

DINNER Á DEUX

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A Play in Ten Minutes

By Nance Crawford

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Karen: Mid-50s. Casually dressed, impeccable makeup and hair; SHE is not your average grandmother; widow.

Ed: 40s. Casually dressed, he is a lifelong bachelor.

Sheila: Late 60's. Ed's late mother, as she exists in his head.

Lou: Mid-40s. Karen's late husband, as he exists in her head.

Scene

An upscale restaurant.

Time

Yesterday evening.

SETTING: A busy restaurant.

AT RISE: Evening. KAREN and ED are seated at a large table for two, lingering over coffee. SHEILA is seated directly upstage of KAREN and ED, at a small table. LOU checks out the restaurant before wandering over to ED and KAREN, who do not acknowledge SHEILA and LOU.

SHEILA

(To ED.)

I can't believe you're going to do this.

(Muttering to the Universe.)

I can't believe he's going to do this!

KAREN

I don't know if the new gardeners are going to work out.

SHEILA

Living together is one thing, Edward...

KAREN

They're really sloppy.

SHEILA

...but this? God, not anymore! You don't have to do it! You can go on and on...

ED

How so?

SHEILA

And on!

KAREN

Well, I don't like having to go out and take the hose to the front walk after they've left because they stomp mud all over it when they finish weeding the flower beds.

SHEILA

And on!

ED

Just tell them not to.

KAREN

I don't speak Spanish.

ED

(Ruefully.)

Maybe it's time to buy a dictionary.

KAREN

(Chuckling.)

Oh, Ed. I have enough trouble with English, since the change hit. I'd create an international incident.

ED

Ask Barbara. Have her over for coffee when they're there and she can translate for you.

KAREN

I guess I could, if she can get free on a Wednesday afternoon.

LOU

Gardeners used to speak Japanese. And they knew what they were doing.

ED

(HE has something on his mind. After a pause, with difficulty.)

Honey - I've been thinking.

SHEILA

No, you haven't, it's impossible. You know it's impossible.

ED

Now that the estate is settled -

LOU

When did that happen?

ED

- I mean, Charlie called last night and said he'd be dispersing funds any day, now -

SHEILA

Good, dependable Charlie. A son who's a rock. To balance out this rock-head.

ED

- and I thought, well, I figured it's time to buy a new car.

KAREN

If you want to. It's your money.

LOU

Yeah. It's his money.

(To KAREN.)

I'm sorry I left you kids, instead of money.

ED

I mean, you can have the Honda. I won't need to trade it in.

KAREN

Oh, that would be great. Thanks.

LOU

You have the money, now! Buy her a new one!

ED

In a year or two, we can get you a new one.

KAREN

Oh. I don't need a new car.

LOU

Are you nuts? They don't grow on trees! Take it!

KAREN

The Honda's in good shape. I like it.

SHEILA

My God. She likes him. She really likes him.

LOU

(To SHEILA.)

Of course she likes him! What? Do you think my wife is a slut?

SHEILA

What the hell are you doing here?

ED

(Making avoidance an art form, HE reaches  
for the dessert menu.)

Uh - um - How about dessert - ?

LOU

I am doing the same as you. Eavesdropping, lady.

SHEILA

I am not eavesdropping. I am looking in on my son. And it's Sheila.

ED

Look at this.

LOU

You are eavesdropping, lady. Sheila. He's an adult, she's an adult. You're dead.

SHEILA

Ha. Pot calling the kettle.

ED

(Showing KAREN on the menu.)

Chocolate Bombardier Surprise.

KAREN

Whoa!

SHEILA

You hang around the house like a dried wreath.

LOU

I do not. I have five children and six grandchildren to check up on, plus two sons-in-law, one of whom is a workaholic and the other who should be in Sing Sing, on death row.

SHEILA

Go be with your daughters. Leave my son alone.

ED

Strawberry Vanilla Bean Mountain. With two cherries and no nuts.

(KAREN grabs the menu to look.)

LOU

Our daughters don't need me right now. Karen does.

SHEILA

She's got my son.

LOU

And a lot of good it does her. She works like a dog. Cooks, cleans -

SHEILA

Doesn't everybody? She should have a job.

LOU

She does. She takes care of him. Better than she ever did me.

ED

That looks great: Caramel Suicide with peaches.

SHEILA

She's older than he is.

(ED takes the menu back.)

LOU

So? I was older

SHEILA

That's different.

ED

Whoa, hey, they have it with chocolate, too.

LOU

Different how?

SHEILA

They'll never have children.

LOU

At her age? I should hope not!

ED

We could share one.

SHEILA

My Charlie already has two.

LOU

So that's enough grandchildren. I know. Six is impossible. You spend your time hither and yon. Hardly time for my daily Hallelujah.

KAREN

Looks deadly.

SHEILA

Charlie's not the best dad. He works. But Eddie'd be a great dad.

LOU

When? He's always in working, banging on that computer at all hours of the night. She sleeps alone.

SHEILA

She should. They're not married.

ED

Probably why they call it suicide.

LOU

Lady! They've been living together for eight years!

SHEILA

He's bored.

LOU

With my Karen? If he was that bored, he'd be dead.

ED

You don't want dessert, do you?

KAREN

Not really.

ED

We've got Rocky Road at home, don't we?

KAREN

Of course.

LOU

What kind of conversation is this?

ED

(Struggling to get it out.)

You know — ahh — Do you want to get married?

LOU

What?

KAREN

What?

END SAMPLE

**FOR A PERUSAL SCRIPT, PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHOR.**