

Chapter 445 A Dinner Party

In his prime, Waylen exuded an alluring blend of charm and elegance.

He leaned in to kiss his wife, creating an enchantingly beautiful tableau.

Vera couldn't resist observing the intimate moment.

She watched, utterly fascinated.

Caught in the spell of the kiss, Rena's lips parted, whispering, "Waylen."

His fingers traced her lips...

Romance saturated the air.

Feeling like an intruder on the scene, Vera grabbed her purse, announcing, "I'll leave you two to it, then. Have a good chat."

"May I offer you a ride home?" Waylen extended the courtesy.

"No, I'll manage, thanks."

Unwilling to impose, Vera made a swift exit.

Once she'd gone, Waylen sauntered over to the door, closing it with a soft click.

Turning back, he found Rena's gaze fixed on him.

Approaching, he picked up a crystal glass, sniffing its contents.

Rena's visage, flushed, revealed her inebriation.

Settling beside her, Waylen delicately swept back her hair, his tone tender. "Are you still upset?"

Rena, perched at the bar counter, gazed into the nocturnal abyss outside, her voice subdued. "Waylen, surveillance isn't what anyone wants. Is it concern or mistrust?"

He smiled, a confession in one word. "Jealousy."

She braced for a confrontation.

Yet his gentleness disarmed her, breeding a mix of frustration and embarrassment.

However, this was no setting for an argument.

They departed together.

In the driver's seat of his black Rolls-Royce, Waylen, still in his formal attire, resembled a charming mafia boss.

Rena averted her gaze.

A chuckle escaped him, his spirits lifted by reuniting with Rena.

Upon halting, Rena sensed a deviation.

They were at a five-star hotel. Was Waylen intending an overnight stay away from home?

He released his seatbelt, querying, "Weren't you planning on a hotel stay?"

"I intended to stay alone."

Waylen's touch was gentle on her face, his voice husky. "Staying alone is a luxury here, a needless one."

With those words, he swung the car door wide.

He pulled Rena from the vehicle.

Collapsing into his embrace, she pounded on his chest. "Mind your behavior. We have children at home."

"I've asked your mother to watch them," he retorted, referring to

Eloise.

Rena's emotions flared between anger and exasperation. Their spat had necessitated Eloise's intervention with the children... Yet, undeterred, Waylen leaned close, whispering, "Opportunities like this are rare. You've been preoccupied with your uncle's and Albert's issues. You've neglected me."

Rena's eyes met his.

Inebriated, her voice carried a husky allure. "So, you invaded my privacy to gain my attention? How juvenile, Waylen!"

Under the nocturnal breeze, he dipped his head, his nose nudging hers.

"Mrs. Fowler, you're paying attention now, aren't you?"

She repelled him with a push.

Marching towards the hotel's entrance, Rena was closely tailed by Waylen, who lowered his voice. "Why seek solitude in a hotel? Come with me."

Her gaze flickered over him.

Procuring the finest suite, Waylen displayed no urgency, accustomed to their marital rhythms. Once inside, he methodically relieved her of her coat before drawing her into a protracted kiss.

Rena, lithe, was effortlessly encircled by his arm.

It was after considerable time that she murmured, "Waylen, intimacy isn't a panacea for marital discord. Had it been, we'd have reconciled that night."

His fingers traced her face tenderly as he professed, "I seek more than physical connection. What's on your mind, Rena?"

She slipped from his hold.

After quenching her thirst with half a glass of water, she

Chapter 445 A Dinner Party

+120 Points at most

whispered, "You're oversimplifying, Waylen. This transcends mere marital friction. I'm an adult, committed to our union. I don't merit such treatment."

Her tone was gentle, devoid of any barbs that might wound.

It stemmed from her reverence for their bond.

She believed he shared that sentiment.

Disrobing his jacket, Waylen approached from behind, enfolding her waist tenderly.

Their affection was palpable in his embrace.

His chin found purchase on her slender shoulder, his hand idly caressing her waist, devoid of overt desire.

Rena discerned his craving.

After a moment's hesitation, he confessed, "I know it upsets you, Rena, but I'm exhilarated, beyond control, when I do this."

He posed a self-inquisitive query, "Does this make me somewhat deviant?"

The glass in Rena's grip quivered.

His levity belied the gravity of his mental state, she perceived.

Her resolve softened.

Rotating to face him, she placed a hand on his shoulder, her gaze ascending to meet his.

In the depths of Waylen's eyes, she sought anchorage.

Her whisper extended a lifeline. "Will you let me accompany you to therapy?"

Waylen didn't resist. His voice, rough with emotion, conceded, "I have an appointment at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning."

Chapter 445 A Dinner Party

+120 Points at most

Rena's love for Waylen was profound.

Confronted with his mental struggles, she responded not with rebuke but with forgiveness and boundless patience.

Their hotel room, at a rate of \$6,000 a night, was the backdrop to their physical reconnection.

Waylen found immense satisfaction.

The following day, Rena stood by Waylen as he sought professional help. While he engaged with the therapist privately, Rena phoned Mark from the corridor, confiding in him the situation.

Mark, upon hearing this, sensed something amiss.

