

Chapter 29

Chapter 29 finds Patricia in a highly precarious situation as she attempts to navigate her way through tense moments and a chaotic environment. On Thursday, Slick makes a call at 10:25 AM, expressing her intention to come, but with the condition that she won't open anything that's sealed. Patricia responds with a brief thank you, acknowledging the risk involved in this dangerous endeavor. When Slick admits her discomfort with the situation, Patricia, too, shares her concerns, but they press on, hoping that their collective effort will speed things up. The phone call is the beginning of an unfolding drama that is far from simple, with both women fully aware of the potential consequences.

Patricia's day is filled with normal activities, such as dropping Blue off at Saturday school and running errands. However, her encounter with Mrs. Greene heightens the tension when she sees Slick's white Saab parked in the driveway of James Harris's home. The sight of the house, which had once belonged to Mrs. Savage, now transformed into a sprawling mansion, stirs up feelings of discomfort in Patricia. As she approaches the house, she can't shake the eerie sense that something is off, particularly given the renovations that have stripped the property of its original charm. Stepping onto the porch, Patricia knocks, and Mrs. Greene answers, her casual demeanor masking the tension between them. The conversation continues with Patricia pretending to search for lost keys, all while keeping an eye out for Slick.

As Patricia moves through the house, she is struck by the stark emptiness that seems to echo in every room. The house feels cold, devoid of personal touch, and Patricia notices the strange absence of familiar household items. Her unease deepens when she heads upstairs, instinctively knowing that the answers they seek are likely hidden within the upper floors. Each room she enters feels more sterile than the last, with no sign of personal belongings or meaningful history—just an empty shell of a home. The

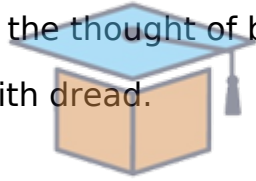
feeling of being watched hangs in the air, and Patricia's discomfort grows. She reaches the master bedroom, where the decor is stark and uninviting, devoid of any personality. As she explores further, she is greeted with more cold, untouched spaces. This coldness is broken when Mrs. Greene catches up with her, making it clear that there is more to find.

Mrs. Greene, still acting as a guide, insists that Patricia should continue her search, but Patricia is filled with a sense of futility. The lack of anything valuable or telling in the house only adds to the feeling of emptiness that permeates every corner. Patricia's mind races as she considers the implications of what might be hidden elsewhere. When the attic door is finally revealed, Patricia's nerves are tested once more. The attic, with its neglected state and unsettling atmosphere, holds the potential for answers—or further danger. With Mrs. Greene's help, Patricia manages to open the attic door and is greeted by a dry, musty smell that fills the air. She climbs the ladder, stepping cautiously, aware that every move could bring danger. The flashlight she uses flickers weakly, but it's enough to reveal the disarray in the attic. Amidst the clutter, Patricia finds the remnants of Mrs. Savage's belongings, preserved in a jumble of mothballs, old suitcases, and broken furniture. But it's when she opens one suitcase that everything changes—the contents of which are far more horrifying than she ever expected.

Patricia's reaction to the suitcase's contents is visceral, as she stumbles back, her body tense with fear and revulsion. The discovery confirms that the situation is far more dangerous than she could have imagined. The sight of Francine's remains, hidden under layers of plastic and mothballs, sends a shockwave through Patricia, freezing her in place. Her heart races as she desperately tries to make sense of the horror she's uncovered. With trembling hands, she examines the suitcase more closely, realizing the depth of the nightmare she's been unwittingly drawn into. The attic, once a place of quiet storage, now feels like a tomb—a dark and suffocating space filled with secrets that Patricia cannot ignore. As she steps back, nearly losing her balance, she grips a beam above her to steady herself. The fear that had been a

distant worry now surges through her, stronger and more immediate than ever before.

Patricia's thoughts swirl as she processes what she's just discovered. The horror of the situation is overwhelming, but there's no time to dwell on it. She knows that every moment spent here is one step closer to danger. The sounds of movement below her only serve to heighten her urgency. With every creak of the stairs and every muffled voice from downstairs, she is reminded that James Harris could return at any moment. Her pulse quickens, and the weight of what she has uncovered begins to settle in. She needs to leave, but the thought of being caught in this house with such damning evidence fills her with dread.



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