



# Dinner with Edward: A Story of an Unexpected Friendship

*Isabel Vincent*

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**“Over mouthwatering dinners, an odd couple--a nonagenarian and a recently divorced reporter--engage in a series of discussions, from the importance of beauty, to living after loss, to the power of love to redeem and renew, to how to make a succulent duck breast. I loved every moment of this book . . . Everyone deserves her own Edward--and everyone deserves to read this book.”** —Susannah Cahalan, bestselling author of *Brain on Fire*

When Isabel meets 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. Thinking she is merely helping Edward’s daughter--who lives far away and asked her to check in on her nonagenarian dad in New York--Isabel has no idea that the man in the kitchen baking the sublime roast chicken and light-as-air apricot soufflé will end up changing her life.

As Edward and Isabel meet weekly for the glorious dinners that Edward prepares, he shares so much more than his recipes for apple galette or the perfect martini, or even his tips for deboning poultry. Edward is teaching Isabel the luxury of slowing down and taking the time to think through everything she does, to deconstruct her own life, cutting it back to the bone and examining the guts, no matter how messy that proves to be.

*Dinner with Edward* is a book about sorrow and joy, love and nourishment, and about how dinner with a friend can, in the words of M. F. K. Fisher, “sustain us against the hungers of the world.”

“A dinner with Edward is nothing to demur. Although the food (I am partial to the roast chicken, lovingly described) is excellent, it is the charming, sweet, and effortlessly wise company that makes this sweet read a charming way to pass a day.” —George Hodgman, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Bettyville: A Memoir*

## Dinner with Edward: A Story of an Unexpected Friendship Details

Date : Published May 24th 2016 by Algonquin Books

ISBN :

Author : Isabel Vincent

Format : Kindle Edition 224 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Autobiography, Memoir, Food and Drink, Food, Biography, Biography Memoir

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## Vincent

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## From Reader Review Dinner with Edward: A Story of an Unexpected Friendship for online ebook

### Terris says

I *loved* this story of friendship between a young 30-something woman, Isabel, and a 90-year-old man, Edward. He is the father of her good friend, Valerie, whose wife has just died. Valerie asks that Isabel visit her father because of his loneliness and grief, hoping a new friendship will keep him from being so depressed after his wife's death.

Edward is an amateur gourmet chef and loves to cook for friends, so Isabel becomes a frequent visitor. The two become close friends, sharing life lessons, histories, sorrows, and dreams. Isabel is going through a stormy time in her married life, and Edward helps her look at her life, as she tries to decide what she wants and what to do next.

It is a short book, very soothingly written with much talk about food: buying it, preparing it, and eating it. It is wonderful! Also, you can tell how they both love New York City and its vibrant hustle and bustle. It is just an amazing book recommended to me by a friend and which I am passing on to a friend. It is definitely a "friend" book :)

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### Diane S ? says

A wonderful relationship between an man whose wife of sixty two years has died and the author, asked to look in on him by his two daughters. Edward is an amazing man, a man who wholeheartedly loved his wife, loves to cook and entertain, Isabel is in a troubled marriage, a journalist who is working in New York. The menus are wonderful, the descriptions of the food make one hungry. So from dinners and conversation a special friendship is formed. A glorious and sentimental story of how two people a generation apart help each other through troubled times.

I fell in love with Edward, it was hard not to, he is such an elegant, intelligent man, a man who only uses the best. We learn of his life with his wife, so beautiful, so sad. We watch how Isabel changes, becoming a fuller person, makes changes in her life, happier. Learn a little history, Roosevelt Island and the mental institution that once inhabited this space and still leaves traces. All in all a wonderful, delightful story.

ARC from publisher.

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### DeB MaRtEnS says

3.5 stars Isabel Vincent is in her forties, with a crumbling marriage, newly employed by Th New York Post and has relocated with her family to New York from Toronto after a career spent primarily as a foreign correspondent. Edward, in his nineties and the father of Isabel's concerned friend Valerie, is a new widower, deeply bereft from the recent death of his beloved wife. Edward has lost his zest for life; Isabel is asked by Valerie, who lives in Canada, to check on Edward periodically.

Edward cooks - divinely. Old fashioned, perfectly composed dinners reminiscent of Julia Child's French

method of creating elegant cuisine are Edward's re-entry to having a passion for life again, and those meals begin by inviting Isabel to dinner weekly.

What follows is Isabel Vincent's memoir of those meals, of her friendship with the multi-talented and faceted Edward and the life changes for both. Edward becomes an admirer, a mentor, an advisor, a source of nourishment for Isabel's trampled soul and immature personality along with the food he brings, in the safe haven of his apartment. With Edward, Isabel experiences chivalry, develops a sense of her own femininity and examines life values from a broader scope. In effect, she grows up.

