

Chapter 45

In Chapter 45 of *We Solve Murders*, Steve finds himself in a lavish hotel suite, a stark contrast to his usual modest accommodations. The suite boasts a stunning swimming pool with sapphire blue water, positioned perfectly to provide an unobstructed view of twin volcanoes in the distance. The picturesque Caribbean landscape outside adds to the suite's grandeur, heightening Steve's sense of awe and discomfort at the luxurious surroundings. As he settles into the space, Steve takes a moment to reflect on his past, reaching for his Dictaphone to speak with Debbie. He recalls their long-held dream of traveling to the Caribbean together, but with a heavy heart, he admits that they never made that dream a reality. Regret consumes him as he contemplates the missed opportunities in his life, particularly the times when he hesitated to embrace adventure and the unknown, choosing instead to stay within the safety of routine. In his reflection, Steve realizes how his reluctance to fully engage with life's possibilities has shaped the path he's taken.

Shifting his focus, Steve recounts the purpose of his trip to St. Lucia, where he and his colleagues are set to meet Nelson Nunez, a man with rumored ties to drug dealing operations. Steve suspects that Nunez is more involved in criminal activities than anyone realizes, and he feels an increasing sense of unease as he delves deeper into the connections between Nunez and his investigation into Bella Sanchez's death. Bella's financial ties seem to be leading Steve down a complex path, one that links her to dangerous individuals like Nunez. As he contemplates these connections, his mind returns to the growing complications surrounding Vivid Viral Agency and the enigmatic figure of Henk, who has recently set up a close-protection business. Henk's suspicious activities only add to the tangled web Steve is trying to untangle, and the realization that he may not be returning to England soon looms over him. This understanding amplifies Steve's feelings of isolation and regret, reinforcing the sense that his life is

increasingly defined by a series of difficult choices and professional obligations that may keep him in this situation longer than he anticipated.

The narrative takes a more lighthearted turn when Rosie D'Antonio sends Steve a black suit intended for an upscale dinner with the owner of Emerald Bay, an event that requires a more formal dress code. Steve, who prefers casual attire, is initially caught off guard by this request and protests the need for such formal clothing. However, the young man who delivers the suit points out that the outfit would also be appropriate for Steve's upcoming meeting with Nunez, further emphasizing its importance. As Steve contemplates the significance of his new attire, he gazes out at the Caribbean Sea, feeling an overwhelming sense of longing for Debbie's company. The expansive view of the ocean only deepens his sense of isolation, highlighting the emotional distance between himself and the life he once envisioned. This moment of reflection brings a wave of nostalgia for the life he could have had, and the luxury of his surroundings does little to comfort him as he grapples with his personal regrets and emotional struggles. The luxury of the hotel only serves as a reminder of how far he's come and how much he's left behind in the pursuit of his career.

Rosie soon arrives to check on Steve, suggesting a walk along the beach as a way to talk through some of the murder mysteries they've been investigating. As they stroll along the shoreline, their conversation naturally shifts to Steve's personal life, and he begins to open up about the emotional conflicts that have been weighing on him. Rosie's questions force Steve to confront the reality of how much he has confined himself to routine and safety, avoiding the risks that come with living life to its fullest. Although Steve tries to maintain a façade of composure, it becomes increasingly clear that Rosie's probing hits a deeper, more vulnerable part of him. Her questions make Steve realize that his tendency to avoid taking risks has been a barrier to his personal growth, and he's forced to consider the consequences of his actions and inactions. Despite his initial resistance to the formal suit, Steve agrees to walk with Rosie, seeing it as an opportunity to connect with her on a deeper level. The walk becomes more than just a casual conversation; it's an acknowledgment of his emotional complexity and the personal growth he is beginning to realize. The chapter ends with Steve and

Rosie walking side by side, each of them reflecting on the balance between professional duties and personal fulfillment, symbolizing the emotional journey Steve has yet to fully embark on.

