

4. July 23, 2021

Holly Gibney meets early with Penny Dahl, a distressed mother seeking her missing daughter, Bonnie Rae Dahl, at the Fourth Street municipal parking lot. Before their meeting, Holly observes a Volvo plastered with images of Bonnie and missing person notices. Holly, drawing parallels between Penny's voice and her late mother's, expected Bonnie to be younger but finds the actual photos show a woman in her mid-twenties with a vibrant and carefree appearance.

Inside the Frederick Building, Penny, appearing unkempt and focused solely on finding her daughter, discusses Bonnie's disappearance with Holly. She provides photos and mentions a security video from a Jet Mart, which Detective Jaynes shared with her, showing Bonnie's last known location. They watch the video, capturing Bonnie's mundane final moments before vanishing. Penny shares her frustration with the police's lack of progress in finding Bonnie, emphasizing a mysterious note found with Bonnie's abandoned bike that suggests she had "had enough," though Penny vehemently denies her daughter would harm herself.

The chapter dives deep into Holly's investigation as she begins to unravel the context of Bonnie's life: her job at Reynolds Library, her relationships, and her last interactions. Insights into Holly's methodical approach to the case are provided, revealing her dedication to uncovering the truth amid her complex feelings of grief and responsibility. The chapter ends with Penny reluctantly discussing a heated argument she had with Bonnie over her former boyfriend, Tom Higgins, hinting at deeper issues beneath the surface.

This encounter sets the stage for a layered investigation, introducing various characters and potential leads while showcasing Holly's empathy and determination. It underlines the emotional toll of a missing loved one and the desperate search for answers against a backdrop of personal and societal challenges.