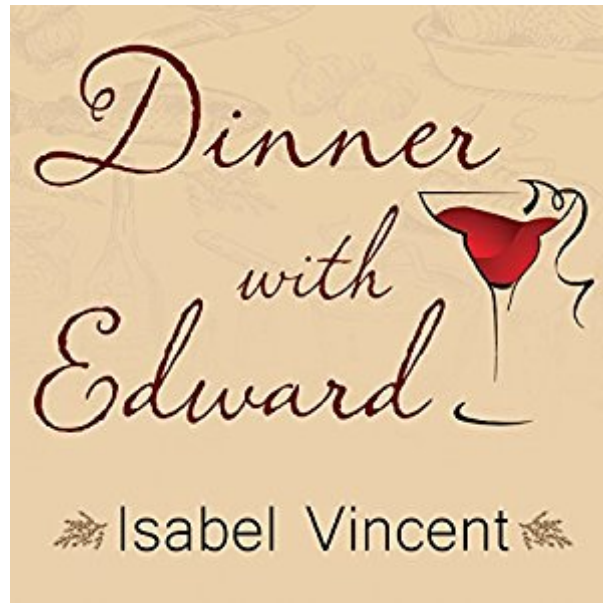


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Dinner With Edward: A Story Of An Unexpected Friendship



Synopsis

When journalist Isabel Vincent befriends Edward, both are at a crossroads: He wants to follow his late wife to the grave, and she is ready to give up on love. Isabel's friend, Edward's daughter, lives far away and has asked Isabel to check in on her dad in New York. At first Isabel is just doing her duty. But soon this charming, elegant, cultured man has become her dear friend. She gives him a reason to go on without his beloved wife of 72 years, and he gives her a renewed faith that happiness is possible. Each chapter in this true-life tale takes place at dinner at Edward's apartment, and, like Edward's meals, the whole adds up to so much more than the ingredients.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a food blogger, I am partial to books that contain food in some way. So, I loved Dinner with Edward because of all the mentions of food. However, I also love it because of the writing, the story and the characters. We first meet Isabel when she is talking with her friend, Valerie. It is shortly after the death of Valerie's mother and she is worried about her father, Edward. He is alone in New York in the apartment that he shared with his beloved wife, Paula. She lives too far away to visit him regularly. Isabel has just moved to New York to work as a reporter. She is struggling with a marriage that is unraveling and its impact on her young daughter. When Isabel tells Valerie that things are not going to well in her life either, Valerie suggests that she have dinner with Edward. She tells Isabel that he is a very good cook and perhaps this would help him. Isabel arrives at Edward's apartment for dinner, not knowing what to expect. What she gets is Grilled Sirloin

Steak, Sauce Bourguignonne, New Potatoes, Chocolate Souffle, and a lovely bottle of Malbec. What she also gets is the beginning of a wonderful relationship with Edward. This is the story of that friendship. The stories they share, all over lovingly described dinners. It is an unlikely friendship, but one that flourishes. Two people needing each other at the right place and the right time. I admit that as a foodie, I loved the descriptions of the food, the effortless way that Edward cooked. But I don't think you have to be all that involved with food to love this novel. The friendship is the heart of the story. I loved this book! I received an ARC copy of this book.

Hard to know how to rate this book because on some levels I loved, and on other levels I despised it. I loved most of the writing, and am always a sucker for good food writing. I also loved the premise of the story of how a middle-aged woman in crisis met and formed a mutually beneficial bond with a 92-year old widower also in crisis after having lost his wife of more than six decades. What I really did NOT like about this book was that it was clearly the story of a lonely, miserable and tormented middle-aged woman about to and going through a divorce who formed what seemed to be a profound bond with a very gentle and kindly elderly man but who, as she got her bearings, gradually dumped him. Initially she lives near him and there is lots of contact. Then she moves further away as she is getting her life together, and she admits that she started to neglect him. Lastly, she falls in love with a new man, and again she is pretty honest that she then hardly had any time for elderly Edward. To me the most painful was when Edward fell and was bed-ridden for months, and she does not even go to see him. While there was considerable charm to this book, I have known too many people who used others in this way, the supposedly deep friendship when they are in need, only to fizzle out when the person is no longer hurting. This left a very bad taste for me.

Dinner with Edward is very much in the same genre as Tuesdays with Morrie. The age-old story of a friendship between a young troubled character and an much wiser, older person. Only this time, the older Edward is a gourmet cook and prepares delicious dinners for the younger, having-trouble-with-her-marriage Isabel. Edward has just lost his wife and Isabel's friend (who lives out of state) asks her to check in on him by letting him prepare her dinner a few nights a week. Together, they plot, this will keep Edward happy and busy, while giving Isabel a much-needed break from her failing marriage. Each chapter starts with a menu of the glorious meal he prepares for Isabel and the drinks enjoyed before dinner "old fashioned, martinis "grown up drinks. It is over these drinks and delicious food that the conversations, reminiscences, and problems unfold. I had trouble finishing this book, and found it dull and predictable "same old

problems “same old trite wisdom” from an elderly man. Slow down, enjoy life as if every day is your last, and even this quote from the book: “He knew that paradise was not a place, but the people in your life” (groan) I never felt that “paradise” connection between Isabel and Edward, as each chapter reads like a disconnected short story. Edwards’ memories and past experiences never really connect with Isabel’s current day problems. Stories are told, advice is given, and food is eaten. And what food! Each chapter only comes alive with the descriptions of the wonderful meals prepared by Edward. You look over his shoulder as he gently stirs sauces and grills perfect steaks with herb butter. So I carried on, largely skimming the boring bits and reading for the food. But, in the end (get this!) no recipes “none” I felt bereft, cheated somehow. One reviewer said Dinner with Edward combined the best of Tuesdays with Morrie with Julie and Julia “since I didn’t like either of those books, I should have had fair warning. One saving grace, Edward describes, in detail, a method for perfect scrambled eggs. It’s on page 9 if you wish to avoid reading the rest of the book. A digital review copy was provided by Algonquin Books via NetGalley. See all my book reviews at BookBarmydotcom

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