

## Glade Hall

### Chapter 17 – Pumps and Pipes

**“The police liked that, smiling at her and writing eagerly in their notebooks. She wondered how many master criminals escaped justice, purely by telling the police what they expected to hear.”**

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~Now~

Her final weekend at home was fast approaching and there was still so much to do. Emma doubted if she'd be going back to college right away, even if she survived the events of the coming weekend. She and Dean acted the parts fate had given them though and acted them well. Her mother behaved as if she knew Emma was up to something, but hadn't made a huge effort to find out what.

“A party.” Dean had said. “She probably thinks we're throwing a wild party for half of Oxfordshire.” There was plenty of room at Glade Hall, over fifty hotel rooms yet to be ripped apart and the original eighteenth century rooms returned to their former glory. Alex and Leonard booked into a hotel on the northern edge of Oxford though. Her mum was too nosey and would keep pestering them if they had rooms at the house. Plus there was likely to be a police investigation and she wanted them well away from that. Dean had come with her to see their friends from Broadstairs.

“We bought an elderly but reliable Volvo estate.” Said Leonard. “Even invested in one of those locks that goes right over the steering wheel, to discourage car thieves.”

“One of those where the lights are on all the time ?” Asked Dean.

Alex was nodding in Leonard's direction and winking.

“Yes it is.” He replied. “Leonard fell in love with it.”

Emma let them have their moment of friendly banter. All her attention was on the three large holdalls, left next to the wardrobe. The bags looked so ordinary, no hint of the destructive devices they held. She knelt down in front of one of the bags and pulled the zip fastener all the way open.

“No worries with the hotel staff.” Said Alex. “Not the sort of place to help carry your bags.”

“Did they ask for your car registration number ?” Asked Dean.

“Yes, but I'm hoping that won't be an issue.” Answered Leonard.

Emma turned and looked at the two men who'd decided to risk their lives by helping her. They too looked so ordinary, just two tourists beginning a week's vacation in Oxford.

“I'm determined you won't be in trouble over this.” She said. “Your car can be driven well away from Glade Hall, before we destroy it.”

The hexagonal explosives intrigued her, technology always did. She picked one up and it was light, though Alex had already told her that. All that potential power, locked up in something so small.

Emma undid all the bags, running her hands over cables, examining the low tech clockwork timer. It was perfect and it would work, she just knew it.

“Bo gave us a crib sheet and a quick run through.” Said Alex. “We're not experts, but we could show you what he showed us, if you like ?”

“Yes, we all need to be able to set the charges.” She replied. “Then we can take you sightseeing. I told Sheila we'd take you in to see her. She remembers you from the Dig Quest episode at our house.”

“I remember Sheila. Nosiest person within five counties of here !”

They laughed and Emma sat on their bed, noticing a shotgun that had been badly hidden in their wardrobe. Leonard must have seen her face change.

"We just needed something." Said Leonard. "You mentioned Tommy saying that shotgun shells did at least hurt them a little."

"Is it legal?" She asked.

"Yes." Replied Alex. "Leonard is quite good with it, used to win medals and all sorts."

"Good, just make sure not to hit any of us when you use it." She said. "Come on, show me how all these cables connect up. Then we'll go to see Sheila Hewer."

"Avoiding your mum at all costs." Added Dean.

Alex picked up two scruffy and crumpled pieces of A4 paper, from the bedside table.

"Sorry." He said. "They were scrunched up with the cables. Still readable though. Why do we have to avoid your mother?"

Dean was smirking, Alice Hooper's interrogation techniques were famous, or maybe infamous.

"My mum is ten times as nosy as Sheila and infinitely better at wheedling information out of people. We have to keep you away from her until she goes to Paris with dad."

She took the two pages of instruction from Alex, smoothing them out in her hands.

"Ok, where do we start?" She asked.

