

## Glade Hall

### Chapter 10 – Adam Glanville

**“They stood in front of the crypt with its strange Latin inscription, pleading for the Maynard line to be allowed peace in death.”**

Σ

~Then~

The construction of Glade Hall had caused a small village to spring up. A few families even living under canvas, which was a hard existence in the English winter. Not that Adam was living in a tent, or one of the rickety wooden shacks that dotted the area near the old farm. Adam Glanville was living in a wooden building that would eventually become the stables. Nothing was wasted, every temporary structure would become a useful part of the final estate. James Maynard, their employer, had a near pathological hatred of waste. There was a set of plans, drawn up by a famous firm of architects in London. They weren't keen on coming out to Oxfordshire and getting their fancy clothes dirty, those expensive architects. Adam wasn't just creating beauty out of rough wood; he was overseeing the entire construction site. The foreman charged with reclaiming materials from the ruined Tudor hall, was back to pester him again.

“I've put extra men onto the job sir, but progress is painfully slow. I do wonder if it's worth all the effort. The stones are of such poor quality.”

“I obtained a supply of blasting powder and men experienced in its use. Use it !”

Adam knew why the man was wary of using the gunpowder, there had been a nasty accident. Gunpowder can blow things apart, it can also burn with a fierce intensity. Two of the labourers would be scarred for life. They were all employees of James Maynard though and he wanted every stone dug out of the ground.

“The men aren't keen on using the explosives sir.”

“Our employer wants no waste, not a single stone ! Use the blasting powder or I'll put another man in charge.”

At one time Adam had hated to threaten the people who worked for him, now he did it without thinking. It worked, the man wouldn't want to end up as just another poorly paid labourer.

“I'll get it done sir. Every last foundation stone will come out of the ground.”

“Good man.”

Adam watched him walk away, his left arm hanging at a slightly odd angle. A war injury, though no one asked what war, just in case the man had been on the wrong side. The Jacobite rebellion, the wars in Austria, not everyone had fought on what the King might consider to be, the right side. Adam had a knee that would never bend again, a souvenir of the war against the French. A Dutchman had smashed his knee and they were supposed to be on the same side as the English. Such things happened in wars though. One of the local boys arrived with food and water, Adam hated to leave a panel half finished. He nodded his thanks at the lad and used a small brush to mark a corner of the panel.

'A.G.'

In blue on the back of the panel. Always on a back corner or in an out of the way place. Sometimes Adam put a few phrases in Latin and those were always well hidden. He often thought of other people seeing them in the future, perhaps wondering who AG was.

Adam Glanville had known James Maynard for many years and his reputation for dabbling in things unholy. They'd both grown up in the West Country, in the days before James had developed an interest in things best left alone. Adam had never wanted to travel to Oxfordshire, but few wanted to hire a crippled carpenter, even a very good one. James Maynard had hired a lot of desperate men to build his home, men who wouldn't ask too many questions or complain about the occasional strange accident. Glade Hall would be built well and look beautiful.

The irony was that all that beauty, would be built by a small army of crippled men. Some crippled from various wars and some crippled in other ways, crippled inside. Adam had studied, he was well read compared to most. His Latin wasn't very good, but he'd learned some protective incantations by heart.

"Protecting who?" He muttered. "Myself? The future inhabitants of this place? Not James Maynard, he's beyond help from my God."

Adam wrote a few lines in Latin and fixed the panel in place, with glue and tiny panel pins. He had no idea why he kept leaving protection incantations around Glade Hall, he just felt a need to do it. It was a minor way of rebelling against a man he loathed, but whose money he needed. There was a wife still in Cornwall and two almost grown children. Adam needed to earn money while he could.

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Night brought its own problems for the small village of workers. Most had fought in wars of one kind or another and James Maynard hadn't been too concerned about the past history of his workers. The local people went home at night, leaving the migrant workers to spend the night in their shacks and tents. Already quite a bit of local thievery was being blamed on those building Glade Hall. Not that James Maynard cared, he just hired those desperate enough to ignore his bad reputation. Adam considered it his duty to walk through the shacks, ensuring the safety of the workforce, as best he could. Not alone of course, he always took two armed men with him and the huge Moroccan servant of Maynard's. Few in England had seen a black man and they seemed terrified of the huge brown skinned Moroccan. Adam had thought himself safe from attack and he was wrong in that assumption.

