

Girlie

The chapter follows Girlie, a young domestic worker, as she navigates her daily responsibilities for her employers, Madam and Oga. Sent to the market three times a week, she purchases household items, groceries, and baby supplies, adapting to their preferences while masking her exhaustion. Girlie reflects on the disparities between her employers' affluent lifestyle and her own humble background in Akko, a village far removed from their polished neighborhood. Her observations highlight the invisible labor of domestic workers and the emotional toll of her separation from family.

Girlie's routine reveals the challenges of budgeting with fluctuating market prices and the physical strain of her work. She carries a leather purse gifted by her mother, a symbol of her forced transition into adulthood. The narrative underscores the risks faced by domestic workers, such as unsafe transportation and exploitation, as Girlie recounts warnings about unmarked taxis. Her resilience is evident as she navigates these dangers, relying on makeshift prayers for protection.

At the market, Girlie interacts with vendors like Iya Tomato, who shows her kindness by adding extra produce to her purchases. These small gestures contrast with her employers' detachment, offering fleeting moments of warmth. Girlie's internal conflict surfaces as she avoids greeting Grace and Mummy Grace, whose playful bond reminds her of her estranged mother. The chapter poignantly captures her loneliness and the ache of missing home, amplified by weekly phone calls where her mother's voice becomes a comforting presence.

The chapter closes with Girlie's encounter with Iya Tomato, who probes about her well-being and family. The vendor's concern contrasts with the indifference of Girlie's employers, highlighting the isolation of her position. A sudden interruption—a woman bumping into Girlie—mirrors the instability of her life. The laughter of Grace and Mummy Grace triggers a surge of emotion, emphasizing the emotional weight Girlie

carries. The chapter masterfully portrays her quiet endurance and the unspoken sacrifices of domestic labor.