Yet, he refrained from prying into the couple's affairs, especially considering they seemed content with their resolution.

Offering noncommittal responses, Mark ended the call.

Overhearing the conversation, Peter couldn't contain a smile, remarking, "The vigor of youth is something else. Waylen's skillful, isn't he? Upsets his wife and then claims mental issues. Instead of anger, she's consumed with concern for him..."

Hesitant, Peter trailed off, embarrassment coloring his pause.

Mark unwrapped a candy, his smile cryptic.

Then, Peter shifted topics. "There's a dinner party tonight, Edwin's with you. Planning on canceling?"

Mark considered it.

However, upon reviewing the document, he inquired, "Wasn't this an investment-related dinner? Summon Maria."

Peter stepped out to fetch one of Mark's secretaries, Maria Manson.

Shortly, Maria appeared, a smile playing on her lips. "Mr. Evans,

Chapter 445 A Dinner Party

+120 Points at most

tonight's host is Mr. Simon Lewis, a big name in the showbiz. He's anxious about funding for his project. He's even managed to invite the play's leading lady—stunning and from Duefron's elite. She rarely makes such appearances."

Mark's curiosity piqued.

Upon inquiry, Maria confirmed, "The actress is Cecilia Fowler."

Peter's gaze met Mark's.

Dispassionate, Mark instructed, "Inform Simon I'll be punctual."

Maria nodded and exited.

Peter's smile was sly. "Perfect. The dinner has multiple investors. You could play Cecilia's guardian angel."

Mark's attention was anchored to the document.

After a pause, he murmured, "In Duefron, she's untouchable."

Mark's intent was singular: to see Cecilia, even just from afar.

Come afternoon, his tasks completed, Mark collected Edwin.

To make up for his absence for the night, he suggested dinner out. Children typically favored fast-food like fried chicken, a preference Mark was willing to indulge.

Yet, Edwin declined the fried chicken.

Grasping Mark's hand, his brow furrowed, Edwin declared, "I want rice."

Mark was baffled by the child's preference for such simplicity.

Patting Edwin's head tenderly, he proposed, "I can watch you eat the fried chicken."

"But I want the rice," Edwin clarified, blushing.

Mark smiled, acquiescing to the child's peculiar request.

"Alright, let's find you a restaurant."

He drove Edwin to a well-regarded establishment, bustling with patrons.

Edwin relished the meal.

As Mark mentioned he'd drop Edwin off before attending an evening event, the boy's demeanor shifted, his focus now solely on his plate.

Mark found Edwin's temperament reminiscent of Rena's.

He cajoled softly, "Your mother will be at the event, too. Don't you want us to meet?"

Edwin did, undoubtedly.

But restrained, he sidestepped. "I have a heap of homework tonight. I can't accompany you. You might as well just go to the event."

Mark's smile returned.

Post-dinner, they drove back to the villa where Zoey anticipated Edwin's arrival.

As Mark made to leave, Zoey approached him, her words firm. "No alcohol for you. Keep an eye on Cecilia; ensure she's treated right."

Mark offered a reassuring smile. "No need to worry, Mom."

Zoey hesitated, her initial words dying on her lips, and instead, she exhaled a sigh. "I've prepared your favorite snack. Some wontons with coriander."

A moment of surprise flickered across Mark's face.

Finally, he responded softly, "I'll bring her back."

He slid into his vehicle, the robust SUV offering an expansive view of the crimson horizon.

A craving for a cigarette tugged at him.

Yet, he refrained.

His health necessitated abstention from all harsh substances, tobacco and alcohol included. While such restrictions could render life lackluster for some, he found solace in Cecilia and their two beautiful children...

A gentle warmth touched Mark's features.

Upon his arrival at the club, the evening vibrancy was palpable.

Peter awaited him at the entrance.

As the vehicle halted, Peter leaned in, his voice a whisper. "Cecilia's here. She's unaware you're coming."

A smile tugged at Mark's lips.

Together, they ventured into the private dining area, already occupied by a dozen individuals.

Except for the film crew, there were five investors.

Upon entry, Mark's presence caught the attention of an acquaintance who initiated light conversation. It was Mark's voice that caused Cecilia to divert her attention from her phone, her gaze lifting.

It was him.

She hadn't been informed of Mark's attendance.

While Mark mingled, his attention discreetly remained on Cecilia.

Their past liaison had stirred ample talk, but current company seemed largely oblivious to their history.

Mark's gaze was inscrutable.

To the rest, it appeared Mark was taking a fancy to Cecilia,

prompting playful jibes. "Miss Fowler is no ordinary woman. Mr. Evans might not stand a chance this time."

Mark's chuckle was low, his ease in such scenarios evident.

Forgoing a direct response, he addressed someone near Cecilia. "Regardless of my prospects, I'd relish an opportunity to discuss the script with Miss Fowler. Lately, this field intrigues me to make some investment."

The seat adjacent to Cecilia became available as the person stood up to make room, and Mark took the opportunity to sit beside her. With eleven people squeezing into ten seats, the proximity was undeniable.

Mark was pressed against Cecilia, acutely aware of the softness of her waist, though his expression revealed nothing of his internal state.