"I'll be in Oxford for a few nights Adam, so be careful." James Maynard had told him.

The muscular Moroccan had gone with him, but Adam had his two guards and besides, the workers knew him. No one was going to risk losing their job, by attacking him. Once again he'd been wrong in his assumption. Drink was a problem and one that Adam never did manage to totally eradicate. It was too cheap and far too easy to obtain. A pint of gin cost less than a loaf of bread. Foul stuff of course and likely to cause serious illness in the long term, but few labourers worried about the long term.

"Did you hear that?" He asked.

"Yes sir, someone screaming."

They were at the far end of the makeshift community of shacks and the scream seemed to be coming from the nearby woods. Much of the wood had been cut down for timber and to fuel their fires, but there were still areas of dense woodland. Another scream, someone in real trouble.

"Come on." Said Adam. "This way."

They had two oil burning lamps, but they were fairly useless, just casting a dull yellow light. In truth, Adam and his men had never strayed from the well-lit workers village before. A hundred yards and they were in the trees and unable to see more than a few feet in any direction. Good luck might have meant them never finding the dead body, but their luck was bad that night.

"Over there sir!"

A dead man, blood all over his face and a jagged cut in his chest. His attackers hadn't run, they'd remained to stand over the body and glare at Adam. He recognised the look of too much drink in their eyes and movements.

"What happened here ?" Shouted one of Adam's guards.

It was fairly obvious what had happened. Three drunken men had gone out into the woods and there had been a disagreement of some kind. Why and what over, was largely immaterial.

"Come with us." Said Adam. "You'll both be kept under lock and key, until this can be sorted out." He recognised them both, though he couldn't easily recall their names. Two former members of his majesty's navy, now employed as wielders of pick and shovel. The drink had the better of common sense and they attacked his guards. Adam's men put up a decent fight, but they were just villagers with swords. Their opponents were experienced fighters and quickly stood over another two dead bodies.

"Kill me and the whole county will be out looking for you." Said Adam. "Hunting you down like mad dogs !"

They looked at each other and then smiled at him. Their faces in the yellow lamp light looked like devils to him. Drink had been their undoing and now it was likely to cause them to kill him too.

"Only you know what happened."

The older one raised his sword and stepped forward, only to gasp and shout out in pain. Something had him by the scruff of the neck, a hand of some kind, a hand out of the shadows.

"Help me Jim, get it off me !"

Jim had his own problems. The younger man was being held by hands too, several grabbing his arms and legs. As Adam watched the shadow hands tightened their grip, causing both men to scream in agony.

"Help us sir....."

It was too late to help, even if he'd wanted to, which he didn't. Not only had the two drunken swine murdered three people, they'd come close to killing him. First legs snapped and their cries became louder, more desperate. As the sound became that of breaking ribs and arms, the two men became silent. It took a few minutes until their necks were snapped and their bodies were allowed to fall to the ground. Adam could see the creatures now, the things made of shadows. A few red flashes where their eyes were, but otherwise they were just smoke between the trees.

"Take a lamp and go now Adam Glanville."

The voice was barely more than a whisper in the night air, but quite clear to his ears. Another one of them spoke to him in a female voice.

"Say you let the men come into the woods on their own. Say you have no idea what became of them."

Now several voices, all talking at once.

"There will be nothing here to find in the morning. Go now Adam. Go !"

He had no idea why they'd saved him, or why they were letting him return to his home in the stables. Perhaps the creatures of smoke served James Maynard ? Perhaps he served them ? None of it mattered really, Adam just wanted to stay alive. Like most well-read men, he had little faith in any kind of afterlife. His leg wouldn't let him run, but he walked as fast as he could.

"Don't look back, never look back." The voices called.

The sounds he heard stopped any inclination to look back. Biting and chewing, bones cracking open. Adam had nightmares about it until his dying day, but he never looked back. Nothing ever was found of the dead men, their swords or even the lamp he'd left behind.

~ ~  
~Now~

Emma knew her parents Sunday routine, they'd remain in their PJs and gowns until well after breakfast. She'd lied to them, she was becoming quite good at it.

"Dean wants to show me the old gravel streets of Lower Worton."

"What about breakfast?" Here mum had asked.

"We'll grab some toast from the kitchen."

