

# Chapter II

In Chapter II, the narrator, Mibs Beaumont, reflects on her life at home after a traumatic incident involving her father. That night, while sharing a dark bedroom with her sister Gypsy, Mibs listens to the sounds around her—her sister's steady breathing, her mother's and brother Rocket's activity downstairs, and the rumbling of the earth itself. Momma and Rocket plan an early departure to Salina, where their father awaits care at the hospital. Mibs wishes to accompany them, longing for a brief escape and the novelty of motel soaps. However, she remains at home with Grandpa, who is troubled and restless.

The next morning marks a significant day for Mibs—the day before her thirteenth birthday. She feels burdened with responsibilities, including looking after her younger brother Samson, who is moody and quiet. On their long bus ride to school in Hebron, Mibs grapples with her peers' teasing due to her unusual name, Mississippi, which has led to unkind nicknames and hurtful rumors about her family's troubles. Mibs anticipates that after her birthday, she'll be leaving Hebron Middle School for homeschooling, allowing her to escape the scorn of classmates like Ashely Bing and Emma Flint.

As the last day at school drags on, Mibs struggles to focus amid her worries about her father. The culmination of her emotions peaks when the teacher announces her departure from school. The other students respond with indifference, further deepening her feelings of isolation. Throughout the day, she hopes for a savvy that could silence her bullies or transform them.

Upon arriving home, Mibs finds a shiny gold minivan parked outside, belonging to Miss Rosemary, the preacher's wife. Known for her overzealous desire to keep things in order, Miss Rosemary has come to help the family in the wake of their father's accident. Mibs and Samson attempt to sneak inside, feeling the oppressive weight of Miss Rosemary's judgments as she insists on cleaning their home, underscoring the absence of maternal care in their lives. Miss Rosemary's comments about the need for a mother add to Mibs's anxiety, as she navigates the turmoil of family challenges and the impending changes in her life.