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Nick Goodwood wasn't secure in his beliefs anymore and that can be troubling to an ex-soldier. He used to have the normal kind of relationship with a Christian God. He went to church for weddings, funerals and the occasional christening. He liked to think there was more to life than just surviving for three scores years and ten, but he didn't like to dwell on it. Scratch most people and you'll find someone who wants to believe and that need can be awoken by the kind of events at Glade Hall. Nick had seen things, all of his workers had too. A shadow where none should be, a voice whispering out of walls, even a face sometimes. If it had been the eighteenth century, he'd have been buying protective amulets and attending church twice a day. In the enlightened twenty first century, he just worried a lot and he'd begun to drink quite heavily.

"Morning Declan." He said. "Nice to see things are progressing well."

They were, most of the buildings hadn't a trace left of the work Oleander Hotels had done to the place. There was just one section of the old college dormitory to be gutted and Glade Hall would be a country house again, a family home. Thanks to a few modern building techniques, he liked to think that much of Glade Hall, now looked better than the time it was built.

"Thank you Nick, the lads do their best.... Considering the problems."

"I do understand Declan. Henry once described it as trench warfare, against an unseen enemy."

"Sounds like Henry." Said Declan. "I just don't want to end up like Oliver."

Or Sean, or Wendy! Nick Understood what Henry had meant by trench warfare.

"The Hoopers are having a long weekend away." He said. "I'm not happy to have people here while they're away, with everything that's gone on."

"A break would be nice, but I don't fancy a short week in my pay packet."

"No, you'll get the basic. No overtime or any incentive payments, I'm not made of money. We'll lock up on Friday night and come back on Tuesday morning. We all need a bit of a break."

"Sounds great. I can catch up on a bit of sleep."

"Can I rely on you to tell the guys you supervise?"

"No problem Nick. Damned good idea, a bit of a break."

Henry next and he was working on a staircase that went from the second floor, right down into the kitchens. There were a few people who fell outside of being supervised by Henry or Declan, but Henry could be relied on to let them know. It occurred to Nick that he needed a replacement for Sean or at least someone to act as supervisor. Nick walked along corridors that any of the great stately homes would have been proud of. Henry's work mainly of course, people always commented on Henry's work. He found the artisan covered in dust, cursing whoever had originally built the place.

"See this Nick ? A ton and a half of stone wall, at least, with no proper support !"

Henry was working out of his comfort zone. Sean should have been looking after the stonework, but he was dead. One of the fallen in their own version of trench warfare.

"Careful Henry !" He said. "Can I help ?"

"No, ok Nick. I've got a couple of supports under it."

Nick watched as Henry wound up a couple of support legs, until they firmly held each end of a stone lintel. Someone had altered the staircase at some point in the last three hundred years.

"Looks like the stairs once went right down into the cellar." Said Nick.

"They did a quick and nasty alteration. Lucky this whole staircase didn't collapse. Old though, looks like James Maynard decided to limit access to the cellar."

Henry was looking at him. They both knew why the stairs had been altered, but would never admit to understanding why. Someone, probably James Maynard himself, had been trying to keep something trapped down there. Something that probably scared the crap out of him.

"I'm making Monday a paid holiday Henry. Everyone will get their basic for the day. Can you tell your guys and the people who used to report to Sean ?"

"They'll like that Nick, everyone needs a bit of a rest. I normally come in at some time over the weekend. Are we closing the site completely ?"

"Yes, the Hoopers are away. We'll lock up on Friday night and return on Tuesday. Have a proper break Henry."

"I will ! Really good idea Nick, giving everyone some time off."

"I do get them occasionally Henry, good ideas."

Only it wasn't really his idea. Nick walked through the rear of the house and out past the swimming pool. Whoever was supposed to be renovating the outside pool, hadn't even opened their various crates.

"I could have found her a reliable contractor." He muttered.

The pool looked clean though and ready to use, so Emma hadn't chosen too badly. It was Emma who'd planted the seed of an idea in his mind.

