

## 13. January 6, 2021

On January 6, 2021, Emily (Em) and her husband Rodney (Roddy) are in their home, disturbed by the sight of a mob storming the Capitol on TV. Em, while outwardly appalled, finds the event fascinating in her deeper, unspoken opinions. She muses on the transformation of America's middle class and the thrill of political upheaval, though she would never openly admit her darker wishes for the situation.

Bonnie Rae, a younger woman working for Em, is also watching the events unfold. When Em insists on turning off the TV, the scene shifts to a more personal setting. Em directs Bonnie to work on a digital task involving Christmas and New Year's greetings, pretending to be less technologically savvy than she is. This act maintains her appearance as a harmless, intellectual elder, masking her judgmental and radical thoughts.

The narrative then reveals a sinister side to Em and Roddy's life. They discuss their next potential victim for what is implied to be a dark ritual involving human fat, hinted at when Em applies a mysterious lotion made from a man named Peter Steinman to Roddy's arthritic hands. The couple has been targeting individuals for their body fat, which they use for pain relief and potentially other, undisclosed purposes.

Em and Roddy deliberate over choosing Bonnie as their next subject, weighing the risks and benefits. They rationalize their choice with Bonnie's current life situations—her breakup, the strained relationship with her mother, and her experience of workplace harassment. Their conversation reveals a chilling detachment from morality, viewing Bonnie's personal struggles and routines as factors that make her an ideal target. This planning indicates their methodical approach to selecting victims, highlighting their hidden malevolence beneath a facade of normalcy and kindness.

As the chapter closes, the conversation between Em and Roddy, coupled with the application of the mysterious lotion, casts a dark shadow over their seemingly benign existence. Their casual discussion of targeting Bonnie and the use of harvested human fat for relief reveals a deep-seated malice and manipulation, setting the stage for a story intertwining the ordinary with the grotesque.