Dean had backed her up, though he had taken some persuading to lie to her parents. Emma didn't care about barely visible traces of long dead villages. Emma wanted to give Hermione a proper burial. The new head gardener was the only unknown in her plans. Lysette didn't officially work Sundays, but she did sometimes visit Tommy. They were still screwing, everyone for miles knew about it.

Emma had carried the remains of Hermione Wood in the cedar box she'd bought for the occasion. Dean had made a special trip to a garden centre in Oxford to buy a spade and a broad shovel. He'd gone on the bus while Emma was working at Sheila's Flowers. Now they were both stood in the Maynard Family Cemetery and looking at the hard dry ground.

"It's been a hot dry summer." Said Dean. "Digging a grave is going to be hard work."

They'd both looked at the hole down the side of the Maynard crypt, the hole full of yew tree roots. It would need widening, but was easier than digging a fresh hole. It just hadn't seemed right to Emma.

"I don't think she'd be at peace there." She'd said.

The ground was like concrete, even the new spade had to be stood on to make it sink into the soil. Dean broke the ground up with the spade, while Emma used the shovel to move it to a small heap. Half an hour later and they'd made a hole barely a foot deep.

"We'll be here until Christmas." Said Dean. "Can the crypt be opened? That would be more dignified than a shallow grave."

"I don't think there's a lock or anything." She replied. "I think we just need to push it open."

They stood in front of the crypt with its strange Latin inscription, pleading for the Maynard line to be allowed peace in death. Dean put his hand against the door and pushed.

"Careful Dean! If we break it, my dad will have some kind of seizure."

"I'm being careful. Help me push."

The door probably hadn't been opened in decades, it made a screeching noise as they pushed it open. The door wobbled slightly as they pushed it fully back, but didn't fall over.

"Closing it again will be fun." Said Dean.

The crypt looked like a small building, the size of a two car garage. Once inside, they could see stairs leading down to a lower level.

"Crap! We'll need a flashlight."

"I'll go and get one."

"Just make sure my parents don't see you, we're supposed to be miles away."

Emma sat just inside the open crypt, enjoying the shelter it gave from the hot morning sun. It looked like it was going to be another glorious summer day. She heard the footsteps and assumed it was Dean, until she heard the grunting, as Lysette climbed over the fence.

"I knew it! Just knew it!" Fumed the gardener. "I told Tommy you had a screw loose. What now? Grave robbing, or just old fashioned criminal damage?"

Emma had made a promise to herself, to never talk to Lysette Anders again. She had an instinctive hatred for the middle aged busy body. She stood up, picking up the shovel and holding it like a weapon.

“Fuck off Lysette !”

“How dare you ! I’ve never in all my life.....”

Emma advanced on Lysette, pulling the shovel back and high up, ready to strike. The head gardener stopped ranting, but stood her ground.

“You need to be fucking off by the time I count down from three.” Said Emma.

“I’m going straight to see your father.”

Emma placed herself only four feet away from Lysette and looked her straight in the eyes.

“Three !”

“I refuse to be intimidated.”

“Two !”

Lysette moved back a pace, but still wasn’t showing any sign of leaving the grave yard.

“One !”

There must have been a look in Emma’s eyes as she brought the shovel back. There had been a definite intent to land the blow on Lysette, probably on her shoulder. The head gardener turned and ran, colliding with the fence that surrounded the cemetery.

“Now I’ve got you, bitch !”

Emma slammed the shovel into the fence, just a few inches from Lysette’s head. Dean was back, stood the other side of the fence, holding a flashlight. He said nothing, just looked stunned at what he was witnessing. Lysette took her chance and scrambled over the fence, falling on her back, her arms and legs thrashing about like an upside down turtle.

“I knew there was something wrong with you.” She yelled. “You’re mad ! Completely mad !”

Emma climbed onto the top of the fence, holding the shovel like a battle axe. That was enough for Lysette, she was up on her feet and running towards the house. No more insults though, she was using all her breath to run as fast as she could.

“Bitch !” Shouted Emma.

Dean climbed over the fence and watched Lysette running into the distance.

“Was she giving you crap again ?” He asked.

“Yes.”

“Remind me to never upset you. Especially if you’re carrying a shovel.”

“The worrying thing is that I really wanted to hit her.”

“Will she tell your dad ?”

“Maybe. Actually I doubt it, he’s already told her to leave me alone. He’s gone off her quite a bit, mainly over the sex stuff with Tommy.”