"Mum and dad are in Paris for a long weekend and I was going to have a few friends over. I know some of your people come in at weekends, but it would be nice to have the place to ourselves."

Of course they would. Normally healthy kids with no parental supervision, he actually envied them their youth and freedom. Eventually he'd come up with the idea of giving his workers a paid break. It had been Emma though, she'd given him that seed of an idea. Nick stopped by his car and wondered about her motivation. A few dark thoughts about the cellar ran through his mind.

"Nahh, she's not stupid. She just wants to get drunk and have a lot of sex." He muttered.

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Emma saw the police cars outside the Copper Kettle and parked her dad's car some way off. It meant a bit of a walk to get to Sheila's Flowers.

"More trouble !" Said Dean.

"Might have been a fight at the pub." She replied. "Sheila will know, she knows everything."

Alex and Leonard were in the back of the car. They both got out and followed her through the quiet village streets.

"Looks a nice place." Said Alex. "Quieter than Broadstairs."

"Problems requiring the police used to be rare here." She replied. "Sheila said they're now thinking of expanding the local force. She has inside gossip, the local constable used to date her."

Two police cars outside the Copper Kettle. One had to be help from Oxford, they only had one police car in the village. One car and one full time officer, with about three specials to help out at the church fete.

"Can't see any of them." Said Dean. "They must all be inside the pub."

"Over drinking causes so many problems." Added Leonard.

Emma hoped he was right. She looked at the three of them, her miniature army. Once again she wondered about calling Bo and offering him money, a lot of money. Her volunteer army meant well, but they were all so inexperienced. At least Bo had handled weapons before and had some hands on experience of warfare. The window display at Sheila's looked a bit droopy, which was unusual. Something had interfered with her morning routine. Her part time employer almost leapt at her, as she walked into the shop.

"Emma ! So glad you came here. You probably haven't heard and I know he was a friend of yours."

Her mind felt cold, an almost visible darkness that made the colours of the flowers, look drab and grey.

"Oh Christ, who is it this time ? Who died ?" She asked.

"I know what you mean Emma, it's as if we're cursed or something. It was Dudley, that young guy who's been at the library so much lately."

It wasn't a name she was expecting to hear or could have even guessed. Dudley of all people, he'd barely been at Glade Hall or been involved in anything going on there. There were other ways to die though, apart from being killed by the dark things that dwelt near The Glade.

"How did it happen ?" She asked.

"It looks like murder according to your dad's investigator. Poor Dudley was beaten to death."

Sheila moved closer, hugging her before adding the gory details.

"They gouged his eyes out ! Terrible, terrible. Doing that to a young man who'd never harmed a living soul."

That was enough for Emma. She ignored everyone and walked behind the counter, seating herself where she sat to put wreaths together, or bunches of flowers. Dean joined her, while Sheila greeted Alex and told him every graphic detail of Dudley's demise. In a way it was better to hear it at a distance being told to someone else. There was less demand on her to react in a certain way.

"Sorry Emma." Said Dean. "I know you thought more of him that you wanted me to realise."

"I didn't, not really. Dudley was attractive and had a nice shape. It's impossible not to like someone, who put so much time and effort into pleasing me. He was in his last year of an MSc course, though I'm not sure what in. Archaeology I assume. I don't know what he had planned for his future and I should have asked."

Dean had his hand on her shoulder.

"Don't beat yourself up. None of this is your fault."

Emma wondered about the ethereal hand she'd seen in the library. Her assumption had been that Hermione was following her around. Maybe it had been someone else though, maybe Eloise.

"I should have shown more interest in his life, he dropped enough hints."

"Maybe, but we hardly knew him. Who is this investigator your dad hired?"

"I think she must mean the guy dad's solicitor hired, to look for anything to help Tommy. I can see how Dudley's death might interest him, if it looks to be the same murderer."

"He's looking for a flesh and blood killer though." Said Dean. "And we both know he isn't going to find one. He might want to talk to you though."

"I'm sure he'd love to talk to me, but not today. Nothing else to do with death and dying today."