I cringed a couple of times when Isabel vented about "men", and that she didn't want anything to do with them again. I'm not sure if she intended for the reader to feel the nuances of her remark, or was truly unaware of the ageism in it. After a "certain" age, people lose visibility. Losing one's gender is actually disheartening, which the young in this world of politically correct "gender neutral" wouldn't understand. An elderly man continues to be a MAN, perhaps frailer, greyer but still wants to be considered a MAN. Women suffer from the same invisibility, pooled into the greyscale with men. Isabel's remarks pointed out her insular life experience, and how much Edward's insights had jump started Isabel's growth.

By end of the book, we see that Isabel has indeed "grown up", moving outside of the self-centred orbit that was hers upon moving to New York. She was a fortunate woman to have met Edward, at such a critical point in her life.

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### **Rebecca Foster says**

In this heartwarming memoir, a journalist tells how friendship with an elderly gentleman rekindled her appetite for life. New to NYC and with a faltering marriage, Isabel received an unusual request from her friend Valerie: Would she look in on Valerie's father, Edward? In his nineties, he'd recently been widowed and Valerie was worried about him losing the will to live. If he could have a guest to cook for and entertain, it might give him a new sense of purpose. As it turned out, it was a transformative friendship for the author as much as for Edward. Each chapter opens with a mouth-watering menu. Although Edward is now deceased, when we see him for the final time, he is still alive and well. This is a nice way to leave things – rather than with a funeral, which might have altered the overall tone.

Non-subscribers can read an excerpt of my review at [BookBrowse](#).

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### **Jess says**

I had a rocky start with this one; but once it got moving.... I sure did enjoy it. What a charming story that I found nuggets of life wisdoms interwoven in its pages.

A favorite quote Edward imparted to Isabel: " You are a fine and talented woman, whose potential is get to be realized given the love and support and luck we all need. Where you lost the will to fight for what is yours, where you gave away control of you life, is the mystery you are now unraveling. When you get it all back, hold on to it" That is some powerful stuff! I loved the both the simplicity and complexity of life that Edward lived. He loved a woman most passionately and lost her. He perseveres on, finding joys in life, food, and the people he meets. I wanted to meet him halfway through the book.

What is it about: Journalist Isabel Vincent a recent transplant to NYC strikes up a routine of having dinner with her friend's widowed father. Her friend doesn't live in New York and it is a comfort to have Isabel

check in on her ninety three year old father. What Isabel doesn't expect as through these culinary masterpiece dinners, she gains a friend, confidant, and guide to help her through her journey as mother, woman involved in a broken marriage heading to divorce, and a seeker in life. A lovely read.

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### **Connie says**

Isabel was just helping out a friend who asked her to check in on her father who was recently widowed. Nonagenarian Edward was grieving the loss of his beloved wife, and felt he had no reason to live. Isabel and Edward's first dinner together was the beginning of a five year friendship. Isabel's marriage was crumbling so she needed companionship as much as Edward did. She was also adjusting to life in New York City as an investigative reporter after previous jobs as a foreign correspondent.

Edward was a charming Southern gentleman who had come to New York hoping for an acting career, although he ended up working as a welder and a tailor. Edward enjoyed writing poetry, making furniture, and was a gourmet cook. He and Isabel enjoyed his fabulous meals, accompanied by perfectly chilled martinis and wine. Edward had a gift of enjoying life to the fullest--from making new friends to baking perfect apricot souffles. Edward told Isabel that he was grateful that Isabel had come into his life at a critical time. "We gave each other the courage to go on with our lives. We were equally giving and receiving in that period, which was crucial to you and me."

"Dinner with Edward" is a small, lovely book about a special relationship. In these days where we often eat on the run, it's also a reminder to take the time to share a wonderful meal with good food and thoughtful conversation.

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### **Debbie says**

This book started a little slow for me, but once it got going, I could not put it down! There were so many emotions running through this book. Edward had just lost his wife through death and Isabel was losing her husband through divorce. Neither wanted to go on. They both felt there was nothing left until they met. What resulted was a wonderful friendship over the most exquisite dinners (complete with details, don't read hungry) with Edward giving out little hints as to what made everything so good.

Yes, this is a "must have tissues" read and I LOVED it. Edward is a very special man and he teaches Isabel a lot about life, love and cooking. I can say while I did shed some tears, it does give a semblance of hope for the rest of us.

Thanks Algonquin Books for approving me to read this title and to Net Galley for providing this title in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Pamela says**

Connoisseurs of fine foods and refined friends, this elegantly charming memoir might just be your next great read. I myself, prefer food and fellowship on a more country casual scale. I couldn't quite make an intimate connection with the author or the urban oasis setting. Still though, overall, I enjoyed this tantalizing cameo memoir. And I could relate to how a woman loses herself, feeling overwhelmingly invisible and

inconsequential over the years, trying to be everything to everyone as a nurturer and working gal cog-in-the-wheel.