“Sex stuff heh ? Nothing worse than sex stuff.”

He was teasing her. Emma playfully lifted the shovel.

“You next ! You can save yourself by giving me the flashlight.”

She dropped the shovel and took the flashlight, noticing that it had ‘Sean,’ written on it in correcting fluid.

“I had to avoid everyone, his was on a shelf near the rear doors.” Said Dean. “Is he ok, will he be coming back ?”

“They’re saying an ex-girlfriend used her nails on him and tore him up fairly badly.”

“Crap ! How badly ?”

"His right arm, then his face. He'll be off work for a while. I'm not sure though, I heard him shouting at someone and it didn't sound like he knew them."

"You were there?"

"No, he was attacked outside. I just heard him shouting at someone to leave him alone. I wish I'd gone to see who it was. He'll be back though, or so Henry says."

"You liked him, didn't you?"

"Yes, he was a nice man. He did have a reputation with the local womenfolk though."

She turned on Sean's flashlight and aimed it inside the crypt. It was filthy of course, but there was no sign of rubble or its imminent collapse.

"Can you carry her coffin Dean?"

"No problem."

He picked up the cedar box and they both started to walk down the stairs.

"Any gap on a shelf will do." Said Emma. "Not the floor though, that would be wrong."

The stairs led to a large single room, with marble shelving, shaped into slots to hold a single coffin. There was a musty smell, but nothing unpleasant about it. Some of the coffins were disintegrating with age.

"There are a lot of small coffins." Noted Dean.

"Infant mortality was at almost fifty percent in the eighteenth century."

They moved on, past row after row of dead Maynards.

"James Maynard himself will be here." Said Emma. "Though you'd need a burial plan to know which was his coffin."

"Was he the first to be laid to rest here?" Asked Dean.

"No, he buried two sons and a daughter before his own death. Look, they left space for more coffins."

A whole section was vacant, ready to receive the dead of more generations of Maynards. Dean placed the cedar box on one of the shelves.

"Now I can say the words." Said Emma.

"In Latin I bet."

"No, she'd never have known Latin. I found the Church of England burial service on the internet."

Emma had the single sheet of paper, folded up in her back pocket. She unfolded it and pointed the flashlight at it.

"We meet in the name of Jesus Christ, who died and was raised to the glory of God the Father. Grace and mercy be with you....."

The website had given various choices of words, so Emma had decided on what had sounded best to her. It took only a minute or two to finish the words.

"Amen." She ended with.

"Amen." Repeated Dean. "Do you think she's at peace now?"

"I don't know. I hope so! I have a feeling we've helped, but haven't set her free of this place."

They left, pulling at the door, carefully closing the door without crushing their fingers. Emma stood back and looked, the gap in the door was easily seen.

"Few people come here." Said Dean.

"Lysette does and she'd love to tell my dad about something like this. There must have been a handle once, long since corroded away."

There was a slight gust of wind, barely enough to move the leaves of the yew tree by the grave yard fence. The crypt door slammed firmly shut, as though strong arms had slammed it from the other side.

“Crap ! That was weird Emma.”

“I know. Come on we’d better get back, return Sean’s torch and clean up a bit.”

“And breakfast, I’m starving.”

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It was mid-morning and Emma was once again sitting at her father’s computer, while Dean entertained Jerry Jr. Afternoons in the study were fast becoming a fixed part of their routine. Her mother came in to tell her a young man called Dudley was at the door, a member of the Oxford Archaeological society.

“Vice chairman according to his business card.” Said her mum. “He’s here to talk about the witch’s book you found.”

“He never mentioned coming today mum.”

Her mum was giving her one of her ‘wise’ smiles. It was completely infuriating.

“Emma he has that look. If you’d been male or my age, he’d have sent you an email. Come and see the poor boy.”

Her mother turned round, just before leaving the room.

“And be nice to him, he’s driven a long way to see you.” She added.

Damn ! The last thing she needed was an amorous archaeologist, Dean was already looking moody.

“He might have found something, I suppose.” Said Dean.

“I’ll bring him up here.”

She found the young man sitting near the front door, a large leather briefcase on his lap. He jumped up when he saw her and her mum had been right, he did have that look on his face. Dudley was a little smitten.

“I wasn’t expecting you.”

