

Dad's Kitchen Nightmare

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Table of Contents

Chapter One

Morning Routines 1

Chapter Two

A Phone Vanishes 2

Chapter Three

Clues in a List 3

Chapter Four

Aha! 4

Chapter One

Morning Routines

Everyone in my family had a morning routine. My dad's routine was the most complicated. Not only was he always late, he was constantly losing something. He also believed in a hearty breakfast. He had his Corn Crispies with rice milk, topped with crushed walnuts, raisins, sliced bananas, and a sprinkle of cinnamon. Like father, like daughter: My favorite breakfast was exactly the same. That's what led me to key clues on the day Dad lost his phone.

The night before the incident, I set my alarm for 5:45 a.m. Getting up that early was super-hard because it was still dark out. As I stumbled down the hall, I heard the hiss of water.

“Ugh,” I grunted.

My sister Kendra had beaten me to the shower. I stumbled past the bathroom door and downstairs. I could see the glow of Dad's cell phone charging on the kitchen counter.

I poured myself a glass of orange juice. Half asleep, I squinted my eyes to read my dad's to-do list, which was posted on the fridge. Just then, I heard Kendra exit the bathroom, so I hurried back up to grab my turn.





Chapter Two

A Phone Vanishes

When I came back down about a half an hour later, a drama was unfolding in the kitchen. It wasn't Kendra and my brother Emmanuel fighting over food, as they usually did. Instead, it was Dad tearing around in his coat and hat, looking for his phone.

"Dad, I saw it right there earlier this morning," I said, pointing at the now-empty space on the kitchen counter.

"I'm going to be late. This is a nightmare!" Dad muttered as he climbed the stairs.

I opened the cupboard to start fixing my favorite breakfast. Instead of Corn Crispies, there was a four-pack of light bulbs with one missing.

"Strange," I thought.

I went to the pantry to get the bag of walnuts. Surprisingly, the box of Corn Crispies was there! I went to the fridge to get the rice milk, and I found the walnuts! Suddenly, a germ of an idea sprouted in my mind.

"Hey, Kendra," I said, "hand me Dad's to-do list."

I glanced at it and immediately knew where Dad's cell phone was.

"Dad!" I hollered. "Come downstairs now! I'll tell you where your cell phone is."

Chapter Three

Clues in a List

When Dad came back to the kitchen, I made him sit down at the table. I knew he was running late, but I was enjoying this too much.

“First of all,” I said, “we know the phone was here this morning, so someone must have moved it. Let me walk you step by step to reveal what happened. Kendra, can you read the first item on Dad’s to-do list?”

“It says, ‘Call the office.’”

“Is that item crossed off?”

“Indeed it is,” said Kendra.

“Can you read me the second item on Dad’s to-do list?”

“It says, ‘Change light bulb in kitchen,’” said Kendra. “It’s crossed off, too.”

“I submit,” I said with my best serious detective look, “that Dad made his phone call while he was changing the bulb.”

“How do you know that?” asked Dad. “I remember doing both those things, but I don’t remember doing them at the same time.”



Chapter Four

Aha!

“Here’s what happened,” I said. “Changing the bulb and talking on the phone got you confused. When you hung up and went to make your breakfast, you started putting things back in the wrong places.”

As I spoke, I walked around the kitchen, opening cupboard doors.

“You’ll see that the light bulbs are where the cereal should be. The cereal is where the walnuts should be. The walnuts are where the rice milk should be. The rice milk is where the bananas should be. The bananas are where the cell phone should be. Everything is one spot to the right of where it should be.”

“Aha! That means my cell phone is where the light bulbs should be!” said Dad. He opened the kitchen cupboard, and there was the phone!

“Just where I knew it would be!” I said proudly.

“What a great detective you are!” exclaimed Dad as he dashed out the door.

