

Ex Convict 2741

Chapter 2741

"Valda, thank you," said Kyla.

"What's there to thank me for? As long as Grace is safe," Valda Theller said sheepishly.

As she was speaking, a figure hurried over. Jason arrived.

"Jason, Grace..." Kyla was about to explain what had happened when Jason said, "You don't need to tell me. I already know."

Jason did not sit on the chair in the corridor but stood at the emergency room door. His face was full of anxiety, unease, and fear.

He was unlike the calm and elegant man who seemed to have everything under control Valda Theller had seen at the banquet.

'It must be because... this man loves Grace.'

Valda Theller thought to herself when her phone rang suddenly.

Valda Theller looked at the caller ID and found it was a phone call from Brian, so she quickly walked to the corner of the corridor and answered the phone.

"I'm at your studio. Your two assistants said you went out for

Chapter 2741

2/3

lunch. What's the matter? Haven't you finished your lunch?" Brian's voice came from the phone.

"I... I'm at the hospital," answered Valda Theller.

"The hospital? What happened? Are you ill?" Brian asked.

"It's not me. It's Grace. I ran into Grace and Kyla at lunch, and-"

Before Valda Theller could finish, Brian's voice came over in a panic. "What? Grace's in the hospital. Which hospital?"

This anxious tone was something Valda Theller had never heard before.

It was hard to imagine a man, who was so cold and indifferent, speaking in such an anxious voice.

While Valda Theller was in a trance, Brian's voice became more impatient. "Hurry and tell me which hospital you're in!"

"Huh?" Valda Theller came to her senses and hurriedly said the address.

Then, beeping noises came over the other end of the line, which meant the call was over.

He did not even say goodbye. Valda Theller looked blankly at the phone she was holding. She knew Brian loved Grace, but only then did she realize how real it felt.

Chapter 2742

Grace shook her head. "It doesn't hurt anymore. I'm sorry I made you worried again." She raised her hand and caressed Jason's cheek.

Jason gently rubbed Grace's palm. "As long as you're okay. As long as you're okay..."

Who would have thought that the famous Young master Reed would behave like an insecure child in front of the woman he loved?

Grace was sent into the ward. Perhaps she was tired from the commotion earlier as she soon fell asleep.

Jason said to Kyla and Valda Theller, "Thank you for today."

Valda Theller waved her hands and said, "It's nothing as long as Grace and the baby are safe."

Kyla said, "I'm sorry. I caused this to happen to Grace. They were after me, but they frightened Grace."

"Alright, let me send you back. I'll take care of Grace," said Jason as he sent Kyla and Valda Theller out of the ward.

Just then, hurried footsteps grew louder. Brian had arrived.

Chapter 2742

2/4

His handsome face was full of worry, and his hair was slightly untidy from running.

"How's Grace?" Brian asked in a panic.

Jason raised an eyebrow and said, "How Grace's doing is what I as her husband should worry about."

"You..." Brian frowned as he glared at him. "I asked you how Grace is doing."

“She’s... She’s okay,” Valda Theller said as she hurried forward, not wanting things to get too awkward. “Several people gathered around us while we were eating and it frightened her. It’s why her belly ached.”

“Several people gathered around?” Brian froze and said without thinking much, “Since you were dining together, why didn’t you help block the others when they gathered around her? Don’t you know she’s pregnant? Don’t you know she—”

“That’s enough, Brian!” Kyla darted forward. “What happened today is all my fault. It happened because of me. Grace would’ve been worse off if it weren’t for Valda. You can blame me if you want. Don’t blame Valda!”

“It... It’s alright. He’s not wrong. If I had paid more attention, Grace might not have been so frightened that she had to be

hospitalized,” said Valda Theller. However, she felt the urge to cry

3/4

Chapter 2742

when she said that. Even her eyes gradually watered.

“Valda!”

Kyla would like to say more, but Valda Theller interrupted and said, “I... I must go now.” With that said, she hurried toward the elevator.

Kyla glared at Brian. “Even if you’re worried about Grace, you shouldn’t blame Valda like this. Since you’re her boyfriend, you should know what she’s like! Grace kept gripping Valda’s wrist

when we were on the way to the hospital today. Valda’s wrist was scratched until it bled, but she didn’t say a word and even said it was okay. Instead of worrying about her, you accused her as soon as you came. Brian, is this how you behave as a boyfriend?”