Involved in the evening's mingling, he held a cigarette between his slender, pale fingers, not for smoking but perhaps as a social prop.

His handsome features complemented his formidable background.

Here, no one would dare challenge him or pressure him into smoking or drinking.

The room buzzed with energy.

Cecilia, mostly quiet, found herself the focus when a tipsy gentleman offered her a glass of wine, slurring, "A toast from Miss Fowler shall guarantee funding for the play."

Her eyes lifted.

Simon, caught in the tension between appeasing wealthy patrons and respecting the Fowler name, was apprehensive.

The prospect of a Fowler daughter entertaining the investor was unimaginable.

Chapter 445 A Dinner Party

+120 Points at most

Previously, Cecilia would have declined without hesitation, but Simon's faith and validation meant something to her, and he used to be such a big help to her career... If her accepting the wine could secure the investment, pride had no place.

Under the expectant eyes of the crowd, Cecilia rose, glass in hand.

She offered a poised smile. "Mr. Medina, I trust you'll honor your word."

As she prepared to sip, a slender hand enveloped hers, steadying the glass.

It was Mark.

A collective gasp filled the space.

They were taken aback. Mark's audacity to casually touch a lady, and not just any, but a Fowler, was startling.

Yet...

Nothing happened next. There was no slap, no rebuke from Cecilia.

Instead, a silent, intense exchange held between them.

The onlookers grasped at once that this was no ordinary interaction.

Mark's gaze locked with Cecilia's, where an emotional storm seemed to brew.

In a hushed tone, he asserted, "I'll drink it for you."

But as he motioned to take the glass, Cecilia's reflexes kicked in.

Remembering Mark's fragile health, she knew he couldn't afford even a sip.

She gulped down the wine hurriedly.

Chapter 445 A Dinner Party

+120 Points at most

Her cheeks were a rosy hue post-drink, rendering her even more enchanting.

Roger Medina, the initial instigator, found his sobriety hastening back.

He'd not only toyed with the Fowler patriarch's daughter but had also slighted Mark. Recognizing the gravity of the moment, he was about to say something, but Mark interrupted him. He declared, his voice resonant, "I will fully fund this play myself."

Roger's anxiety surged, not over potential profit loss, but the realization that he'd crossed Mark, a man renowned for his resilience.

Eager to invest but wary of the terrain, Roger observed Mark's lack of immediate action. Instead, Mark offered a subdued smile, advising, "Mr. Medina, no need to vie with me this time. Aim for the next project. Simon has an abundance of compelling scripts."

Simon, regaining his wits, hastily concurred.

Roger exhaled in relief, though cold sweat drenched his back.

As Mark engaged Roger in conversation, he effortlessly took control of the situation.

This apparent usurpation irked Cecilia.

In a silent protest, she consumed several more glasses of wine, her assistant's attempts to intervene proving futile.

The assistant's glance darted towards Mark, aware of the history he shared with Cecilia.

Initially, Mark sought to dissuade her, but he soon relented, allowing her to indulge.

The wine, of decent quality, wouldn't induce immediate inebriation.

However, Cecilia consumed half a bottle in the end, sufficient

Chapter 445 A Dinner Party

+120 Points at most

to impair her senses. As they prepared to depart, Mark assured her assistant, "I'll ensure she gets home safely."

The assistant, though hesitant, acquiesced.

Once Cecilia was settled in the car, Peter made a move to accompany them but reconsidered, sensing the intimacy of the moment, and instead closed the car door behind Mark.

As the window ascended slowly, Mark's gaze rested on the inebriated woman beside him. Her black hair cascaded freely, and she was adorned in a simplistic long dress, clutching an overcoat.

Her profile was a blend of sophistication and innocence.

Touching her face, Mark felt its feverish heat.

Hearing Cecilia's distressed murmurs, he surmised her emotional turmoil was the impetus behind her excessive drinking.

Having severed ties with Thomas, was she nursing a heartache?

A twinge of anguish gripped Mark, but he steeled himself, recognizing their current reality as a divorced pair. Despite the uniqueness of this solitary moment, it felt illicit.

After a spell of indecision, Mark steered towards the house on Gamous Road.

Taking her to the Evans villa in her current state would only distress Edwin and earn Zoey's ceaseless chiding.

Gently caressing Cecilia's face, he murmured, "We're heading home."

Thirty minutes elapsed before the black SUV pulled up at the apartment's entrance.

Cecilia stirred at the halt, her eyes fluttering open to unfamiliar surroundings. "Where are we?" she inquired, disoriented.

Chapter 445 A Dinner Party

+120 Points at most

A noise punctuated the silence.

Mark released his seat belt, leaning across to do the same for her, his voice a soft murmur, "It's the place we once called home."

Another vehicle approached, its high beams intrusive.

Cecilia shielded her eyes, discomfort evident as she reclined, her breathing shallow and visibly alluring. "Why don't I recall the place we once lived?" she probed.

In the closeness, Mark was enveloped by her scent.

It was a unique blend of her natural fragrance mingled with floral notes.

A dormant desire within Mark quietly awakened...