

Chapter 35

Chapter 35 — Chapter 35 begins with shock, not from violence, but from the unexpected appearance of someone long presumed dead. After barely escaping Eddie's violent outburst—where a silver pineapple became a weapon—the protagonist finds herself face-to-face with Bea Rochester. Not only is Bea very much alive, she seems curiously unfazed by the revelation that her husband tried to kill someone else. Calmly requesting wine as if hosting a routine dinner party, Bea leads them into the kitchen. Her demeanor is collected, even graceful, a woman completely at home in a space the protagonist had only borrowed. Every gesture, from choosing the right bottle to pouring the glasses, reinforces that this was always Bea's house—her life.

The storm outside mirrors the tension between them, creating a cinematic backdrop as they sit in the gothic dining room, candles flickering and wine glasses full. Bea and the protagonist could almost be mistaken for queens of some dark fairy tale, meeting to settle a throne. As they drink, Bea reveals what she knows—or claims to know—about Eddie's deceit, infidelities, and the tangled lies connecting them all. She speaks of Eddie's manipulation, suggesting that both she and the protagonist had been drawn into his schemes. Blanche's name surfaces, not as a footnote, but as the center of a deadly narrative. Bea implies that Blanche's death was not an accident and that her own confinement was part of Eddie's twisted plan.

The protagonist listens, but doubt simmers beneath the surface. Bea's story, while confident and well-rehearsed, doesn't fully hold together. Certain details don't sit right, and her seemingly casual tone only raises more questions. The protagonist observes every inflection in Bea's voice, each pause or omission. It's not just the trauma or the alcohol—something doesn't add up. Could Bea be twisting the truth to suit her own version of events? As these thoughts stir, the protagonist also reflects on how easily appearances had fooled her before. It's hard to tell where truth ends and performance

begins in this house built on secrets.

In this moment, the protagonist realizes she's not just a bystander in Eddie and Bea's drama. She's become entangled in a deeper history—one layered in betrayal, manipulation, and power plays. Bea's polished calm and enigmatic storytelling mask motives that remain unclear. But even as doubt creeps in, the protagonist can't ignore the weight of Bea's words. If any part of what she said is true, then everything the protagonist thought she understood about Eddie—his charm, his lies, his love—has been poisoned by intent. And if Bea is lying, then her survival, and the violence she claims to have endured, may not be what it seems either.

What adds a chilling depth to this chapter is how both women navigate their trauma through ritual: the wine, the storm, the setting of a table neither of them fully owns anymore. It's a negotiation of control. Bea, by acting unbothered, regains power. The protagonist, by asking careful questions, reclaims her agency. But power here is fluid, traded silently between them in glances, sips, and subtle shifts in tone. They are survivors—different in their methods, but alike in the quiet understanding that truth won't come easily, and safety might be an illusion.

A major theme woven through their interaction is the role of performance in survival. Bea is theatrical, but calculated. The protagonist, though shaken, has begun to see the strength in peeling back layers rather than adding more. She notes how Bea's control falters just slightly when details don't line up, and in that flicker, there is an opening—a possible glimpse at something raw and unscripted. The dynamic has shifted. No longer just a guest, the protagonist now sees herself as part of a larger, darker game. Not a pawn, perhaps not even a queen, but something altogether different.

By the end of the conversation, the wine is mostly gone, but the real intoxication has come from the revelations. Whether or not Bea is telling the truth, the damage has already been done. The protagonist can no longer pretend innocence. She is implicated now, pulled deeper into the undercurrent of betrayal, and left to decide how much of Bea's story she's willing to carry. As the chapter closes, the house creaks

under the pressure of silence and secrets. And above all, one thing is clear—none of them, not even the supposedly dead, are finished playing their part.