Kyla’s accusation shocked Brian, and embarrassment flashed across his face.

The place instantly turned silent.

Jason ordered the bodyguards nearby to send Kyla away first before turning to look at Brian. He said, "Valda Theller's a good woman."

"I know." Brian pressed his thin lips together.

"But you don't love her, do you?" said Jason.

Chapter 2743

Brian's expression changed suddenly. "What do you mean by that?"

Jason said ruthlessly, "You rushed over and blamed her as soon as you found out something had happened to Grace. Anyone

can tell that you don't love her! Kyla and I could tell. Do you want Grace to tell that too?"

Brian stiffened instantly. "Jason, what do you know?"

He said, "I don't know anything, but I can guess, can't I? We both want what's best for Grace."

Brian's expression turned furious suddenly. "If you want what's best for Grace, why did you get her pregnant? You know she almost died giving birth to the triplets! Why did you put her in this position?"

Remorse flashed across Jason's face. Then, he stared at Brian and said, "It's indeed my fault, so I'll live and die with Grace! If she can't survive this, I'll die with her!" "You..." Brian's eyes flashed with shock, but then it became clear.

Yeah, he would have done the same if it were him.

Chapter 2743

2/3

Jason said coldly, "Grace isn't doing well. She can't have mood swings and will have to stay in bed until she gives birth. Brian, since you started this and let Grace know that you already have a lover, you should keep doing it to the end! I don't want Grace to have another mood swing because of you and get in danger again!"

After a long silence, Brian finally murmured, "I want to see Grace."

"Sure, but she's asleep right now. Don't wake her." Jason turned around and walked toward the ward after saying that.

Brian followed.

After entering the ward, Brian looked at Grace who was sleeping on the hospital bed. His eyes watered slightly.

She looked pale and fragile as she slept. The time before she gave birth was the most worrying.

If she had another mood swing, it could put her and the baby at risk.

He would hate to see her in any danger.

his feelings put her in danger, then... he was willing to get rid of them. He would do anything for her!

"I hope you won't let Grace know what's going on between you and Valda Theller. Even if it's a lie, at least don't let shatter it in

Chapter 2743

front of her!" Jason's voice rang in the ward.

3/3

Brian's eyelashes quivered slightly as he gazed at the person lying on the bed. Moments later, he said, "I know what to do!"

Valda Theller ran out of the hospital. When she got on the bus, tears could not help gushing out.

She did not expect herself to cry like that.

She frantically wiped the tears from her face, desperately trying to stop them.

'What's there to cry about? I already knew Brian cares for and loves Grace. It's natural for him to blurt out such things!"

Chapter 2744

*She was only his nominal girlfriend. He had no affection for her.

They were not even friends.

After wiping the tears on her face, Valda Theller got off the bus. Instead of returning to her residence immediately, she went to the nearby supermarket to buy some groceries before going home.

However, she never expected to see Brian when she reached the

entrance of her apartment unit.

The tall figure was standing in front of her door. He stepped forward at the sight of her. "You're back. I was going to look for you if you hadn't come back soon."

"What is it?" she asked as she bit her lip slightly, her tone estranged and polite.

Brian frowned slightly. For some reason, he was upset with her tone.

"I know I shouldn't have criticized you in the hospital today... Sorry," he said. He seldom apologized, but he was now sincerely apologizing to her.

Valda Theller froze and looked blankly at him as her jaw dropped.

It was as if she did not expect him to apologize so suddenly. "It...

Chapter 2744

It's okay. Of course, you're more worried about Grace. I... I understand."

2/4

His eyes narrowed suddenly as he grabbed her jaw with one hand. "Have you been crying?"

She was startled. She tried looking away, but she could not move because he had grabbed her chin.

"Uh... I accidentally got sand in my eye on the way back. And... tears came out." She made up excuses.

His expression changed slightly. "I'm sorry." It was the second time he had apologized to her today.

She said awkwardly, "I got sand in my eyes. It has nothing to do with you. Why don't you go in first?"

He withdrew his hand. "Okay."

She took out the key, opened the door, and the two entered the house.

Valda Theller said, "What would you like to drink? Tea, water, or

coffee?”

She was so polite it was as if she was treating a guest.

“Water will do,” said Brian.