“Sorry, but I thought you’d want to see the pictures. Some of the book was readable, quite a bit of it actually. We used different wavelengths of light to.....”

“There’s coffee upstairs and nibbles.” She broke in. “Cook always makes enough for at least six.”

She led him upstairs, wondering about cook working seven days a week. That had to be breaking lots of rules, maybe even a few laws. She’d mention it to her dad.

“We’re in here. How do you like your coffee ?”

“Black please.”

Emma rolled her eyes at Dean, she had a feeling that Dudley was going to turn out to be, what her father referred to as a ‘complete turnip.’ Still, he was a guest and Emma was determined to be polite.

“You’re lucky, Mrs Hargreaves just brought up some fresh cookies.” She said.

“Cookies !!” Yelled Jerry Jr.

Once Dudley had consumed coffee and half a cookie and been warned not to feed the three year old, they examined the contents of his briefcase. Emma quickly revised her opinion of Dudley and mentally apologised to him. All the ruined pages of the witch’s journal had revealed something, underneath centuries of dirt and mould. It was a journal, not a spell book.

“Written in English, using a lot of words she spelled by her own rules.” Said Dudley. “Not unusual at that time, they weren’t as fussy about spelling as we are now.”

Dudley spread several sheets of paper over her dad's desk, showing page after page of gibberish, written in appalling handwriting. Or at least gibberish to her.

"I have translations into modern English for just about everything." Said Dudley.

He removed about thirty pages from his case, obviously proud of what he'd accomplished. It was all there, a full translation, printed on a modern laser printer in Calibri font.

"Not eighteenth century. Much, much older, probably written before the Norman Invasion."

"Wow, you must have spent days doing this." Commented Emma.

"Yes, but it was worth it. Two years ago there wasn't the technology." Said Dudley. "We'd never have known about Eloise and her two sisters."

Emma scanned the sheets of paper, noting that much of it was about cures for various common complaints and of course, the removal of warts. It was pretty much as she'd expected, until she reached the darker parts.

"She was obviously quite mad." Said Dudley. "Eloise Ward would spend her final days in an institution if she was alive today. I must warn you, some of it is fairly graphic."

"Is this mine?" She asked. "Are you leaving all this with me?"

Even a quick scan showed her a woman obsessed with The Glade. Stories of children being sacrificed for power, always power. Eloise was even scathing about the magic of her time, ridiculing the attempts by her own sisters, to influence the world they lived in. Was Eloise mad? To Emma it seemed that she was the one sane person in her household.

"Yes, it's yours. Actually I'm hoping you'll do me a big favour."

Dean was giving her the 'here it comes,' look. Emma was determined to hang onto the pages of translation, even if she had to involve her dad.

"What do you want?" Asked Dean.

"I'd like to use the original book and the translation in an exhibit, at the museum I work with. If that's ok? It's huge, something this old and still just about legible."

Was it luck? Emma began to wonder if her dad buying Glade Hall, the book being found where it shouldn't have been, were something more than just luck. Now it seemed that the technology to examine the book was still in its infancy. All just luck, or some kind of serendipity? Maybe she was becoming paranoid, thinking that the universe had synchronised everything, for when her family moved into Glade Hall.

"Fine, I'll get my dad to sign something if you like." She said.

"Super! And of course you'll be a VIP at the opening of the exhibit. I do hope you'll come and your parents of course."

Emma put her arm through Dean's, he'd been quite good and hadn't glared at Dudley at all. Well, hardly at all.

"Thank you." She said. "We'd love to come."

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Once Dudley had gone they read the pages together. Emma read ten pages and then passed them to Dean. It was all there, a journal with just about every detail of how to successfully use the power of The Glade. In their hands was an ancient instruction manual, written by a slightly mad obsessive, compulsive witch.

"Wow, this Eloise was crazy." Said Dean. "She stole her neighbour's cattle, to bleed them out at the standing stones."

She was annoyed at him, why didn't he see what she saw?

"Mad! This is a lab report Dean, written before most people could even read and write."

“Really Emma ! This Eloise even sacrificed the occasional infant.”

There was no point in arguing and part of her knew he was making a valid point.

“Yeah, you’re right Dean. She was a total nut job. Good reading material though.”

“Great, better than our college work.”

A brief pang of guilt as she realised that neither of them had done much genuine study during the summer holiday. She was saved from further angst, by her dad’s PC playing ‘I love it,’ by Icona Pop. It was the way she knew if any mail for her had arrived in the inbox. Jerry Jr instantly stood up and did a little dance.

