

Chapter 57

In Chapter 57, we are thrust deep into Millie's psychological torment and the disturbing complexity of her relationship with Andrew. The chapter opens with Millie waking up in a state of unease, her thoughts immediately drawn to the camera feed she set up to keep watch over Andrew, who remains trapped in the attic. She's gripped with a sudden wave of panic, fearing that he has escaped, only to feel a chilling combination of relief and dread when she confirms that he's still there, hidden under the covers. This mixture of emotions—relief that he hasn't escaped but fear of what he represents—sets the stage for the tension that will unfold between them, revealing the power dynamics at play in their toxic relationship.

Millie's thoughts drift back to the five hours that Andrew has already endured, trapped beneath heavy books, a punishment that, in her mind, feels justified but also deeply manipulative. Her mind is at war as she contemplates the odd sense of control she now holds over him, reminding herself of the twisted bond they share and the deal they made. Before she proceeds with releasing him, Millie chooses to focus on herself, indulging in a rare moment of respite with a long shower, savoring the act as an escape from the grim reality she is steeped in. When she finally emerges and dresses herself, she does so with quiet determination, having tucked away both Andrew's phone and a mysterious object she found in the garage—tools of control, of manipulation, that she carries with her as part of her psychological arsenal. Her calculated actions underscore her cold detachment, preparing her for the next phase of their interaction, where she will maintain her iron grip on him.

As she approaches the attic, the palpable tension grows. Andrew, weak and desperate from his hours of entrapment, stands as a stark contrast to Millie's calculated composure and cold indifference. His attempts to negotiate his release fall on deaf ears as Millie slides pliers under the door and demands that he pull out one of his own

teeth—a demand both physically excruciating and deeply symbolic. His immediate refusal, coupled with frantic attempts to break free, highlights his vulnerability, the full extent of his powerlessness laid bare before Millie. She remains unmoved by his pleas, her detachment deepening as she continues to manipulate the situation, using Andrew's desperation as a means of reinforcing her dominance. She controls the terms of their interaction, pushing him to his physical and emotional breaking point with each demand, each moment of silence from her that extends his agony.

The psychological and physical power struggle between Millie and Andrew forms the crux of this chapter, with every word and action carrying a heavier weight than the last. The attic, with its cold, oppressive atmosphere, symbolizes not just Andrew's confinement but Millie's own psychological imprisonment—a prison of her making, one that thrives on control and dominance. While Andrew's captivity is physical, Millie's is emotional and mental, tethered to her need to assert power over someone who once held power over her. The more we witness Millie's actions, the clearer it becomes that her need for control is driven by her own deep insecurities, her belief that only through domination can she feel secure in her place. The final moments of this chapter leave the reader grappling with the implications of power, submission, and the dark undercurrents of human relationships that often go unnoticed. It's a chilling exploration of the depths of manipulation, with Millie and Andrew's fates intertwined in a web of control, emotional violence, and unrelenting psychological torment.