

The Story of a Day



By Velina Derilova

I got to the Blagoevgrad bus station at 1:40 p.m. only to find out the next bus to Sofia was leaving at 2:20. That evening, I was supposed to go to a film premiere I had been invited to. The thing was: I had forgotten to buy tickets so I needed to reach Sofia as soon as I could to get 'em before there were no tickets to get.

I tried to cure my frustration of having to wait while in a desperate hurry the usual way—by shoving down my throat the most unhealthy tasty thing I could get my hands on. A greasy three-day-old banitsa later, I was in the bus persuading my Sofia located

sister to use her late lunch break to buy the tickets for me. The answer was a resounding ‘NO!’

I tried to get the friend I was going to the premiere with to take care of the tickets. No luck there, either. She said she was working until 5 p.m. (the screening was starting at 6:30) and it became evident I’d be the one getting me out of my own mess. Oh, well.

By a miraculous turn of events traffic was relatively light and I arrived in Sofia at 4:30. If I really tried my best, I could get those two darn tickets and even stop by at my sister’s place for a quick shower.

Things started to look a little brighter when I went out of my sister’s bathroom at 5:30, having already secured the coveted tickets (losing a couple of liters of sweat in the process). I couldn’t help feeling good about once again getting out of a tricky situation. Yes, created by my own carelessness, but, hey, success is success either way!

So my friend and I got to the movie theater located next to the National Palace of Culture right before it was time for the doors to close. Luckily, we met the director of the film who had invited me to the premiere outside and he gave us passes for the party after the screening.

More than pleased that we made it after all, we took our seats in the beautiful art house cinema hall where people talked quietly and knew they were about to see a

meaningful documentary instead of an overrated blockbuster. Oh, and no one was eating popcorn.

After *Life Almost Wonderful*, a bitter-sweet story drawn from Bulgarian reality and centered on three brothers, was over, the audience applauded for a long time. One of the characters in the film—a terribly charming gay hairdresser—was there and thanked the audience about two dozen times for their respect and kindness.



The director invited the crew, an incredibly talented bunch of people, inexplicably shy to be on the stage, to join him and answer a couple of questions. A few curious audience members wanted to know some details about the lives of the characters but it was obvious that everyone wanted to go and get something to drink.

It was time for the after party.

We arrived at the Czechoslovakian club (Sofia has all sorts of weirdly cool places), where the fun had already started, at 10:30 p.m. We entered a beautiful, smallish ball room in which people were laughing and discussing whatever topics creative, cultured people happen to discuss. There was a neat, pretty stage where a classy jazz band was playing.

The gay-hairdresser-turned-documentary-film-star had assumed the part of a host and welcomed us like we were his very special guests of the night, and I'm sure, like



everyone else in the room, he had no clue what we were doing there.

Being probably among the few people outside the film business, my friend and I ran for the drinks' table where each of us grabbed a glass of white wine and pretended that drinking and being by ourselves made for a hell of a fun time.

Just as I was beginning to relive my suspicion that going to the party would be a terrible, awkward mistake, I spotted a familiar face! It was a guy named Yordan, the managing editor of the now defunct magazine I once did an internship for. I was more than thrilled to see him.

So I went to say hi and we engaged in a surprisingly pleasant conversation, despite never quite hitting it off during my internship. We were just catching up on what each of us had been doing when my friend joined in and it was plain to see from then on that three were a crowd.

Just as I had tactfully left them to exchange Facebook addresses in peace, something incredible happened. I saw a second living being I knew! Internships, it turned out, can be beneficial in many, many wonderful ways.

It was a great, young journalist from a daily newspaper I also did an internship for. He seemed equally excited to see me, even though he was there with the right number of friends, i.e. more than one.

After talking to him for quite some time and occasionally to my friend and Yordan, who despite enjoying each other's company seemed a little uneasy when left alone, we all decided to take the party elsewhere.

We went outside to get a taxi and, as it's often the case at parties like this, we met some guy we invited to join us. He was a Norwegian film and television producer on a business trip.

Some 15 minutes later, we arrived at the newest, coolest night club in Sofia and stormed in like it could close anytime. It was a huge place, even for Sofia standards, and I thought I might as well be in New York (that could have been the whine talking, though).

Once inside, to my surprise, I became involved in one of the most epic dance episodes in my entire life. My journalist friend turned out to be an awesome dancer and was quite adamant about making me his dance partner. I, on the other hand, had nothing against it.

The rest, as they say, is history. The feeling one wakes up to after an insanely unexpected, fun night like this one can only be described as priceless. In other words, the old Bulgarian saying that claims you can tell how a day would go by the way it starts, seems to me, can be a little erroneous. Sometimes, anyway.

