

Chapter XVIII

In Chapter XVIII, Mibs struggles emotionally after a troubling encounter. Weak and shaken, she is supported by Will, who tries to distract her by leading her to the Emerald Truck Stop Diner and Lounge, where their friends await. Upon entering, Mibs is overwhelmed by a cacophony of thoughts pouring from the patrons, making her feel dizzy and nauseous. The presence of tattooed bikers and truckers amplifies her discomfort. As she stumbles, Fish and Will rush to steady her, showing concern for her state. Lill, their friend, offers help but faces her own troubles with a nagging waitress.

Mibs is then led to a cramped storeroom filled with the scents of ketchup and pickles, which reminds her of their home in Mississippi. In the storeroom, Lill encourages Mibs to rest on the sofa while she attends to her duties, leaving Fish to check on Mibs. Still distracted by the disturbing noise inside her head, Mibs struggles with her sense of failure regarding her savvy, as she grapples with the hope of bringing back their father, Poppa, who is away.

Fish, concerned about his sister, insists she explain her abilities. Reluctantly, she reveals that her savvy seems linked to ink on skin, hinting at her ability to read minds. This revelation complicates her feelings further, as she longs for a normal life away from her unusual powers. To demonstrate her ability, Mibs uses a silver pen given by Will Junior and asks Fish to think of a number. As she draws a symbol on his palm, she transcribes his thoughts without his prompting, confirming that she can indeed hear what he's thinking.

Just as she begins to process this truth, Bobbi interrupts, curious about Mibs' newfound ability, "So you read minds, do you?" This confrontation leaves Mibs feeling exposed and troubled, setting the stage for deeper exploration of her powers and their implications on her family and friendships.