“I love it !” He yelled.

“Did you teach him that ?” Asked Dean.

“No, all his own work. Don’t tell mum he’s adorable, she might well kill the next person to tell her that.”

The email was from Alex Godfrey, reminder her to come and see him.

‘Emma

I know it’s short notice but how about coming down next weekend ?

Mel is coming to see me, the lady injured by the Steadicam.

Bring the boyfriend.

Alex.’

Why not, it was more useful information and a chance to meet a victim of Glade Hall’s bad reputation.

“Do you fancy a weekend at the coast ?” She asked Dean.

“When ?”

“Next weekend, the Dig Quest producer had invited us for the weekend.”

“Where does he live ?”

“Broadstairs.”

He sighed, as though he was being invited to the most boring town on the planet.

“Ok, fine.”

Emma tapped in a reply, telling Alex that they’d be spending the following weekend with him.

Jerome Hooper knew his night time regime of locking up the house was thorough. The police who’d called regarding the dead sheep had given him a number to call, for a free security check of the premises. With builders in all areas of the house, things had become a bit lax. The police officer, who’d spent two hours looking at every door and window, was quite anxious about security at Glade Hall.

“At least six points of easy entry and one door actually left ajar all day.”

Easy entry meant windows left unlocked, a treat for any potential burglar.

“People think the countryside is safe Mr Hooper, but there are teams of burglars, looking for antiques. One gang even rip out the antique fireplaces.”

Jerry listened to it all and realised that something had to be done. An alarm system would be useless while the renovation work was being carried out. With builders arriving early and leaving late, there would be an intolerable number of false alarms. Nick Goodwood had prioritised making sure that all ground floor windows and doors had working locks. Jerry had drawn up a check list with the community police officer and he was using that list every night. By ten pm, Glade Hall was locked

tight, not a single window unchecked or door unbolted. Emma was currently behaving and remaining indoors at night. There was no flaw in the check list, no way for anything to be missed. So he was surprised to see the glow of lights, as he prepared to undress.

“Look Alice, round the side of the residential block.”

There was light on some trees at the rear of the house, there had to be lights on somewhere, yet he'd turned everything off. There were a few emergency lights in the corridors, left over from the days when Glade Hall had been a hotel. They were useful while the builders were leaving bags of rubble in odd places. None of those were bright enough to light up the grounds though.

“Looks to be coming from the chapel.” Said Alice. “Maybe Emma is taking some more pictures.”

“It's midnight and I have the only set of keys.”

A firm of cleaners had been right through the chapel. He'd hired a company that specialised in cleaning up biologically hazardous materials. A bit of long dead dog hadn't worried them in the slightest. They'd returned the keys and he'd locked up the Maynard Chapel.

“You must have left a light on.”

“No, I remember seeing darkness through the chapel windows.”

He had things handy now, like flashlights, keys and a small bag of tools. As he put his shoes on to go and check the mystery lighting, Alice was putting her skirt back on.

“No need for both of us to go.” He said. “Probably just Emma or Henry finishing something off.”

“We'll both go.” Said Alice. “Don't you dare leave this bedroom until I'm ready to go with you.”

He waited, it would be nice to have company. Their phones worked inside the house in case there was an intruder on the premises. It took her ages to pull her clothes on and give her hair a tidy up.

“Don't want to look scruffy for the burglars.” She joked.

“Remember what the police told us, in case we do see an intruder.” He said. “Run away, hide and use your phone to call the police.”

“I remember dear. The local PC plod will then turn up two hours later.”

They left their bedroom with him leading the way. There wasn't a sound in the house and no main lighting in any of the corridors. The dull emergency lights lit their way, some in green and pointing towards the nearest exit. It all felt quite normal, yet someone had turned on the chapel lights.

“Slow down Jerry, I'm just wearing slippers.”

“Sorry.”

Much of the interior of the accommodation block had been demolished. It was going to be two or three decent suites of rooms, for visiting friend and family. Now it was a ruin, full of rubbish bags and builders tools. The chapel was untouched though and the lighting was shining through the stained glass doors.

“That was in darkness when I walked round. I'd swear to it.”

“Call the police Jerry. They can deal with it.”

“But, supposing it is Emma?”

