

## Glade Hall

### Chapter 16 – Local Library

**“We understand.” Said Alex. “Place everything, then cables, then timer, then switch.”**

**“Then you fucking run !” Said Bo.**

Σ

**~Now~**

Emma had been letting her phone go straight to voicemail for a couple of days; things had been too hectic for interruptions. When she did playback the message from the young archaeologist, it couldn't have come at a better time.

‘Emma. This is Dudley, Dudley Sterland, remember me ? I have the Glade Hall exhibit set up at the local library and would love you to see it. You know, give it the official stamp of approval and all that. Give me a call when you get a chance. I found out a few things that might surprise you.’

Dean was with her, staring at her phone as if it was a snake, about to bite him.

“I hoped we'd seen the last of him.” He said.

“Worth going to see.” Said Emma. “He might have found out something useful and it'll be a break from preparing for battle.”

“What's the library like ? I don't remember seeing one in the village.”

Emma had to smile, the library was small. One of those blink and you miss it buildings, sandwiched between the Copper Kettle and the bakery.

“Library and museum.” She said. “Quite small and it only exists at all because of donations from a few local wealthy individuals. Nice building, you'll like it.”

“So we're definitely going then ?”

“Yes, but we needn't stay for long. It's polite, even if he is a bit stalkery. If that's even a word ?”

Dean was smiling at her now.

“Glad you noticed he was a bit too attentive.” He said.

“One more week and we'll be back at college, just be nice to him for one last time. Please, do it for me !”

“Ok, he does seem fairly harmless.”

She still took her phone outside to call Dudley, she wasn't completely immune to the young archaeologist's charms. She was nineteen and still enjoying the admiration of cute looking boys. There was no harm in a little flirtation, but Dean might not see it that way. Jerry Jr followed her out into the corridor, her constant companion since she'd given him several lumps of Mrs Hargreaves's wonderful fudge.

“Raining !” He yelled.

“It is. Be quiet while I call someone.”

Dudley answered after barely one ring and he obviously had her name on his phone.

“Emma, glad you called.”

“How could I resist a chance to see the exhibit, before it opens ?”

“Sorry, I was hoping it would be sooner.” Said Dudley. “There have been a few logistical problems.”

“Nothing serious I hope ?”

He was chuckling at her, quite a nice chuckle.

“No, the church fete was using the room for storage.”

She liked his laugh too and it was always nice to have other options. Dean might suddenly become a monster as he grew older, or..... Emma remembered that Dean was about to risk his life in a battle that wasn't his own. He was willing to die for her, that had to earn a lot of loyalty.

"I'm not at Sheila's this week." She said. "Can we come over this afternoon?"

She felt him chill, as he realised who she meant by we. Of course Dudley wanted her to himself, but that was never going to happen, never.

"I'll get some lunch about one." Said Dudley. "But otherwise I'll be here all day. The outside door might be locked, so just call me and I'll let you in."

"I'm dying to know. What did you find that might surprise me?" She asked.

"Easier to show you, but you won't be disappointed. See you this afternoon."

"Yes, er.... Can I bring my little brother too? He'll be no trouble."

Of course he'd be trouble, three year olds were always trouble. Emma was becoming worried about him being in danger at Glade Hall and it would give him some exercise. Jerry Jr was becoming quite chubby. Dudley was laughing again, that quite warm and attractive laugh.

"No problem, see you all later."

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Once again Bo had managed to surprise Alex. He'd expected the ex-special ops soldier to arrive in a black van, looking like something out of The A Team, or maybe an ancient Cadillac. Instead a two year old Toyota Prius arrived outside their house as they were having a late breakfast. Leonard answered the door and carried one of the holdalls into the kitchen.

"I smell fresh coffee." Said Bo. "I'd kill for a decent coffee after that drive."

Coffee became a full breakfast, while Bo kept up a report of his troubles with British motorway food and all those cones that still seemed to be everywhere.

"Weren't they banned once or something?"

Alex liked Bo, he understood the value of small talk and a little pre-amble before getting down to business. The minutiae of Bo's journey relaxed them all, led Leonard to sympathise, especially about overpriced motorway meals. Eventually Bo went to pick up one of the three holdalls that had been carried into the kitchen.

"Do you have a table anywhere guaranteed not to be seen by a nosey neighbour?" Asked Bo.

"The table where we held the séance." Said Leonard. "There's nothing on it and the net curtains are quite thick in that room."

The holdalls were plain, no markings on them at all. Bo carried two, while Leonard carried the third.