She could see Alex getting the full treatment from Sheila. He wasn't able to get a word in edgeways and Leonard looked completely lost.

"Come on." She said. "I know where the tea things are and Sheila's secret biscuit stash. We'll make tea for everyone and rescue Alex from Sheila."

"Then what?"

"Then we carry on with the plan. We need to destroy Glade Hall, before anyone else dies."

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Hilda Hargreaves was becoming more stressed out with each passing day, each warning scribbled on the front door of the fridge, or the large freezer.

'Leave this place. Or you will be die.'

Her faith had been with her all her life, planted there by her mother and hammered home by a long life and attending church most Sundays. There was nothing to fear, she'd hurt no one, so the dead wouldn't hurt her. There was the start of a nagging doubt after so many warnings. Hilda wiped the tomato ketchup off the fridge door and considered taking a vacation. Just a week or so with relatives in Dorset, long enough for matters at Glade Hall to play out. Both of her new part time assistants were due to start in about two weeks time. Just enough time for her to get a little rest.

"But poor Jerry Jr." She muttered. "What might become of the poor thing?"

Hilda had appointed herself as grandmother to the kids, without even realising it. Emma would be at college, but her three year old brother would still be at Glade Hall. There was no question of leaving him without the protection of her faith. His parents were nice people, but they showed no evidence of anything spiritual in their lives. They possessed a private chapel, yet never used it for family worship.

"No ! It is my duty to stay."

Hilda clearly heard Jerry Jr chuckling and wondered if the ghosts had found a new way to torment her. It was him though, walking beside his mother as they both entered the kitchen. There was a moment of guilt, as she realised the boy was now a very chubby child, mainly due to her homemade cookies.

"Hilda, I was hoping all the builders would be busy building stuff by now." Said Alice Hooper.

"The last left an hour ago." Answered Hilda. "I'm just tidying up a little, before starting preparations for lunch."

"Yum, don't tell me, I love lunch to be a nice surprise."

Hilda liked the fact that the lady of the house left her to it. Lunch was whatever she thought was fresh or the family would like. Some of her past employers had actually wanted to decide the daily menu with her. That had often been a nightmare and caused her to seek a new position.

"There is some fudge, if it's alright for him to have some?"

"Yes, my little monster is becoming quite heavy. Still, he's used to his treats now and the weight will come off when he starts nursery school."

She fetched the bowl of fudge from the pantry. It had been there a couple of days and some of the cubes of fudge looked a little dry. It didn't matter though, it would still taste good. Hilda offered the bowl to the three year old, watching him take two pieces.

"When does he go to nursery school?" She asked.

"Officially he started this week, but I didn't have the heart to send him away during Emma's last week at home. Tuesday of next week will do, not that I expect him to learn a great deal at his age. It's all about mixing with other children and gaining social skills."

Hilda put the fudge bowl back in the pantry and had forgotten about needing a break, until Alice Hooper brought it up.

"We're going away for a long weekend Hilda, Jerry and I, to Paris. The builders are having a long weekend too, so it would be an ideal time for you to have a much needed break."

"Thank you, I have been a little tired lately. As long as Emma and the little one will be ok."

Jerry Jr was chewing at fudge and smiling up at her. He looked so angelic, for such a mischievous little boy.

"Hmmm, well. Emma has invited a few friends over. That probably means loud music until the early hours. Another good reason for you to have a long weekend away from Glade Hall. My daughter might seem to be away with the fairies on occasions, but she'll make sure her little brother is fed and safe."

"Love Hilda!" Shouted Jerry.

"Don't be rude, Mrs Hargreaves to you." Said Alice.

"That's fine." Said Hilda. "Hargreaves is a bit of a mouthful for a young one."

"Actually, now I come to think about it." Said Alice. "The builders can do their own tea on Friday and we'll be flying out quite early. Have a full four days off and come back on the Tuesday."

