

Chapter 13

Chapter 13 presents a poignant exploration of Phoebe's internal struggles as she drives Juice, her husband's child from his affair, through the quiet streets. Her thoughts are consumed with her feelings of inadequacy as a mother, particularly when compared to others. Phoebe recognizes that her emotional distance and less traditional approach to motherhood are often highlighted by people around her, which causes her to reflect on her own upbringing. Growing up with a father who wasn't particularly affectionate, Phoebe became accustomed to withholding her emotions. This shaped her resistance to the emotional expressions that are expected from mothers in conventional society. Despite her detachment, Phoebe feels a genuine love for children, but her affection comes without the overt displays many other mothers exhibit. This contrast between her inner emotions and outward expectations becomes a source of internal conflict, leaving Phoebe to question how she fits into the role of a mother.

The chapter shifts to a Thanksgiving gathering, where Phoebe's feelings of alienation are made clear. Surrounded by her husband and Mia, Juice's mother, who bond over stories of parenting, Phoebe feels like a stranger in her own family. Their easy camaraderie highlights the distance between Phoebe and her husband, who seems more engaged with Mia than with her. This disconnect prompts a painful realization: Phoebe fears the growing rift between her and her husband, a rift that began with his affair and now seems to widen with every passing moment. She feels increasingly isolated, as the intimacy between her husband and Mia underscores her own feelings of abandonment. The emotional weight of this fear—of losing her husband both emotionally and physically—settles heavily on Phoebe, marking the beginning of a profound shift in her perspective on love, loyalty, and connection.

Phoebe's day continues with a shopping trip alongside Juice, during which they share a warm and humorous exchange. As they talk, Juice reveals his strong disapproval of Lila, his father's new partner, and Phoebe sees this as an opportunity to encourage his sense of self-worth and independence. Their conversation about style, self-image, and societal expectations takes on a deeper meaning, shedding light on the generational differences that separate them. Phoebe recognizes that while Juice is forming his own understanding of identity, she, too, is navigating her own journey of self-discovery. They discuss how societal pressures shape their perceptions of themselves and others, but it becomes clear that Phoebe is committed to teaching Juice the importance of staying true to who he is, regardless of outside opinions. In this moment, Phoebe also learns from Juice, who shows her the simplicity of being true to oneself and how his openness to change contrasts with her own struggles.

Throughout their shopping experience, Phoebe begins to feel a sense of empowerment. As she picks out clothes and accessories that represent who she wants to be, she feels liberated from the constraints of maternal expectations that have been placed upon her. The act of choosing items that express her individuality brings a much-needed sense of control back into Phoebe's life, even as the shadow of her relationship troubles looms large. Despite the emotional confusion she's facing with her husband and her feelings of displacement, Phoebe embraces this small victory over the expectations surrounding her. It is through these simple, yet significant, moments that she begins to carve out space for herself. The sense of ownership over her choices becomes a symbol of her independence, offering her a fleeting but powerful respite from the chaos and uncertainty of her personal life.

As the day progresses, Phoebe and Juice share more meaningful moments, discussing themes of love, loss, and identity. This conversation with Juice deepens their bond, bringing them closer together as they navigate their individual journeys through life. Phoebe finds comfort in the connection they share, as it becomes clear that despite the turmoil in her marriage and the weight of her responsibilities, she can still find moments of clarity and hope. By the end of the chapter, Phoebe's reflections have shifted. She now approaches her role as a mother and wife with a renewed sense of

purpose, having embraced her individuality and understood the importance of connecting with herself, her daughter, and others in her life. The chapter concludes on a hopeful note, with Phoebe feeling empowered and ready to take on whatever challenges lie ahead.