"You've got one of the heaviest." Said Bo. "Ten shaped charges and a few spare cables. What do you think of the weight?"

"Heavy but manageable, even carrying it with just one hand."

Leonard handed it to Alex, who had an existing problem with his right shoulder.

"Fine, as long as I don't have to run with it." Said Alex.

Bo unzipped all three bags and handed Alex two pieces of A4 paper. They looked to have been torn out of a college notebook and were covered in tiny writing.

"I've given you instruction, but everything was put together quite quickly." Said Bo. "Not exactly up to modern health and safety and a mishap will do more than give you a nasty shock. I'm sure you understand my meaning."

"Yes, it's dangerous stuff." Said Alex. "We'll read the instructions, but a run through would be nice."

"Great, I was hoping you'd say that."

Bo pulled back the side of one bag, exposing the clockwork timer they'd seen in his basement workshop.

"Everything is the best military grade I could find, right down to the impacts adhesives."

He lifted the timer, showing an electrical junction box that hadn't been there before.

"Twenty connectors for twenty charges and nothing to tighten or likely to fall out. Push a cable in and you'll feel a slight snap. Nothing will get it out again, same on the explosives. I gave you a few spare cables, in case any are damaged en-route."

He turned the timer over, pointing at a peel off strip of cloth.

"Waterproof, just about everything proof. They use this stuff to fix anti-personnel mines in place. You'll need a cloth each to dust the surface a bit."

Bo looked up and grinned at them.

"Nothing fancy, just get the worst of the loose stuff off. Pull off the strip and push the timer firmly down for a couple of seconds. It won't move, I promise. Same procedure for each charge."

Bo took the instruction from Alex and pointed at a section underlined in red ink.

"Important points underlined, only two and they're extremely important. Don't cable up the charges as you place them, it'll take you longer. Trust me, I've seen experienced guys trying to sort out a curled up pile of cables. Get all the charges stuck in place and then cable them up. One at a time !"

Bo was prodding at the next red underlined section. This one had been highlighted too, with a yellow marker.

"This one is my bad, but there wasn't time to buy the right electronic gismo. Turn on the arming switch with the timer at zero and it's firework night ! There is a cover over the switch, so don't press it down until after you set the timer. Ok ??"

"We understand." Said Alex. "Place everything, then cables, then timer, then switch."

"Then you fucking run !" Said Bo.

"And when the timer gets to zero, the charges explode simultaneously." Said Leonard.

Bo was grinning again.

"I won't get into philosophy with you Leonard, but nothing is ever simultaneous. But yes, as near as makes no difference, they explode at the same time."

"What sort of safe distance are we talking about ?" Asked Alex.

"Shaped charges are designed not to waste any power on the general vicinity." Said Bo. "But in a confined space and with flying stone fragments. You want to be out of the cellar, with a good stone wall to hide behind."

Alex took the information sheets back, scanning through them quite quickly. Actually it was quite easy, easier than some video editing equipment he'd cabled up. Video equipment was different though, it didn't kill you for pressing a switch too early.

"We'll obviously be careful, but it isn't that scary." He said.

"Rehearse it together." Said Bo. "Imagine being under fire as you try to do it. Something simple can become a nightmare if an enemy is trying to kill you, or the building is on fire. Anyway, I have other places to be."

"Sorry, yes the money." Said Leonard.

More pinkish fifty pound notes in a plain brown envelope. They'd debated adding a few hundred, as a kind of tip. In the end, they'd decided that Bo was a professional at what he did and might be offended. Alex saw him out.

"Rehearse it in your mind." Said Bo. "Think it through until you're fucking fed up with it. That just might end up saving your life."

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Just about everything happened as Tommy had expected. He was in solitary confinement, even his excise break was taken alone. Never just one prison warder now, always at least three of the warders with him while he trudged round the yard. The tough ones of course, the warders with that look in their eyes, the ones who'd love an excuse to beat him up a little.

"Bring Milner in, his solicitor is here."

His solicitor had changed her attitude towards him too. No longer was she excited young Gretchen, keen on the case moving to London. She was now Miss Jacobs and didn't even smile at him anymore. She still saw him in private, but rarely told him anything about the progress of his case. He was on legal aid, the lowest of the low and unlikely to get a proper defence. Their exchanges now tended to be a few clipped sentences, usually about his appearances in court. One of the warders opened a door, deliberately barging him into the wall. Tommy was used to that now.

"Tommy, good to see you. I hope you're still remaining positive?"

