

Gourmet Recipe

By

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FADE IN:

INT. LOUNGE- DAY

On the recliner we see EVAN, 72, gaunt and pale in his pajamas. Prongs in his nose connect to a long tube that snakes its way to the oxygen concentrator positioned alongside.

His breathing, laboured, wheezy. Constant whir of the mechanical device.

Landline rings in the next room. Three times.

 VALERIE (O/S)

Hi this is Val.

 (beat)

Oh hi Sara. How are you, love?

Evan winches. Grabs at his right flank. Pained expression.

He reaches down for his patient controlled analgesia button. Long push. Coughs and wheezes.

 VALERIE (O/S) (CONT'D)

--no, I'm staying in with your father tonight. Making him a special dinner. For our anniversary.

 (beat)

OK then, dear. Chat in the morning as usual. Bye now, love. Bye.

 EVAN

Sara?

Evan's voice is raspy.

 VALERIE (O/S)

Yea. Wanted me to come over and mind the kids.

 EVAN

You could if you want.

 (wheeze)

We could do this tomorrow.

VALERIE, 65, walks in. Short, matronly in look and demeanor, she wears a frilly pink apron.

 VALERIE

Don't be silly, love--

She moves to Evan's side. Bends over and kisses him on forehead.

VALERIE
--we've planned this special night
for months.

She points out to the kitchen.

VALERIE
The recipe's printed out. And it
took me a week to find all the
ingredients. I'm not postponing
this now for some snotty grandkids
and two minute noodles.

EVAN
(wheeze)
Special night.

Evan coughs and wheezes.

VALERIE
(rubs Evan's arm)
Very special night my love.

INT. LOUNGE- NIGHT

Oxygen concentrator purrs. TV background noise.

Two tables in front of side by side recliners. Upon each table, two meals, a casserole type dish and mash. Valerie's share around twice that of Evans.

Evan uses a spoon. Slowly scoops some food into his mouth.

A long, painful chew. Finishes the morsel.

EVAN
(clears throat)
Who needs fancy French rest--
(wheezes, coughs)
--restaurant.

A breath as deep as he can take. Wheezy as usual.

EVAN
When I've got the best--
(wheeze)
cook in the world.

VALERIE

Oh, how sweet. Always the charmer.

EVAN

(wheeze)

Best stew ever, my love.

VALERIE

Evan Fredricks, wash your mouth out! I'll have you know this is a slow cooked Moroccan lamb tagine. With three root mash. It's gourmet!

(grins)

Do you think I've been slaving all day for a plain old stew?

EVAN

Sorry, love--

(wheeze)

--didn't mean to offend.

VALERIE

I suppose I'll forgive you. Thirty eight years of being the most wonderful husband and father has to count for something.

EVAN

Another lucky esc--

(wheeze)

--scape.

Evan aims his spoon for another scoop.

INT. LOUNGE- LATER

Valerie begins to stack the dinner ware.

She leans over and notices Evan looking upset. Takes a tissue from her bra and wipes a tear away from his face.

VALERIE

Come on darling, it's going to be OK I promise. Look, I'll whack on your DVD now. Then I'll bring in dessert.

EVAN

(sniffs)

Blessed are the cheese--

(wheeze)

--makers.

INT. LOUNGE-LATER

TV drowns out Oxygen concentrator noise.

ACTOR (O/S)

*--We worship you Oh Brian, who are
Lord over us all. Praise unto you
Brian, and to the Lord our Father.
Amen--"*

We now see the screen. The Life of Brian, Scene one.

Valerie brings in two long glasses. Milk based drinks, whipped cream, cherry on top. Straws and a long spoon in each.

She sits in her recliner. Passes Evan his dessert.

VALERIE

I've been a bit naughty and put
some Tia Maria in your parfait,
love.

EVAN

Alcohol?
(wheeze)
That stuff'll kill ya.

VALERIE

(smiles)

Cheers. here's to thirty eight
wonderful years.