"Thank you, I'll go and see my niece in Dorset. Make a proper holiday out of it."

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Emma had avoided the police and ignored several calls from the investigator who seemed to be travelling with them. He had a strong Scottish accent and referred to himself simply as Kemp.

'This is Kemp again, please call me back.'

Like a rock star with only one name, she imagined him as some sort of Elvis of investigators. Her father had been of no use in getting him, or the police, out of her life.

"You and Dean were probably the last people to see Dudley alive." He father had told her. "No wonder they're all so keen on talking to you."

Her father had become quite annoyed at one stage, pointing out that he'd only paid for an investigator to help Tommy, because she'd made such a fuss about it.

"You wanted me to help Tommy. So have the common sense to talk to the police and this Kemp. If it looks like the same killer, it clears Tommy. I do wonder what gets into you sometimes Emma, I really do!"

What got into her was the truth! No human killer had killed Dudley or Lysette for that matter. The police would either give up or find another likely suspect to pin it on. Emma saw no reason to talk to Kemp or the police, even if it might have a tiny chance of helping Tommy. Unsurprisingly, the police saw her attitude as suspicion and turned up at the house at about ten pm. The two officers Sheila had told her about and Kemp, following them in an expensive Jaguar car. Emma was in her room watching TV with Dean. The police had even used their blue lights, as if to tell anyone who might be looking, that the matter was extremely serious.

“Your daughter isn’t a minor Mrs Hooper. We are well within our rights to question her and her boyfriend.”

Her mother winding up the police. Emma hid on the stairs listening for a while, as her mother tried to get rid of them. It might have worked if Kemp hadn’t been there. He’d once been a high ranking police officer and local officers were treating him like visiting royalty.

“They could interview them both in Oxford.” He said. “At the police station and under caution.”

Great ! The guy her dad was paying for, seemed to want them arrested. It was enough for Emma, she walked down the stairs, Dean beside her.

“Sorry ! I avoided the calls because I didn’t want to talk about yet another death. After Sean, Wendy and ..... The way Lysette died.....”

Emma found herself crying and it wasn’t an act. The police weren’t going to let a few tears put them off interviewing them. They’d used their blue lights and everything and they’d been wound up further by her mum. Emma took them into her dad’s study, making sure her mother remained downstairs.

“Please mum, I can handle this.”

Kemp looked at her with the expression of a man who hated students and generally disliked anyone under forty. The police seemed happy to let him talk, while they took notes. She sat in front of her dad’s computer, Dean lounging in his usual leather armchair. Emma left the visitors to sit or stand as they chose.

“It’s late.” She said. “What do you want to know ?”

“You mentioned other deaths.” Said Kemp. “Do you think they’re related to the murder of Dudley Sterland ?”

Careful ! Sounding too crazy might get her a compulsory mental health evaluation or even sectioned. She wanted rid of the police and the best course of action seemed to be repeating the nonsense the police expected to hear.

“Only in that they were all known to me.” She replied. “Sean killed himself and Wendy drove on the wrong side of the road with no lights on. Hardly a connection there, but I did know them both very well.”

The police liked that, smiling at her and writing eagerly in their notebooks. She wondered how many master criminals escaped justice, purely by telling the police what they expected to hear.

“I have no wish to upset you Miss Hooper.” Said Kemp. “Please tell us about your meeting with Dudley that afternoon, in as much detail as possible. Begin in the car park of the Copper Kettle, were there any strange vehicles ?”

Emma took an hour over it, telling them everything apart from the nebulous hand in the wall. Dean helped her out with some details and she even gave them a copy of the pictures she’d taken. About ten gigabytes with the short movie sections, all copied to a USB memory stick.

“Most of it is just boring local stuff.” She told Kemp. “But some of the metal detector finds are quite interesting.”

There was nothing startling in amongst the pictures. There had been four, showing shadows that had no right to be where they were. Some went against the ambient lighting and one looked to have claws. Those pictures had been placed on her private cloud server. For some reason she was crying again as they left.

