

Glade Hall

Chapter 7 – James Maynard

“Some of his friends dabbled in what they liked to call the occult, or dark arts. They were all liars and charlatans, James had spent time with them all, wasted time.”

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~Then~

Monarchs always seemed to be in need of money and that was the primary reason for James Maynard being offered the five hundred acres of land, known locally as Yew Glade. Usually estates were given away as a reward for fighting in or financing a war, often with some sort of title thrown in. Yew Glade had a reputation though; the old Tudor hall there had been destroyed by fire, as had the ancient chapel. Giving it away might be seen as more of an insult than a reward, so the land was still owned by the crown, when George II found himself in need of money.

George II was the last British monarch to be born abroad; he was born and brought up in Germany. He was also the last British monarch to lead an army into battle. He liked wars, wine, women and hedonism, an expensive mixture. Something needed to be sold to pay off a few royal debts, discreetly of course.

There was no title associated with the five hundred acres of Yew Glade, but the soil was fertile and the area had potential. By luck an agent for the crown had mentioned the land to a friend of James Maynard. One thing led to another and in the summer of seventeen forty seven, James found himself looking at a large chapel a few miles to the north of Oxford. He looked at the description of the land and property for sale and was slightly perplexed.

“A chapel destroyed by fire is mentioned.” He said. “Yet I see a large and well cared for building.”
“The local villages have a long standing tradition of keeping the chapel in good repair.”

The crown agent was a local man from Oxford, with a minor title and all the pretensions associated with minor nobility. James hated Simon Fairfax already and he’d only spent the morning with him. The man had even insisted on bringing two armed servants with him, as though he expected to be assailed by bandits a few miles out of Oxford.

“But the cost !” Said James. “How do they raise the money ?”

His guide looked uncomfortable, probably trying to avoid the bad reputation of the property the king wished to sell. The price being asked wasn’t cheap though, for a piece of land with a troubled past and no title attached to it. James Maynard was already veering towards looking further west for somewhere to build a family home.

“Four local villages supply the labour and some of the money.” Answered Simon. “Plus there are two other estates in the area, with a tradition of offering help.”

They’d already ridden past the ruins of the burnt out Tudor manor house. Every decent piece of surviving brickwork had been robbed, they’d even taken a pick to the foundations. James had seen some of the bricks in the walls of sheds and barns on the way up to the chapel. The locals, the same people who’d robbed out everything useful from the old hall. He was supposed to believe that those very same people, gave their money to rebuild a chapel in the middle of nowhere. It didn’t make sense, unless they viewed the chapel as a way of protecting their community from something.

“There’s no graveyard.” He noted.

Simon had wanted to come by carriage, but James had insisted on riding up from Oxford. The crown agent looked a little overweight and unused to being in the saddle all day. He was beginning to look tired and uncomfortable.

"No one is buried here." Said Simon. "No one at all. The inhabitants of the nearby communities are traditionally buried in their local churchyards."

James was beginning to have his suspicions and those ideas were increasing the likelihood of him buying the land.

"If I buy the land." Said James. "I take it the chapel would be mine ? It would be on my property."

"Yes, though there is a tradition of allowing unfettered access to the local people."

More traditions ! It seemed he'd have to allow the local villagers to wander about as they pleased.

"Let's look inside." He said.

James Maynard wasn't a stranger to unusual occurrences or bad reputations. One reason hinted at for his lack of any kind of title, was his reputation for carrying out ungodly ceremonies. Nothing to cause him to appear before the courts, or excommunication from the church, just unsettling rumours. As he walked through the chapel door, James felt them, felt the raw power of something he'd spent his life looking for. He had to sit down, his head felt as though it was going to burst.

"Are you alright ?" Asked Simon. "You look so pale."

"I'm fine. It was such a long journey and I left my travelling companions with friends in Exeter." He replied. "I'm just very tired."

Some of his friends dabbled in what they liked to call the occult, or dark arts. They were all liars and charlatans, James had spent time with them all, wasted time. None of them was more dangerous or possessed more real power than his daughter's pet rabbit. They had kindled an interest in such things within him though, a certainty that real power was there for the taking. He read the books written by mystics from the east and the grimoires of two famous Arab practitioners of the arcane. Their works had convinced him there were, or had been people with power, real power. He'd also been convinced that certain places acted as attractants for that power, funnelled it in. Before he was married he'd taken a trip across Europe and into the deserts of North Africa.

James Maynard had hired a group of mercenaries, some camels and headed deep into the Libyan Desert. He found the city that even the mad Arab was afraid to name, though there was little left of the city to explore. Even the Shaman he'd hired turned out to be a coward and a liar. The man had run off into the desert, when it was obvious that he knew nothing of the city they'd found. James found the unholy temple by using directions in the grimoire, finding just a few stone blocks and floor tiles under feet of sand.

