

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 follows Millie as she embarks on a difficult cleaning spree at Nina's house, determined to make order out of the chaos she finds herself surrounded by. After a long seven hours of hard work, she tackles various areas of the house, starting with the living room, which is the first of many challenges. The pizza box stuck to the coffee table, caused by a sticky spill, becomes a frustrating obstacle that takes more time to clean than she anticipated. As she moves from room to room, the kitchen proves to be the most daunting space to handle. Overflowing garbage bags, a dishwasher packed with dirty dishes, and pans coated with what seems like days-old food form a truly overwhelming sight. Millie, however, refuses to give up and spends hours restoring some order to the kitchen. As exhausting as the process is, she feels a sense of accomplishment when she finally manages to get the kitchen back in a somewhat presentable state, despite the massive effort it took.

However, Millie's sense of satisfaction is short-lived when she has an unexpected encounter with Cecelia, Nina's daughter. Cecelia surprises Millie with her silent, almost eerie presence, and the intensity of her pale blue eyes only adds to the sense of discomfort that Millie feels. The first interaction between them is tense, as Millie, trying to bridge the gap, offers to prepare a snack for the girl, but Cecelia's cryptic responses make it difficult for them to connect. Millie, feeling somewhat awkward, decides to prepare a snack of peanut butter and banana on crackers, thinking it would be a simple and well-received gesture. However, to her horror, she discovers that Cecelia is allergic to peanut butter, a detail Millie had no knowledge of. The situation escalates rapidly when Cecelia, alarmed and upset, accuses Millie of trying to harm her, which results in Millie feeling panicked and guilty. The tension peaks as Nina rushes into the room, her concern for Cecelia's wellbeing apparent, but the entire scenario leaves Millie feeling overwhelmed.

Caught in a whirlwind of misunderstanding, Millie attempts to explain herself, only to be rebuked by Nina, who chastises her for neglecting to consider Cecelia's peanut allergy. Nina's anger is sharp, and Millie, still in shock, silently endures the scolding, feeling both embarrassed and frustrated. She had no idea about Cecelia's allergy, and the lack of communication about such an important detail weighs heavily on her. Despite her attempt to clarify, Nina's anger does not subside quickly, though she eventually calms down and issues a stern warning, insisting that Millie must be more mindful in the future. Millie, irritated by the situation but too cautious to challenge Nina directly, accepts the rebuke without a word. The chapter concludes with Millie feeling unsettled, confused by Nina's harshness and questioning the fairness of the situation. She is left to prepare dinner, a task that now feels like another burden in her already strained and unpredictable role in the household.

This chapter serves as a pivotal moment in Millie's journey, highlighting both the challenges she faces in adjusting to her new life and the complex relationships she must navigate within Nina's family. The misunderstanding with Cecelia underscores the difficulties of trying to integrate into a family where important details, like allergies, are not communicated. Millie's frustration is evident as she tries to balance her desire to do the right thing with the frustration of being blamed for something she couldn't have known. The chapter also delves deeper into Nina's control and her tendency to place blame quickly, which adds to the pressure Millie feels in trying to keep everything in order. What was meant to be a simple gesture of kindness quickly turns into a lesson in navigating the intricacies of family dynamics and the weight of responsibility that comes with her position. As Millie faces the unpredictable nature of her new job, her internal conflict continues to grow, as she's torn between trying to prove her worth and struggling with the lack of communication and understanding in the household. The emotional toll of these misunderstandings foreshadows the many hurdles Millie will have to face as she continues to navigate her role within the family.