“We will try not to bother you again miss.” Said the local officer.

Emma was just glad that they’d gone, hopefully for good.

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Friday came and there was the usual panic, helping her mother do that all so important last minute packing and checking of documents.

"My passport only has six months left on it." Her mum had noted.

"You're going to Paris for the weekend mum, not a two year polar expedition. Six months left on it is fine."

Jerry Jr had cried a little, more from the general feeling of stress than because his mother was going away for three days. It was a huge relief when her parents were in the back of a chauffeur driven limousine and heading for the airport.

"Which airport are they leaving from?" Asked Dean.

"Not sure, don't really care." She'd replied, honestly.

She thought there was a helicopter arranged, somewhere in Oxford, to get them to a major airport. It might have been Heathrow, or maybe London City. It didn't really matter, what mattered was that they'd gone, for three whole days.

"The builders will be gone before three, you watch." She'd told Dean.

"Henry seems to always work late." Dean had said.

"Not today, not without tea and food always available from Mrs Hargreaves."

She'd been right. Nick Goodwood appeared at about three fifteen to tell her that he'd just walked around the entire building and that everything was safe and secure.

"Just the three of you now, have a good weekend."

"We will Nick, see you Tuesday."

She sat back in her chair then and felt like taking a nap. It was odd, all that stress suddenly lifted off her. So much could have gone wrong, so much of her plan relied on people who often seemed quite unpredictable. The cook might have dug her heels in and insisted on staying to make sure Jerry Jr was fed properly. Nick Goodwood might have decided it was an ideal weekend to carry out a stock take of his bags of cement. There were a hundred and one things that might have meant abandoning or delaying the destruction of Glade Hall and the evil it held. None of them had happened though and her mind was trying to make her take a nap.

"I suddenly feel like sleeping for a week." She said.

Dean was playing with her brother, they'd developed a real bond. Dean was the only one strong enough to carry him about for any length of time.

"Have a sleep if you like. I can call Alex and tell them to arrive when they're ready." Said Dean. "We did agree on having a quiet night and starting preparations on Saturday morning."

"I know, but now is an ideal time to open up the crates I ordered. We never did check the contents arrived in one piece." She said. "Call the lads and get them to come round to the back, Alex will know where the pool is."

Dean was grinning at her.

"The lads Emma ! Alex would love that."

"You know what I mean."

While he called the lads, she put her brother's shoes on and his jacket for going outside. There was no way she was leaving Jerry Jr alone in the house, or anywhere else.

"I can do my own shoes."

"I know you can Jerry, but we need to go outside sometime today."

He blew a raspberry at her, which made her laugh.

"They'll be here in an hour or so." Said Dean. "Alex remembers how to get to the pool from the car park. He also said he's bringing extra protection, whatever that means, as the ghosts will have heard us planning."

Of course they would have and the evil that infected the house wasn't stupid. No details maybe, but they'd know that Emma was bent on their destruction and that it was happening soon.

"I bet it's holy water and crucifixes." She said. "I can already see them covered in little silver crosses."

They laughed, but maybe it wasn't a bad idea. Later in the evening, she was going to dig through her own jewellery box for anything vaguely religious. And her mother's, she knew her mum had at least three gold crosses. Bought more as fashion items than ghost repellent, but the evil spirits wouldn't know that.

"This little monster is all ready." She said. "We'll need a crowbar though."

"Your dad's emergency tool bag is downstairs. We can pick it up on the way."

"Does it have a cordless drill in it?" She asked.

"Probably not, but luckily we now have several sets of builder's tools we can borrow for the weekend."

They picked up Sean's drill; it had been left stood on its charger base, its battery light winking green at them. Everything was neat; every tool cleaned and put in just the right place.

"It's like they created a shrine." Said Dean.

"We're not going to damage his drill, just borrow it." She replied. "He'd have understood."