Chapter 2744

3/4

“Okay, wait a minute,” she said and poured him a glass of warm water.

He took a sip of water and said to her, “Do you mind making dinner for one more person?”

She hesitated for a moment and said, “No... I don’t.” He had tried her cooking before anyway. “I’ll go do it now,” she said, intending to go into the kitchen and cook.

However, he grabbed her and said, “Wait.”

She looked at him strangely and saw that he had suddenly pulled up her sleeve.

The next moment, the scratches on her left wrist instantly came into view.

She moved her wrist to withdraw her hand, but his hand grabbed it firmly.

“I’m sorry I misunderstood you. I didn’t know,” he said.

She chuckled awkwardly. “You already apologized to me earlier.”

“Does it hurt?” Looking at the red marks, he thought of what Kyla had said. Grace had grabbed her all the way to the hospital, but Valda Theller said nothing.

“It doesn’t hurt so much anymore. It’ll go away in a couple of

Chapter 2744

days,” she said.

“Have you applied any ointment?” he asked.

Chapter 2745

She blinked. “Do I need to apply ointment for this?”

He said, “Do you have any ointment for blood stasis and pain relief?”

"I do, but you don't need medicine for such injuries-

He interrupted her before she could finish her sentence. "Where is it?" he asked, staring at her.

Valda Theller could only take out the ointment obediently. Brian opened the ointment cap and applied it for her.

As he smeared the ointment on the red marks on her wrist with his fingertips, Valda Theller felt a strange sensation spreading through her body. Her heartbeat quickened.

'What's wrong with me? All he's doing is applying ointment for me. Why did my heartbeat quicken?

'I mustn't and can't fall for this man! There's no way it's gonna work out between us. He loves another woman.'

Valda Theller tried hard to warn herself not to care about Brian.

When he finally finished applying the ointment, she quickly withdrew her hand. "Have a seat while I prepare dinner."

Chapter 2745

2/4

She could not wait to leave, but Brian stopped her. "You can't make dinner when you've just applied ointment on your hand. Let me do it."

Valda Theller widened her eyes in surprise. 'I didn't hear it wrong, did I? He wants to... make dinner?'

Then, Valda Theller saw Brian take off his jacket, roll up his shirt sleeves, and walk into the kitchen.

His long fingers opened the plastic bag containing vegetables she had bought from the supermarket. He took the vegetables out one

by one.

He washed the vegetables, cut them, then cooked them... Valda Theller found that Brian was indeed cooking.

Once the food was ready, Valda Theller spoke with slight embarrassment, "I'm sorry for troubling you today."

"I don't think it's too much trouble," he said.

She lowered her head and began digging in. For some reason, she felt awkward facing him.

Maybe what had happened in the hospital today made her understand her position more clearly.

Brian's eyes glimmered as he watched Valda Theller's face almost

Chapter 2745

glued to the bowl. He could feel her estrangement from him.

He caused all this.

3/4

Jason said everyone could tell that he did not love her. Jason and

Kyla could tell that. Was he going to let Grace realize that too?

Brian felt a sudden pain in his heart as he recalled Grace's pale and weak appearance in the hospital bed.

He did not want Grace to have any mood swings again. He could not let Grace learn he had no feelings for Valda Theller.

"Can you be a real couple with me?" His hoarse voice suddenly rang out.

Valda Theller suddenly stopped eating and looked up blankly at the person in front of her. "What... do you mean?"

Brian murmured, "As I said, let's become a real couple. We'll stop acting and date seriously."

She blinked. "Why are you... suddenly saying that?" She could not understand why he would suddenly want to turn a fake relationship into a real one. "You don't love me, right?"

He said he wanted them to be a real couple, but there was no affection in his eyes.

"I don't want Grace to know we're fake. She can't afford to have any mood swings right now," he said.

It suddenly dawned on her. Her eyelashes quivered slightly as she looked down slowly. It turned out that he made such a sudden decision because of Grace.

Chapter 2746

Who would have thought that the crown prince of the entertainment industry would love a woman so much that he could go so far for her?

1/4

“Will you? You can ask for anything if you’re willing to do it. I’ll do anything for you as long as it’s within my power!” Brian said.

The simple sentence contained so much emotion.

Other women would be elated to hear Brian make such a promise, but Valda Theller’s face contained no joy.