Grumpy Gretchen being nice to him again and she'd brought a middle aged man with her. Tommy sat in the chair furthest from the door, his guests tended to appreciate that.

"I'm fine Miss Jacobs, solitary detention has its advantages."

She was looking shocked, as was her companion.

"Violence you mean?" Asked Gretchen. "Are the inmates taking some kind of revenge?"

Actually most of them hadn't liked Spike and he was currently the hero of the prison. It was the warders who'd been giving him a hard time and he'd have to learn to live with a few bruises. Moan about it and Gretchen was likely to make an official complaint. Then his troubles would really begin.

"No, that isn't a problem." He replied. "I can sleep properly, the main blocks are often noisy at night."

His new visitor looked about fifty or maybe over and dressed in an expensive suit. He had grey hair and blue eyes and he was smiling at him.

"I'm Ernest Watson and I will be your barrister once the case gets to court. If you'd like me too that is?"

"Mr Watson is a QC." Added Gretchen. "We're lucky to get him."

Ernest Watson QC seemed embarrassed by her statement, but he was holding out his hand to be shaken. Tommy gladly shook hands.

"Fine by me." Said Tommy. "I am on legal aid though. I've been told it doesn't go far these days."

"Indeed it doesn't." Said Ernest. "Mr Jerome K Hooper is picking up your legal bills though. Again only if you like the idea? Miss Jacobs actually has some paperwork for you to sign, stating that you're happy with that arrangement."

"Yes of course I'll sign anything." Said Tommy. "But why would Mr Hooper pay my legal fees?"

"You do manage the farm on his estate." Said the QC.

"Emma Hooper insisted from what I hear." Added Gretchen. "She still believes you to be innocent." At least one person still believed in him. That was the sort of news that helped him cope with solitary detention and the casual cruelty.

"Do I really stand a chance of getting out of here?" He asked.

"There is no chance of being released on bail." Answered Gretchen.

"No, sorry I meant a chance of being acquitted?"

They were looking serious now and Gretchen was fiddling with the papers he had to sign.

"There's always a chance of course." She said. "We just don't know how the Crown Prosecution Service are going to handle the prison death. At the moment you're due to be moved to London and stand trial for the murder of Lysette Anders."

"Cross bridges as we come to them." Added Ernest. "There is money in the kitty now to hire an investigator. There were similar killings before you were born. The prosecution will claim you're a copycat killer, but the jury might doubt that."

Ernest pushed the papers across the table and placed a simple black biro on top of them.

"There are yellow stick its where you need to sign." Said Gretchen.

Tommy signed and put the papers back over to their side of the table.

"I know it might be a slim one." He said. "But there is a chance, isn't there?"

"It's all about putting just a little doubt in the minds of the Jury." Said the QC. "And of course, the investigator might find something useful."

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Dean drove, while Emma checked over her camera and fitted a fully charged power pack. There was no use in visiting the exhibit in the library, if they didn't have a record of everything.

"I'll just start taking pictures." She said. "I'm not giving Dudley a chance to say filming isn't allowed. I'll take a mixture of pictures and short movie sections."

She checked the pocket inside her camera bag and there were enough memory chips to hold anything she might want to film. They were in the village and Emma could see the display in the window of Sheila's Flowers.

"Where is it we're going exactly?" Said Dean.

"Just use the Copper Kettle car park." She replied. "Dan Freeman won't mind, he knows dad's car. I sometimes park there when I'm working at the florists."

Dean drove into the almost empty car park and found an empty bay near the rear of the pub. June Freeman was cleaning the windows and waved as they walked towards the high street. Jerry Jr waved back furiously, as Emma grasped his other hand.

"You never got that in London." She said. "People in villages are more friendly than in cities."

"Or just more nosey."

She playfully thumped his arm, but he had a point.

"Probably a mixture of both. Here's the Library and Museum. I told you it was easy to miss."

Set back from the road and down a narrow alley, the library wasn't easy to spot. There was a sign, but it was high up on the wall, above a window. The door was locked, but there was a glow of fluorescent lighting showing through the window.

"Keep an eye on Jerry while I call him." She said.

Dudley didn't even answer her call. There was the sound of the lock being opened and the door swung open. Dudley Sterland was smiling and beckoning them inside.

"Sorry about the locked door." He said. "The library is only open three days a week now, but a lot of locals still walk in if the door is open. I found one lady browsing the DIY section, even asked me about plumbing in a new radiator."

Even Dean had to laugh, Dudley seemed determined to be an amusing host for the afternoon. He was even holding up a Twix bar, obviously intended for her brother.