He loved his daughter, but was well aware of the mischievous child that still seemed to lurk in her head. Any more trouble and the authorities might insist that she underwent a mental health evaluation. Jerry pushed at the chapel door.

“It's locked.”

His hand was actually trembling, as he pulled the bunch of keys out of the bag and put the large steel key in the lock. Alice banged on the stained glass.

“Emma ! Are you in there ? Emma !!” She yelled.

Jerry unlocked the door and pushed it back, opening up a view of the entire chapel. It was a relief, it all looked spotlessly clean and empty. There was the problem with the lights though; they'd been turned off two hours before. Someone had turned them all on, every single bulb.

"No one seems to be here." Said Alice. "It's beautiful Jerry. I haven't seen it since the cleaning company worked on it."

It did look sensational, even the old silverware on the altar had been polished and coated in lacquer to keep it shining.

"They might be in the back office." He said.

On the way, they found Lysette. His head gardener was dead, spread eagled in front of the altar and nailed to the floorboards.

"Christ !" Said Alice.

"Call the police dear." He said. "Tell them it's fucking urgent ! Tell them they need to be here, now !"

Jerry could hear his wife as she spoke to the emergency services operator. Her tone of voice and state of anxiety would tell them to hurry.

"I don't need to see if she's breathing." Said Alice. "She's nailed to the damn floor and almost cut in two."

Jerry knelt next to Lysette's body and almost threw up. Nails had been driven through her ankles and wrists in a warped imitation of the crucifixion. Blood covered much of the floor around her, only the gaps in the floorboards had stopped it spreading further. Like the dog, her body had been cut open from neck to crotch and the skin stretched back and nailed to the floor. Her insides had been cut about and there were gaps where some organs had been removed. Jerry was no expert, but someone had taken bits of her away, probably her liver and something else from that part of her body.

"They're on their way Jerry."

Alice knelt next to him, putting her arms round his shoulders. Her closeness comforted him as he held onto his flashlight, feeling its weight. It had taken strength to crucify Lysette and whoever had done it, might still be on the premises. The Maglite wasn't much of a weapon, but it was all he had.

"Oh Jerry, look at her forehead."

Her eyes were open, staring sightlessly up at the ceiling. He'd avoided looking at her face and had failed to see what had been carved into the skin of her forehead.

'PIG.'

It had been carved in deep, he could see right down to the bone of her skull.

"We're leaving." He said. "Once the police have been and Lysette's body has been taken away. We'll pack and go to a hotel in Oxford."

~ ~

Agnes felt stronger than she had for many years. Usually she gained nothing from events in the house and Natalie's tantrum with the builder had barely registered on her consciousness. Events in the chapel had pulled her out of the fabric of Glade Hall and almost dragged her into existence. Darkness, wonderful darkness ! Someone with real power had been walking the corridors of Glade Hall again. She pressed her hand against a half open door and it moved.

"Now I'll have him." She mumbled.

The darkness was so strong, like the times when James Maynard had called upon those best left alone. She'd been scared by James, but he had been strong, oh so strong. No one could pull her inside out when James had been practising his craft. She bumped into a table and it rattled, sending

a small tray, crashing to the ground. She could affect the real world, it was wonderful. Noise too ! It had been centuries since she'd been able to cause any sound at all.

"I can't have a son, so why should they ?"

Her voice was still only in her head, but a door crashed into a wall as she flung it open. Nothing could stop her, the heir to the current owner of Glade Hall, would die that night. A sacrifice of a true innocent might give her real form. Oh to be corporeal, even for just a few hours.

He woke as she slammed his bedroom door against the wall. Agnes didn't want him to run, chasing him through the house might diminish her new found strength. She smiled at him, hoping he wouldn't see her as a threat. The child remained in bed, putting his hand out towards her.

"Pretty lady !"

Now, she would snap his neck and then pull him underground, to the dark places. He was hers, no one could stop her. Agnes extended her right arm, touching his cheek, feeling its warmth. Yes, it would work, the child would be her sacrifice.

"No Agnes, the child is important."

A hand on her shoulder, pulling her back, burning her skin where it touched.

"Hermione ! How can you do this ? Why ?"

Agnes felt herself being turned inside out, her form being disintegrated. Hermione of all people, her friend, was sending her to that place, the one place she really feared. Why though ? They'd always shared their kills in the past.

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