

Chapter 12

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Even though I had resigned myself to minding my own business about Nina's mental health history, I can't help but wonder. I work for this woman. I live with this woman.



And there's something else strange about Nina. Like this morning as I'm cleaning the master bathroom, I can't help but think nobody with good mental health could leave the bathroom in this sort of disorder—the towels on the floor, the toothpaste hugging the basin of the sink. I know depression can sometimes make people unmotivated to clean up. But Nina motivates herself enough to get out and about every day, wherever she goes.

The worst thing was finding a used tampon on the floor a few days ago. A used, bloody tampon. I wanted to throw up.

While I'm scrubbing the toothpaste and the globs of makeup adhered to the sink, my eyes stray to the medicine cabinet. If Nina's actually "nuts," she's probably on medication, right? But I can't look in the medicine cabinet. That would be a massive violation of trust.

But then again, it's not like anyone would know if I took a look. Just a quick look.

I look out at the bedroom. Nobody is in there. I peek around the corner just to make absolutely sure. I'm alone. I go back into the bathroom and after a moment of hesitation, I nudge the medicine cabinet open.

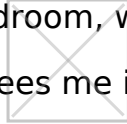
Wow, there are a lot of medications in here.

I pick up one of the orange pill bottles. The name on it is Nina Winchester. I read off the name of the medication: haloperidol. Whatever that is.

I start to pick up a second pill bottle when a voice floats down the hallway: “Millie? Are you in there?”

Oh no.

I hastily stuff the bottle back in the cabinet and slam it shut. My heart is racing, and a cold sweat breaks out on my palms. I plaster a smile on my face just in time for Nina to burst into the bedroom, wearing a white sleeveless blouse and white jeans. She stops short when she sees me in the bathroom.



“What are you doing?” she asks me.

“I’m cleaning the bathroom.” I’m not looking at your medications, that’s for sure.

Nina squints at me, and for a moment, I’m certain she’s going to accuse me of going through the medicine cabinet. And I’m a horrible liar, so she’ll almost certainly know the truth. But then her eyes fall on the sink.

“How do you clean the sink?” she asks.

“Um.” I lift the spray bottle in my hand. “I use this sink cleaner.”

“Is it organic?”

“I...” I look at the bottle I picked up at the grocery store last week. “No. It isn’t.”

Nina’s face falls. “I really prefer organic cleaning products, Millie. They don’t have as many chemicals. You know what I mean?”

“Right...” I don’t say what I’m thinking, which is I can’t believe a woman who is taking that many medications is concerned about a few chemicals in a cleaning product. I mean, yes, it’s in her sink, but she’s not ingesting it. It’s not going into her bloodstream.

“I just feel like...” She frowns. “You aren’t doing a good job getting the sink clean. Can I watch how you’re doing it? I’d like to see what you’re doing wrong.”

She wants to watch me clean her sink? “Okay...”

I spray more of the product in her sink and scrub at the porcelain until the toothpaste residue vanishes. I glance over at Nina, who is nodding thoughtfully.

“That’s fine,” she says. “I guess the real question is how are you cleaning the sink when I’m not watching you.”

“Um, the same?”



“Hmm. I highly doubt that.” She rolls her eyes. “Anyway, I don’t have time to supervise your cleaning all day. Try to make sure to do a thorough...”