"Is he allowed to.....?"

"You'll have to now." Said Dean. "He's seen it and you'll get no peace until you give it to him."

"My mum is right." Said Emma. "He can be a bit of a monster."

"Monster!" Shouted Jerry, raising his arms and baring his teeth.

Dudley laughed and handed Jerry the chocolate treat. He led them past the usual library shelving, full of books and into a back room that still smelt of fresh paint.

"Mind your clothes on the woodwork." Said Dudley. "We've been freshening up the paintwork a bit."

Emma grabbed hold of Jerry, who was a dirt magnet at the best of times.

"You've a lot more items than I thought." Said Emma. "Where did the dolls come from?"

There was a table, almost covered in sets of crude wooden dolls. As far as she was aware, none of those found at Glade Hall, had been given to the museum. Always a boy and a girl doll, nearly always with grotesquely carved genitals and sweet innocent faces.

"Found all over the village, usually when building work is going on." Said Dudley. "The exhibit is for the entire community, although it's mostly about Glade Hall."

"Can I touch?" She asked. "I'll be careful."

"Yes, just keep little fingers well away."

That wasn't a problem, Jerry Jr was busy sucking the chocolate off a Twix. A fairly disgusting business, but it kept him entertained. She picked up a set of dolls, the ones that looked the oldest. The boy had been given a penis as large as himself.

"Crude fertility offerings." Said Dudley. "They're found all over Oxfordshire and beyond."

"How old are they?"

"Only one or two have been accurately dated." Said Dudley. "The one you're holding is probably from around fifteen fifty. Some are much older."

Emma had thought of the problem as their and theirs alone. Glade Hall as some kind of island of nastiness in an otherwise untainted world. It wasn't like that though; the darkness had infected the whole community.

"I must get some pictures."

She didn't ask if it was ok and Dudley seemed happy enough. She put the dolls back on the table and took picture of them all, finally running over the table with her camera in movie mode.

"Just for my own use." She said. "I'm not trying to ruin your grand opening."

"No problem." Said Dudley. "The best stuff here is from Glade Hall anyway."

Emma treated it as a photoshoot, taking hundreds of pictures to be looked at later. There were tables full of finds, loaned to the museum by the local metal detecting club.

"Lots of Roman coins, musket balls and assorted buttons." Said Dudley. "There are a few nice pieces of Saxon gold. All badly damaged of course."

"Damaged by what?" Asked Dean.

"Farmers ploughing their land. Very few of the detectorists finds are undamaged."

Emma carried on taking pictures of everything, but realised the Saxon gold looks very similar to the items in the Glade Hall cellar. There could be no telling Dudley about the priceless finds though, nothing to even wet his curiosity.

"Do you get many Saxon finds in this area?" She asked.

"Just the fragments the ploughs leave behind." Answered Dudley. "There is a rumour of a source of it all in the area, maybe a temple or a major hillfort. So far though, no one has ever found it."

The most important exhibit was the only one to be rewarded with its own glass display case. A large antique piece of furniture with several shelves and front doors that locked.

"The town maps used to be in it, but I moved them to a shelf in the main library." Said Dudley. "The journal kept by Eloise and her sisters deserved the best place in the exhibit."

"I didn't realise all her ramblings would be made so..... Public." Said Emma.

Copies and printed pages of course, yet it was all there. First a few copies of the age darkened pages and then the nice legible pages, brought to life by Dudley and the magic of modern technology. Most of the pages were about their various harmless potions and powders, but not all, oh no, not all.

There were several pages of insane rambling by Eloise, talking about past events at The Glade. The ramblings of a mad woman of course, a poor disturbed young woman. They weren't though, Emma knew that most, if not all of it, was true. Dean read some of it and actually gasped.

"The media Emma. Think what they'd make of this."

"Please don't say we can't use it Emma." Said Dudley. "The amount of work put in by so many people. Even the local MP is coming to the opening of the exhibit."

Poor Dudley, looking as though he was worried she was about to ruin his big day. It was a tiny library and museum though in a small village. Even many locals didn't know it existed. No rabid journalist was ever going to arrive and read the pages of Eloise's journal. If they did, it would look like the insane ramblings of crazy woman. Emma could hardly tell Dudley any of that though, much of it would sound insulting.

"Leave it all in the exhibit." She said. "It's the history of the whole community and they should be given a chance to see it."

"Thank you Emma. You've already got a thank you credit on the programme."

"Fame at last." Said Dean.