It was strange outside by the pool, far too quiet. There had been builders about for months their often elderly vans filling the car park. Now it was like going out for a walk on Christmas morning, the same feeling of tranquillity.

"Don't wander off Jerry ! Stay close to me today.... Ok?"

"Ok."

It all seemed too quiet, even Dean looked a bit spooked by it. Alex and Leonard would be there soon, the lads from Broadstairs. She'd have to feed them of course, but Mrs Hargreaves had enough food to feed a small army for a few months. Pizza probably, she could easily heat up Pizza and garlic bread for four and a half people.

"There are a lot of crates." Said Dean.

"I bought the pipes in pre-cut sections." She said. "Then there are two pumps and quite a few tools we might need."

Emma looked over the crates, all of them identical and put her hand on the nearest.

"Might as well start with this one. Did you bring another crowbar?"

Dean found one in her dad's tool bag and together they prodded, tugged and generally swore at the crate, until the front panel fell away.

"Yay ! Again ! More !" Shouted Jerry Jr.

"Don't worry Jerry." Said Dean. "We've another six or seven to open. Lots more fun."

Inside the crate were two very well wrapped petrol driven pumps. Not hugely powerful, but enough to empty the large heating oil tanks in about two hours. Timing was important to her plan and the pumps were powerful enough.

"Crap !" She said. "Good job we started today. How much packing material do you need for two small pumps?"

"We could wait until the lads arrive."

More polystyrene packing and bubble wrap than pumps, it was all a bit daunting. Then they'd have to scrunch up the packing material afterwards.

"No, we'll make a start. I hope you've brought a couple of sharp knives?"

He had and Emma attacked the plastic sheeting, bubble wrap and tapes, which had been used to hold the pumps in place. Even working together, it took ages to free the pumps from their packing and get a good look at them. By then Alex and Leonard had arrived.

"They look..... Expensive." Said Alex.

"They were, very." She replied. "For remote desert locations, complete with five year guarantee."

"Or one enormous house fire." Added Leonard.

Emma had to laugh, even though they were about to burn down her family home. No talk of any last minute change of heart though, they'd come too far.

"Pizza alright for tonight?" She asked. "I can amaze you with my skills at turning an oven on and producing hot food."

"Mmm we both love Pizza." Answered Alex.

"We'll just open one box of pipework and head inside for a lazy evening." She said.

They were better at it now, knew the best way to jam crowbars into the wooden crates. The front fell away and Jerry Jr did his little dance for joy. Inside there seemed to be more packing than pipes.

"Hell!" Said Dean. "They certainly know how to pack stuff well."

"I told them it was all going in a container to Saudi." She said. "I had to think of something on the spur of the moment."

Alex looked as daunted by it as them, but Leonard picked up the crowbar she'd just put down.

"Come on." He said. "Unpack it all now and it's done. Better than having it all to do in the morning."

"Just dig out one length of pipe." She said. "Then I can test my idea about using the drill. Then we'll open up all the other crates."

Alex had heard her talk about drilling holes in the pipes, but they were both looking a bit dubious, as Leonard placed a curled up pipe on the ground.

"Reinforced and expensive looking." Said Alex. "What sort of drill bit are you using, masonry?"

Emma had no idea, she just shrugged and held the drill firmly, pressing it against the pipe. She pressed the trigger and after a moment's hesitation, the drill produced a neat hole in the expensive pipe.

"As Jerry would say, Yay!" Said Dean.

"Yay!" Shouted her brother.

"It'll work, I'll drill each section every few feet." She said. "The oil won't spurt out, but it will ooze all over the floor, right through the house."

"We're not going to drill the sections in the cellar though." Said Dean. "Oil on the stairs is the last thing we need."

"Where are the pipes leading to?" Asked Leonard. "Where is most of the oil going?"

"The tunnels under the house." She replied. "They'll take the heating oil out under The Glade and into the Grotto in the other direction. If we're going to have a fire, we might as well make it a really big one."

"Yay! Big fire!" Yelled Jerry.

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