She only squeezed her chopsticks harder, took a deep breath, and said, “I’m sorry, but I can’t say yes.”

For some reason, disappointment flashed across Brian’s heart after hearing the answer.

“You can tell me if you have any special requirements. I can-”

“It’s not what you think.” Valda Theller interrupted him and raised her head. Her round eyes looked straight at the person in front of her. “I was willing to pretend to date you at the beginning because of sympathy. I thought you needed help. I wanted to help you just like how Camille helped me when I was in trouble. Since you helped me afterward, I wanted to repay you. That’s why I was

Chapter 2746

2/4

willing to pretend to be your girlfriend until the day you thought it was okay to stop.”

After a pause, she said, “But a real relationship is unlike a fake one. It requires real feelings. It requires me to love you and you to love me. But that’s impossible. I can’t do it.”

“Do you mean you can’t fall for me?” His dark phoenix eyes gazed at her. The melancholy and pain in his eyes made Valda Theller’s heart skip a beat.

Falling in love with Brian had never been difficult.

There were so many things a woman could love about a man like him. If he really wanted a girlfriend, he just had to say it and many women would go after him.

He said, “Valda Theller, it’s not too difficult to fall in love with me, is it? What’s your ideal type? I can adapt myself to fit your ideal

type.”

‘My ideal type?’

Valda Theller laughed. ‘He is my ideal type.’

Cold and elegant, yet loyal and affectionate. He could shelter her from any trouble.

Rather, she had fallen in love with him during their time together. She just repeatedly told herself that they were too different and

Chapter 2746

that it would never work out.

However, like a spell, his words make her heartbeat quicken.

3/4

“Even if I can fall for you, you can’t fall for me, can you? In that case, how can it be a real relationship?” she asked as she looked straight at him.

He froze slightly. His long black lashes quivered. “Do you want me to fall for you?”

“Any woman would want the man she loves to fall for her, and I’m no exception. I want my feelings to be reciprocated. If I want to love someone and be in a real relationship with someone, it’ll be

on the premise of marriage because I’m hoping I can spend the rest of my life with that person!”

She spoke seriously. The look on her face and the light in her eyes showed her seriousness.

“On the premise of marriage?” He suddenly smiled. Since he lost Grace, he never considered marriage. He even thought that perhaps that was it for the rest of his life. He would not marry any woman or let any woman enter his world.

However, it did not annoy him when Valda Theller talked about having marriage as a precondition.

“Yes, I can date you on the premise of marriage,” he said as his phoenix eyes seemed to have some resolution. “Fall for me, and...

make me fall for you Perhaps it would be the baut for us

Chapter 2747

1/3

‘Yeah, Grace will be relieved if I can fall in love with Valda Theller.

I won’t be stuck in a hopeless relationship again, and my parents will be relieved too.

'But can I really fall in love with the woman in front of me? She doesn't annoy me, and I even find my time with her relaxing.'

Valda Theller stared at Brian with a shocked gaze. She thought Brian would give up on the idea after she said this. She did not expect him to... say so.

"What... What did you say? You want to date me while considering marriage?" she asked, finding her voice slightly out of tune.

"Yes," he answered confidently.

"Do you want me to... love you? Will you love me too?" she asked again.

"Yes, I will try to fall for you," he said.

"But can you fall for me?" She was doubtful. After all, he was so in love with Grace. Could he fall for another person?

He spoke honestly, "I don't know. I don't know if I can fall in love

Chapter 2747

2/3

with you. It'll be a gamble for you and me. No one can predict the outcome."

Valda Theller bit her lip. She could not believe that Brian agreed.

She was glad he said that now. Yeah, no one knew what would happen in the end.

His cold voice said, "Valda Theller, do you want to love me? Let's be a real couple. Make me fall in love with you!"

Thump! Thump! Thump!

She could hear her heart beating very clearly.

'Should I refuse? Or agree?

'Can I really make this man fall for me? Can I get him to move on?' She gazed at him deeply. After a long pause, she heard her voice reply, "Well, we're a real couple now."

It was only because... she did not want to lose him!

After dinner, Valda Theller was still deep in trance even though

Brian had left the apartment.,

'Am I really dating... Brian now?

Chapter 2747

3/3

'No more acting, but a real relationship? Brian even promised to try to fall for me!'

