was able to book at Emilo's, her sixth choice. It was a new discovery in, what was for us, a **different** part of town. Luckily, Claudia, the navigation computer, wasn't flummoxed by the location. We (okay 'she') easily located the restaurant and..

"A parking place, Nazy!" I gushed. "An actual parking place *right in front of the restaurant*. It is a sign from God."

"It may be a sign that Emilo is not a good cook," Nazy murmured.

"And," I continued, "I have change for the meter. This is great!"

"Let's walk around and see if alternatives are available," Nazy continued. "I don't like the looks of Emilo's."

We strolled along the chilled streets discovering a (fully booked) Lebanese Restaurant (The Cedar) and were turned away from a cozy French Eatery (Le Bistro). We ended up at Emilo's.

"No candles!" Nazy thought, opining on the (lack of) ambiance as we walked in.

"People come here for the grilled chicken," the waiter explained once we were seated.

I ordered wine and we both ordered the *signature dish*: half a grilled chicken. As a side dish, I ordered risotto. Nazy ordered **spinach**.

The "chicken" arrived.

"That," I whispered, "is a very small chicken."

"The waiter is going to cut it in half," Nazy gasped.

"With what? Tweezers, manicure scissors and a magnifying glass?"

"*I've seen eggs bigger than that chicken*," I thought. "You should have ordered scrambled chicken, Nazy." I said after the waiter served us.

"You should have let me cook at home," Nazy replied.

"*This 'date' is really going well*," I thought. "At least we found a parking place," I noted.

"I'll have my coffee at home," Nazy concluded.

Back home, Nazy frowned at the Apple TV. When we last mentioned the Apple TV, the Apple store had replaced the original (defective) unit. Then I had made three trips to Media Markt to get the special (and €xpen\$ive) cables necessary to establish functionality. I loaded selected photos into an iTunes Library and enabled home sharing. Everything was working...

... for about 3 days. We woke up one morning and:

"You broke it, Dan." Nazy declared.

"Nazy, my dear, it was working when we went to bed. It was not working when we woke up. Why do you think that I broke it?"

"You don't know how to set it up."

"Nazy, my dear, it was working when we..." I stopped. (A quick glance at my wife convinced me that this approach was feckless and fruitless.) "Let's take it back to the Apple Store and ask them for assistance."

"They'll never give you another new one." Nazy muttered.

"Let's see what they say at the Apple store."

I arrived for the appointment on time. Nazy, coming separately with the defective device, was also on-time (barely).

"... and so," I concluded. "Now we're back for the third time."

"*I'm sure Dan broke it*," Nazy thought. "Do you have a lot of problems with the Apple TV?" I asked.

"It's not our, eh, most reliable product," the clerk replied.

"So you usually need to replace them?" I asked.

"Well, replacing them twice is not usual. They don't work in a variety of different ways."

"That's consistent with our experience," I thought.

I have re(re)installed the Apple TV which is, once again, working. More importantly, Nazy now believes that I am not responsible for any..

"... shortcomings, You agree that I am not responsible for any and all shortcomings."

"Any and all shortcomings?"

"Yes, that's what we agreed."

"Your request is .."

"Reasonable? All-encompassing? comprehensive?, complete?"

"Ridiculous."

Darius called while Nazy and I were discussing the situation. The political situation in Lebanon was deteriorating. The government had fallen, Hezbollah was on the rise and..

"Now we've had to delay final exams. The students are afraid they'll be stuck in a roadblock or will be asked to donate tires to burn in the street."

"Bringing down the government in order to get a few more days to study for final exams sounds a bit extreme, Darius," I replied. "What about next semester?"

"I may have to find a new job if the US embargoes Lebanon."

"Hmm.. When you're applying for a visa, don't mention your time in Iceland or Lebanon."

"Why?"

"Maybe someone will 'connect the dots': Darius arrives in Iceland and then the economy collapses. Darius arrives in Lebanon and then the government collapses."

"Thanks, Dad. Mom says that I can come 'home' if everything falls apart in Beirut."

"Hmm.. Switzerland would be a real challenge for you, right?"

Take care and Cheers,

Dan