EVAN

(wheeze)

Cheers.

CLINK!

They drink from their straws in unison.

Evan starts to cough. Continues on and on. His face reddening.

Breaths more laboured. Tears streaming down his face.

VALERIE

(rubbing his back)

You OK, love? There there.

The coughing and wheezing continues.

Purpuric hue descends upon Evan's complexion.

Gasping, wheezing. Hand clutching at his throat.

The breath sounds are now softer almost non existent.

Bulging eyes. His head slowly inching backwards.

VALERIE

(grabs Evan's hand)

Oh, dear. I didn't expect it to be
like this. I'm so sorry, darling.

Evan appears to be at his final gasp. Then--

With a rasping huck, a brownish sputum globule is
expectorated from Evan's mouth. Flies over the table in
front of him and lands two metres away on the carpet.

He breathes easier. Two more coughs and he is back to just
his normal wheeze.

His complexion improves. The fear in his face, gone.
Composure once again.

EVAN

Oh, Val--

(wheeze)

--enough Tia Maria you reckon?

Two more coughs.

Valerie wipes below his watery eyes.

EVAN

Val, love. Thank you for this.

(wheeze)

For being with me tonight.

VALERIE

Wouldn't be anywhere else. And I'm
staying right here watching this
stupid movie with you.

(points to kitchen)

The washing up can just wait for
once.

EVAN

(wheeze)

Love you.

Valerie gently caresses her husband's face.

VALERIE

I love you too, my precious,
precious man. Now and forever.

EVAN

(wheeze)

Forever.

Both take another sip on the drink.

ACTOR ON TV

"--and thanks a lot for the gold
and frankincense. Er, but don't
worry too much about the myrrh next
time--"

EXT. FRONT DOOR- DAY

No sound, only vision.

We see a woman, she bangs on the front door. And again.
Tries to see through the window.

Next to the window is a combination key lock. She frantically
punches in a keycode.

This is SARA, 34 female. Solid build, well dressed, a no
nonsense type lady. She looks concerned.

Retrieves the key.

INT. HOUSE- DAY

Still no sound.

We follow Sara as she moves down the hall.

First room. She opens the door and looks inside.
Nothing. More steps down the hall. Second room. Nothing.

We see her call out something. Then...

She peers into the lounge room. TV is on, Life of Brian
menu.

Sees the back of two recliners. Sides up to these.

She's taken aback, an expression of horror befalls her face.

Evan and Valerie. So blue. Both their heads slumped
forward. They are holding hands.

Empty glasses on each table.

Sara touches her mother's face. Straight away jolts her hand back. Grabs an arm. It's so stiff, can't even be moved an inch.

We see the scream... "NOOOOOOO!"

INT. KITCHEN- DAY

We can now hear morning birdsong.

Sara sits at the kitchen table. Sips a coffee. Looks down at a notepad.

Behind her on the bench, a blender, some boxes of medication, a bottle of Tia Maria.

A POLICE OFFICER, female 20's, holds a piece of paper. She walks to Sara.

OFFICER

OK, Sara, there's tablet residue in the glasses over there we believe.

(reads paper)

So, Endep, Diazepam, Kapanol, which is morphine. Mixed with ice cream and milk. Some sort of suicide cocktail recipe from the internet, it seems.

Sara nods.

OFFICER

I'll get some more details once we've bagged all the stuff, OK?

(points to notepad)

Oh, by the way, is that yours?

SARA

No it's Mums. There's a note on here for me.

OFFICER

Oh, OK. Well we'll have to take that for evidence as well, Just routine.

SARA

Sure, you can have it.

Sara pushes the notepad towards the Police Officer.

The writing is now visible. It reads:

Darling Sara,

Please don't hate me, I know you will be sad and probably not understand. But in my heart I could not bear living without your father. It's selfish, it's unfair but it is what I needed to do.

We are together. We are at peace.

All my love,

Mum.

PS. Sorry about the dishes.

FADE OUT:

THE END