Valda Theller looked at her red face in the mirror after walking into

the bathroom. She took a deep breath and said to herself, "Come on. Let's fight... for this!"

'Let's fight for this relationship!'

She knew she had fallen for Brian. She had never felt this emotion again after Raymond Bowman hurt her.

Chapter 2748

She almost instinctively rejected love for fear of being hurt again.

However, Brian had inadvertently barged into her heart, which also encouraged her to try again.

Perhaps she could be happy too?

The next day, Camille Strickland's eyes almost popped when she found out that her best friend and Brian were dating for real now.

"Are you and Brian dating on the premise of marriage now?" Camille Strickland asked in surprise.

"Yeah." Valda Theller nodded.

"What's going on? Has Brian fallen for you?"

"No, no." Valda Theller shook his head. "He probably wants to move on, so... he wants to date me for real."

Camille Strickland frowned. "Why does that sound so strange?"

Valda Theller smiled drily. "It's a little strange, but he also said he'll try to fall for me."

"But sometimes, relationships don't necessarily work out just

Chapter 2748

2/4

because you work hard," Camille Strickland said with worry, afraid

her best friend would get hurt again.

Valda Theller said, "I know relationships don't necessarily work out just because you work hard, but you'll get nothing if your don't. Camille, haven't you always wanted me to find someone? You wanted me to keep an open heart, and now I want to do something for myself."

"You..." Camille Strickland sighed. She knew that her best friend might sometimes look naive and have no mind of her own, but she would stick to everything she had decided until the end. "I hope to hear good news from you soon."

She could only give her her blessing!

"Thank you!" Valda Theller smiled slightly, but she frowned again afterward. "Tell me. How do you make a man fall in love with you?"

"By showing off your feminine charms, of course," said Camille Strickland.

'Charms?' Valda Theller blinked. "But the problem is what kind of feminine charm has Brian not experienced in the entertainment industry?"

Camille Strickland agreed with the statement, so she asked, "Why don't you just do what normal couples do? Bond with each other first."

Chapter 2748

"What normal couples do?"

"For example, going to the movies, eating, shopping, traveling, or spending your day at home together. You've drawn so many romance comics, don't you? It's all there."

Valda Theller was speechless. It was one thing to draw comics, but it was a different story in reality.

Anyway, they should try their best to bond with each other first.

3/4

When Brian came to visit Grace in the hospital, Grace was already awake and lying on the hospital bed. Jason sat at the head of the bed, peeling an apple for Grace.

"How are you? Are you okay?" Brian asked.

Grace said, "I'm fine, but I might have to stay in bed until I give birth. I heard from Jay that you came to the hospital to see me yesterday?"

"Yeah, I heard from Valda that you were hospitalized, so I came over," said Brian.

Grace said, "Speaking of yesterday, I need to thank Valda. If she hadn't helped me block those people away, I would've been in more danger. I haven't thanked her."

Chapter 2748

"I'll thank her for you," said Brian.

Just then, Jason had peeled an apple and cut them into small pieces. He brought a piece to Grace's lips.

4/4

Grace opened her mouth and ate the small piece of apple he fed her. It was obvious that they understood each other very much.

Brian watched quietly. Grace must be happy with her life.

He once hoped he could give her such happiness. However, he realized in the end that he was not the one destined to give her happiness!

Chapter 2749

"I gotta go. I'll bring Valda to see you next time," Brian said as he got up.

"Okay," said Grace.

Just as Brian was about to reach the ward door, Grace suddenly said, "Brian, when you came to the hospital yesterday, Valda... didn't misunderstand anything, did she?"

Brian chuckled. "She knows I used to like you, but she also knows she's the one I like now!"

"That's good." Grace was relieved. "Valda is a good woman."

"Yeah, I know," Brian said and walked out of the ward.

Grace looked at the ward door, which opened and closed again. She was somewhat entranced.

"What's the matter?" Jason's voice rang as he handed another piece of apple to her lips.

"Nothing. I just hope Brian can be happy," murmured Grace.

"Everything will turn out as you wish. Believe me," said Jason.

Chapter 2749

Grace chuckled and looked at her husband. "Are you sure?"

His deep peach blossom eyes were bright. "Yes, I'm sure."

Even if it did not, he would try to make it turn out the way she wanted!

2/4

Brian walked out of the hospital, took out his phone, and called

Valda Theller. "Where are you?"

