

Ella Hates Fractions

"I hate fractions," Ella said as she walked into the kitchen. Her mother was cutting vegetables on a cutting board that was placed on the counter. Piles of onions and bright red, green, and yellow peppers were heaped on the edge of the board.

"It's not nice to hate," Mom said as she finished cutting the onions. "I'm making your favorite meal tonight."

"Chili?" asked with a small smile.

"Yes. Chili!" Mom answered as she picked up the cutting board and walked over to a large pan that was on top of the stove. "Why don't you like fractions?" she asked as she scraped the vegetables from the cutting board and into the pan.

"I don't understand them at all!" Ella sat on a barstool on the other side of kitchen island.

"How is your sister doing with fractions?"

"Madison totally understands them! Seems like since we are twins that I should understand too. But I don't. I've never been as good at math as Madison. I'm just dumb."

"Ella! Do not say that. Ever! You are a very smart girl."

"Then why don't I understand fractions?" Ella asked.

"You will. Everyone learns at a different speed. I had a hard time with fractions too. But I figured them out. So will you."

"No I won't. I will never understand them. I don't even know why I have to learn fractions. I mean, what's the point? I'm never going to need a fraction in my whole life."

"Do you want to help me make cookies?" Mom said.

"I guess."

"You don't sound very excited."

"I am. I just don't like fractions. I will never get them."

"Let's not worry about that right now. Instead, will you get the peanut butter?" Mom said as she pulled a large mixing bowl from one of the cabinets.

"Okay," Ella walked over to a cabinet and pulled a jar of peanut butter from it.

Mom placed a clean pan and some measuring cups on the kitchen island. "Here. You put the ingredients in

the pan and after that, I will cook them.” Mom put a tin canister of sugar and a carton of milk close to the pan. “First, put the sugar into the pan. Start with one full cup.”

Ella slid the silver measuring cup into the white sugar and gently pulled out a full cup and dumped it into the pan.

“Good,” Mom said. “Now, I need a little more. I need three-fourths of a cup. That is more than half of the cup, but not all the way to the top. Fill it halfway first.”

Ella filled the cup halfway full.

“Okay. Now, see that line a little way up? That is three-fourths of a cup. Add enough sugar until it reaches that line.”

Ella scooped a little more sugar into the cup until it reached the line.

“Great! Now, pour that three-fourths of a cup of sugar into the pan. Next, we need one-half of a cup of milk. Here, use this glass measuring cup with lines. See, here is the half cup line. Fill it to there with milk and then add it to the pan.”

Ella slowly poured the milk. She was happy the carton was only half full. That made it easier to handle.

“Okay. Here’s the milk.”

“How much did you pour?”

“Half of this cup. Just like you said.”

“Right. One half of a cup. Now we need one half of a cup of butter,” Mom said as she reached into the refrigerator and removed a stick of butter. Luckily, there is exactly one half of a cup of butter in this one stick, so all we need to do is unwrap it and drop it into the pan.” Mom unwrapped the yellow stick of butter and dropped it into the pan.

Mom picked up the pan and placed it on the stove. “Now I have to bring this to a boil and then cook it for one and a half minutes. After that, all we need to do is add four tablespoons of cocoa, three cups of oats, one teaspoon of vanilla, and one-half cup of peanut butter.” Mom turned to Ella. “Did you hear that? One-half cup of peanut butter?”

“I see what you are doing,” Ella said with a smile I thought we were just baking cookies, but you are showing me something.”

“What in the world would I be showing you?” Mom asked.

“You are showing me I need to understand fractions.”

Mom laughed. “And you were understanding! You just need a little more practice.”

“Okay. I understand now. Fractions are important,” Ella said.

“And why are they important?” Mom asked.

“Because without fractions, we wouldn’t be able to make cookies! And I probably couldn’t live without

cookies!"

"Me too!" Mom said. "I love fractions!"

Emma and Mom both laughed as Mom stirred the cookies.

Questions

1. What is Ella's favorite meal?
2. What is Ella's sister's name?
3. What is Mom cutting when Ella comes home?
4. Mom put something yellow into the pan for cookies. What was it?