She was packing up her camera when Jerry began to jump about and point at the wall beneath the window.

"Monster ! Pretty Monster !" He shouted.

The others laughed, but for a fraction of a second Emma had seen it too. Just a slight blue glow and the tips of three fingers, sliding back into the wall.

"Sugar rush psychosis." Joked Dean. "Gets them every time."

Emma winked at her brother, a wink that said, 'we know little brother, just you and I. We share a secret.'

"Talking of pretty monsters." Said Dudley. "Would you like to see a drawing of Eloise Ward ?"

"Oh yes, of course I would." She replied.

"I didn't know there was a drawing of her." Said Dean.

"It's on my laptop. One of the pages far too decayed to bring up to exhibit standard, but you can still get an idea of how she looked in life."

Dudley fetched his laptop and found the JPEG version of the picture.

"Rose was the artist out of the three and sketched her sister in pen and ink." Said Dudley. "All homemade of course, it's a miracle any of her drawings survived."

Rose had been a good artist, there had even been an attempt to show light and shade. All hidden quite a lot by the ravages of time on the fabric of the page. She was still there to be seen though, the infamous Eloise. Tall for her day, a good five foot ten. Almost a giant for that period of time, she must have towered over just about everyone else in her village.

"Great jawline." Said Dean.

"And the hair looks modern, almost like mine." Said Emma.

"I bet she turned a few heads." Added Dudley.

A strong jaw and something hinted at in the eyes, a lady who wouldn't put up with anyone's crap.

There was real beauty there, but it was tainted by a hint of cruelty in those eyes.

"Tall and beautiful." Said Dean. "No wonder everyone hated her."

Emma had to chuckle.

“So cynical for one so young.” She said.

“Bad Lady !” Yelled Jerry.

No random shout this time, he was pointing straight at the drawing of Eloise Ward.

“He might be right.” Said Dudley. “They claimed their father killed himself, but you have to wonder. Maybe he was yet another sacrifice as part of their bizarre religious practises.”

“Yes.” Agreed Emma. “You have to wonder.”

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Alice Hooper was beginning to pack a weekend case. There were still several days to go until their romantic weekend, she just liked to be organised. Jerry didn’t look at it like that though. He just considered her attempts to get ahead of the game, as fussing.

“You’ll need to unpack half of it dear.” He said. “You’ve put your hair dryer in there.”

“I have another Jerry, stop being a pest.”

“Fine, I need to check some work emails anyway.”

They argued quite a lot, most of it low level bickering that meant nothing. Only the safety of the children really made her claws come out and hopefully they’d soon be away from Glade Hall. Jerry stomped off to buy half the FTSE300, or something. She respected his work, it had bought them a comfortable life, but it wasn’t her kind of thing. Alice had once developed a New York town house free of charge, because the project excited her. Numbers on a screen didn’t give her that excitement, but they obviously pressed the right buttons for her husband.

“Chalk and cheese.” She muttered. “Chalk and cheese.”

She’d already decided to remain in Britain and keep her apartment in New York. It was an expensive luxury, but she needed it as a kind of security blanket. In many ways, their marriage worked because she could run away if it all became too much for her. Jerry could be such a cold fish sometimes.

“I’d miss the sex.”

She spun around, realising she’d said it out loud. Sex was the glue that held a lot of relationships together, including theirs. Alice needed her escape capsule in New York, but she had no intention of using it.

“Panties, more panties.” She mumbled. “You can never pack too many pairs of fancy knickers.”

The weekend in Paris had been Emma’s idea, even booking them a suite at the George Cinq Hotel for the weekend. Using Jerry’s Amex card of course, but done for the right reasons.

“I’ll be back at college next week mum.” She’d said. “Then you’ll have the Jerry Jr monster to look after and the building work to supervise. You need a weekend to unwind, a romantic weekend.”

It made sense and it had to be two years, maybe three, since they’d last been to the George Cinq. She loved Paris and its crowded narrow streets. And the food, all those wonderful places to eat. There was one thing bothering her, almost a mother’s sixth sense.

“She wants us gone so she can get up to something !”

Alice had woken up at about five am, worrying about what her daughter had planned. It wouldn’t stop her going away of course and Jerry hadn’t a clue what was going on. Alice smiled and added a particularly daring lingerie set to her weekend bag.

“Relax you daft bitch.” She muttered. “It’s not as if your daughter is going to burn the place down or anything.”