OH, but I warn you: gourmet foodie or not, this book will make you crazy hungry so consider this an after-dinner mint sort of read. Some of the exquisitely exotic dishes made me swoon and salivate with envy. Everyone needs be blessed with a wise and wonderful friend and foodie like Edward.

THREE \*\*\* Exotic Food and Exquisite Friends, Cameo Memoir \*\*\* STARS

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### **JoAnn says**

A delightful memoir of a friendship between a middle-aged woman in a failing marriage and a ninety-something widower trying to find meaning in life after the death of his beloved wife. Edward is a gourmet cook. Each chapter begins with a dinner menu and, naturally, includes Edward's tips and secrets. But this is as much about life, love, and sharing as it is about food. A perfect book for my recent flight from Denver to NY!

3.5 / 5 stars

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### **JanB says**

2.5 stars

Isabel, struggling over her crumbling marriage, and Edward, a man in his 90s who is grieving over the recent death of his wife, strike up a friendship over weekly dinners. The meals that are so lavishly described are a springboard for stories from both their lives. Edward's wisdom on love, marriage, and life is sprinkled throughout. Through this unlikely friendship, both begin to heal from their wounds.

The problem for me is I felt something was missing. It was sweet but there was no depth, and I didn't become attached to either character, especially Isabel. Although a short novel, I struggled to finish it. For a book that revolves around food so much, recipes would have been nice.

I do not recommend the audiobook. The narrator has an odd cadence to her speech and overacts the part. She reads it with a light chick-lit tone.

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### **Ammar says**

Beautiful and short. A book about love and nourishment. About slowing down and taking it easy. Isabel the journalist.. the newly separated and then divorced... Edward the 93 years old widower who cooks and by himself is a university of life.

Over many dinners .. life is discussed and advice dispensed. Love and death... life and work.. memoirs of the past and dreams of the future..

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Heart warming and touching. I wish there was some recipes of those wonderful dishes that he prepared for her

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### **Book Barmy (Bookbarmy.com) says**

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, reminisces, and problems unfold.

I had trouble finishing this book, and found it dull and predictable — same old problems — same old trite wisdom's 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.

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See all my book reviews at <http://www.bookbarmy.com>

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### **Frances Sarcona says**

It was a very easy read, however it lacked depth. I found the story to be a little boring and pointless. The characters were not development in a way that the reader would become attached to them. The book jumps around a lot into different moments in time but never really gets into great detail about anything. It is a

forgettable book.

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## Deb says

Read for Cook the Books

Dinner with Edward is a foodie memoir about a journalist who as a favor, starts having dinners with her friend's father to check on him as he is depressed after the death of his beloved wife. The dinners soon turn into a weekly event and a loving friendship that ends up helping both Isabel and Edward lead happier lives. Each chapter starts with the menu of a dinner that Edward cooked (An example: Grilled Sirloin Steak, Sauce Bourguignonne, New Potatoes, Chocolate Souffle, Malbec) and the food is talked about as well as life lessons. Edward gets Isabel's company and purpose by helping her and Isabel gets delicious food, cooking tips, and the prompting and guidance to live and love more fully.

I enjoyed spending time with Edward as much as Isabel did and was sorry to have the book end so quickly (it's only 224 pages). Of course any book that describes food so well and so lovingly gets extra points in my book--I wanted to eat and make so many of the dishes mentioned like soft shell crabs, fried in a light batter and served with hot melted butter, perfectly scrambled eggs, avocado salad with pungent blue cheese dressing, Fennel Remoulade over Lettuce, macarons and fleur de sel caramels, Pan-Fried Potatoes with Gruyere, Apricot Souffle and Apple Galette, to name just a few.

You can see my review as well as a recipe for Shrimp and Corn chowder inspired by the book on my blogpost here: <http://kahakaikitchen.blogspot.com/20...>

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## Kathryn says

Enjoyed reading this, delightful. Why did I read it? I wanted a food memoir to read for the Better World reading challenge and I saw a review for this by Katherine over at I Wish I Lived in a Library.

Plot Well there isn't one but there is a wonderful accounting of Edward in his nineties and Isabel who is in an unhappy marriage. Isabel visits Edward once a week and partakes in his delicious meals. No recipes but oh my, makes me want to appreciate and taste such food.

What Appeals to Me? The way Edward lives his life so fully in his nineties and his obvious deep love and devotion to his wife who is now dead. He battles with this loss but it does not diminish too much his participation in life. I liked the way Isabel valued the friendship and grew as a person in the time she was able to experience this special relationship.

And so... Very happy to have read it. As one person also pointed out from It's Monday! What Are You Reading? pointed out there is a great tip for scrambled eggs that she uses to this day. I have yet to try it but I will.

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