

Chapter IV

In Chapter IV, Miss Rosemary hints at a birthday celebration for Mibs, creating a tense atmosphere at the table as the Beaumont family grapples with their family traditions surrounding birthdays. While others seem to expect joy, Fish, Mibs' brother, is visibly strained by the talk of a party, indicative of the family's unspoken understanding that thirteenth birthdays are typically private affairs. Gypsy, being just three years old, is blissfully unaware, expressing excitement for balloons and icing.

Despite Mibs' reluctance and truthfully stating she lacks friends, Miss Rosemary insists on organizing a party for her, using cheerful determination. Meanwhile, Mibs' sister Bobbi is dismissive and mocks their mother, revealing the family's friction as she emphasizes her disdain for the planned celebration. The conversation continues as Miss Rosemary attempts to convince Mibs to invite classmates, but Mibs inwardly wishes to avoid the public attention surrounding her birthday.

Reflecting on past celebrations, Mibs recalls a vivid memory of Rocket's thirteenth birthday, where their Grandma Dollop engaged them in canning radio waves—a whimsical task that included capturing sounds of songs and stories from the air. The day had been charged with an atmosphere of worry for Rocket, who feared inheriting an ordinary fate without special abilities, unlike his siblings who had shown promise. The memory culminates in a dramatic moment where Rocket discovers his own special talent, producing chaos and spectacular radio sounds during a power outage, marking him as unique within the family.

As Mibs prepares for her own significant birthday, she does not wish for extraordinary talents but instead fervently prays for solitude, hoping that no one will attend her party. This sets the stage for the emotional landscape of the chapter, highlighting the conflict between family expectations and individual desires, encapsulating Mibs' growing anxiety and desire for peace amidst family pressures.