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Dudley Sterland had intended to carry on painting over dull paintwork and trying to clean dust off high picture rails. Instead he became obsessed with obtaining a good printed copy of that drawing. The one Rose had drawn of her sister Eloise, in an age before witches were even called witches.

The problem was getting the picture contrast right. Too much brightness and detail was lost, too little and the printed picture was just a dark mess. The doors were locked and he had nowhere else to be, so he carried on playing with the image. Ideally he'd have been in a local pub with Emma Hooper, perhaps taking her to dinner later that evening. In his heart of hearts he's seen the way she looked at Dean and knew his affections were never going to be returned.

"I can dream though." He muttered.

As young men often will, he sat for a few minutes, running a memory of Emma Hooper through his mind. Perfect, she was as close to the perfect female as he could ever hope to meet. It was natural, perhaps even healthy. One day he'd think of another woman the same way and then another. Until he was wise enough to realise that all women are perfect in their own unique way.

"Maybe I should go for it ? Ask the girl out, what is the worst she can say ?"

There was a sound in the main area of the library, a faint sound of wood being dragged over a stone floor. It sounded like someone moving a chair around. Dudley had turned off the lights, apart from in the small room he was using as an office. Neighbourhood watch were fierce in the village and he didn't want them hammering on the door. He turned on just one row of lights out of six, leaving the library in semi-darkness. There was just enough light not fall over anything.

"Anyone there ? The library is closed today."

No reply, not a sound. He walked confidently to the outside doors, satisfying himself that all the bolts and locks were in place. It was an old building, the remnants of an old gatehouse from before the Norman Conquest. It made noises as the beams settled at night, as did all old buildings.

"Crap !"

A chair was in the middle of the Arts & Crafts section, a chair that had been firmly against the wall. Or had it ? Part of his mind badly wanted it to have been moved by Emma's little brother. In the sensible and annoying part of his mind he remembered it being against the wall, only an hour or two before. Certainly long after Emma and her brother had left the library.

"Hello !" He yelled. "The library is closed ! I'll be locking up soon. If you're hiding in here, you'll be locked in for the night."

There had to be someone, heavy old chairs didn't move on their own. The library wasn't large, he turned on all the lights and walked through every section. Nothing, empty ! He even walked through the ladies toilet, just in case a practical joker was hiding in there. His logic told him he was alone in the building, but he still felt nervous as he turned off all the lights.

"One last play with that picture." He mumbled.

Even a little anxiety hadn't managed to kill his enthusiasm to make that drawing of Eloise, a perfect centre piece for the exhibit. He'd even bought a chrome plated frame for it, out of his own money.

"No it's not colour saturation you idiot, it's the hue."

The original picture had been in a brown ink and had faded over the centuries. It wasn't a completely monochrome image though, he needed to let the brown show through. Dudley let the software work its magic and then manually steeped up the brown hue.

"That's it ! Eloise, you were a babe !"

The drawing would never look as good as the day Rose Ward had put pen to paper, but it still looked wonderful to him. The shade was there in her cheekbones, the dress that seemed to cling where it showed the body beneath, to best effect. Eloise had been quite a woman.

"Pity you were a monster who killed your own father." He muttered.

The sound of a chair falling over, he can guess which chair. In the back of his mind Dudley remembers the chair being against the wall Jerry Jr was so interested in. The back wall under the

window, the wall he'd shouted 'Monster !' at. It was nonsense of course, just a joker trying to mess with his head. Probably one of the other students in his archaeology class.

"Bastards !" He yelled. "I've a good mind to call the police and see you arrested."

He went back into the main area of the library and had turned on two banks of lighting, when he saw the three burned women. Terrible burns, leaving them impossible to recognise, but he knew who they were. Fear hit him, complete and uncontrollable fear. Fear that made his heart thump hard in his chest and caused his bladder to empty. Still he knew, part of his mind remained rational and it knew he faced the three long dead witched. Eloise in front of course and still tall for a woman.

"Twice you've accused me of killing my father." She hissed.

She touched him, grabbing hold of his throat. He could feel her dry burned skin touching his, feel his airways being crushed. Dudley held up that perfect picture of her, hoping in some way to gain her favour. Rose, the smallest, grabbed it from his hand and tore it to pieces.

"Sorry." He said. "I never meant to....."

Eloise held him too tight for him to say anymore. The dead witch lifted him up by his throat, her long dead eyes glaring into his.

"I loved my father !" She yelled. "He killed himself !"

Dudley heard that and the sound of his neck being snapped. Luckily he was dead before she used her fingers to gouge out his eyes and then fling his body against the wall.

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