"I'm in my studio," she said.

"Are you busy with work?"

"Yeah."

"Will I be disturbing you if I come over?" he asked, suddenly wanting to see her and hear her voice.

"Just come over. But I'll be busy with my assistant and you might get a little bored," she said.

"It doesn't matter," Brian replied and drove to Valda Theller's studio.

Valda Theller and her two assistants were in the studio.

The two assistants had seen Brian before. They were now looking

Chapter 2749 curiously at him.

3/4

Valda Theller made Brian a cup of tea and said, "Sit wherever you like. I still have something to work on."

"Okay, go on," said Brian.

Valda Theller returned to her work desk and continued drawing with her two assistants.

Brian sat on the couch and held the tea as his phoenix eyes looked at Valda Theller not far away.

She was as absorbed in her drawing as she had been when she was drawing him when he modeled for her.

Her two assistants glanced at him now and then, but she did not. Her attention was always on her drawing, and anyone could see how serious she was.

Brian smiled. Few people were as focused as Valda Theller.

She must be this focused because she loved her career.

‘Can I fall in love with this woman?’

‘Can I fall in love again after loving Grace? Or... will I still not fall for her even if I don’t hate her and even if I appreciate her sometimes?’

Chapter 2750

1/4

Valda Theller was considered the most intimate woman with him
in the past few years.

Brian fell into a trance as he watched Valda Theller. Valda Theller looked up and met Brian’s eyes as soon as she finished her work.

She could not help but suddenly blush.

Her two assistants snickered. “Valda, you and your boyfriend are so sweet. He’s been looking at you since you were drawing

earlier.”

“Yeah, he must really like you.”

Valda Theller chuckled sheepishly. “Alright, let’s call it a day. You only need to color them tomorrow.”

“Yes, yes. We’ll stop being the third wheels.” The two assistants laughed and got up. They packed up their things and bade goodbye to Brian before leaving.

Valda Theller went to Brian and said, “You must have waited for a long time. Don’t mind my two assistants’ nonsense.”

Brian raised his eyebrows. “What’s there to mind? I’m your boyfriend. We should be sweet with each other. I should like you

Chapter 2750

very much too.”

Valda Theller pressed her lips together... ‘Should.

‘Yeah, this must be like a blank exam paper for him, and he’s
working on it for someone else.

2/4

‘But this is the path I’ve chosen. I have nothing to complain about.

Perhaps I should even feel lucky.

'At least the person I like is trying to fall for me when he doesn't like me and is in love with someone else.'

"You must be hungry. Let's have dinner together," Brian said after looking at the time.

"Okay," replied Valda Theller. She packed up her things and left the studio with Brian.

After getting in the car, Brian asked, "What would you like to eat?"

"Anything will do. Or we can go somewhere you usually go?" she said. Since they were now in a real relationship, she wanted to know more about him. She wanted to learn about his likes and dislikes, the restaurants he frequented, and what he liked to eat.

"Okay," Brian started the car and drove slowly toward the west of tMason Swansonty.

Finally, the car stopped in front of a restaurant surrounded by

Chapter 2750 plants,

This area was in Emerald City's scenic area. Due to its remote location, there was not much of a crowd, making it quiet and elegant,

3/4

The two got out of the car. Valda Theller followed Brian to the door and saw someone coming over. They said, "Mr. Hart, welcome. Do you want your usual table?"

"Yes," said Brian.

The person led the way, and Valda Theller walked in, only to see the restaurant's unique points. There were some ancient-looking buildings, pavilions, bridges, and streams.

As they reached the corridor, someone came over. After seeing Brian, the person said enthusiastically, "Young Master Hart, fancy running into you today."

"It is," replied Brian.

"This is..." Their eyes glanced at Valda Theller.

"This is my girlfriend, Valda Theller." Brian introduced her to them generously. Surprise flashed across the person's eyes, but their gaze returned to normal afterward. They smiled at Valda Theller and said hello.

Then, they added, "Since we ran into each other, why don't we

Chapter 2750

dine together?"

4/4

Brian looked at Valda Theller, obviously asking for Valda Theller's opinion.

Valda Theller hesitated. Seeing Brian's reaction, he should be familiar with the person. It would be inappropriate to reject them, so she nodded.

Brian turned to the person and said, "Let's dine together, then."