He's waited until the 30th April, for the dark powers to be at their strongest. James prepared the ground in the correct way and cleansed his own body. He'd drawn the summoning circle, running salt completely around his chalk lines. The circle to hold the being he intended to summon was then drawn and more salt was used to seal it. Silver compounds were also sprinkled around both circles and a little quicksilver. When all was ready, he attempted to summon a demon, who it is still forbidden to name.

In that ancient place, in the driest and most barren part of the desert, something answered his call. For a few seconds a shape formed in the secured circle and tried to break free. He'd even been through hypnosis to try to remember more, but his main memory is of a creature who shimmered like a rainbow. There was a jaw with rows of teeth and two claws instead of hands, but then the creature he had summoned, broke free ! James woke up two days later, badly dehydrated, his neck and back deeply burned by the desert sun. Most of the mercenaries he'd hired were dead, their

decaying bodies spread around him. Some seemed to have killed each other, but others had literally been ripped apart. He spent several days back at their camp, letting the terrible burns heal a little. James still carried awful scars on his shoulders, from lying for two days under the Libyan sun. Two of the mercenaries appeared out of the desert, babbling about a Jinn attacking them. They understood what a Jinn was, their Sanity could just about cope with their comrades being slaughtered by a Jinn. When he felt well enough, James Maynard headed for the coast and a boat back to Europe and home. When the roofs of Benghazi were in site, he woke up one morning to find the two men dead, their throats ripped out during the night. Something seemed to be following him, something that appeared as a shadow in the streets of Benghazi. Half mad he'd paid a ludicrous price to travel the short distance across the Mediterranean to the coast of Spain, still seeing the shadow in the hour or so before dawn. The phantom followed him right across Europe, finally leaving him in peace when he stood on the jetty at Dover.

Was the shadow real or just part of his delusional state? James was never certain, but he did know one thing. He'd felt power in that ruined Libyan city, where he'd pulled a demon from the abyss. Yet it was only a tenth of the power he felt in that Christian chapel in Oxfordshire. Not that the power was Christian, it had nothing to do with the naked figure on the cross behind the altar. It was a far older power and it had moved into the chapel from somewhere else. Some would say it had infected the chapel, but it excited James.

"I'd like to see this Glade before we go." He said. "It sounds interesting."

He saw the fear in Simon's eyes and knew the crown agent was thinking of an excuse.

"My hips aren't used to riding over rough ground these days." He said. "An old wound from my army days. One of my men can show you the way though."

They looked worried too, the stories about The Glade had obviously reached beyond just the local villages. James held up the hand drawn map, which they'd used to find the chapel and the ruins of the burned out Tudor Hall.

"I'll find it on my own." He said. "Less than a mile away, I won't be long."

They didn't need much persuading to let him go on his own. James felt the power, he didn't need the map. It was like a beacon, showing him the way and drawing him on. He tied his borrowed horse to an old oak tree and walked the last hundred yards. It was a bright sunny day, but James felt cold as he began to walk down the path into The Glade. Real power, he felt it and in a part of the world not only easy to reach, but for sale. That huge journey to Libya, when ten times the darkness was so close. Christianity was a new cult that might, or might not last another hundred years or so. This power though, was already ancient when men had first climbed down from the trees of Africa and started hunting on two legs.

James Maynard stopped walking when he reached the oval of grass and the two standing stones. He knelt and held his arms up, hands palms upwards in supplication.

"I've searched all my life for you." He said. "Only to find you were here, in England."

Libya and the deaths hadn't stopped him from practising the dark arts, he'd just been more careful, more discreet. His current home had a cellar devoted to the worship of gods and demons that few could name and even fewer could call upon.

James Maynard looked around the grass, knowing that something was required of him. Shadows were constantly forming and vanishing, which didn't worry him at all. He felt as though he'd come home and he knew they were pleased to see him.

"What is required of me?" He asked. "I'm not yet schooled in your ways."

A giggle behind him, he stood up and turned. She's about ten years old, with the features and clothing of a local village girl. She's not really a girl of course, that much was obvious to him. "Welcome James." She said. "We've been expecting you for some time. In answer to your question. Blood is what we require, it's always been blood ! It will always be blood !"

Sniggering behind him now, he was being mocked by them for being an ignorant fool. The girl became a laughing hag of immense age, only to become a girl once more.

"There !" She said, pointing at the largest standing stone.

"Make sacrifice of blood there or leave this place, never daring to return."

More mocking, it was driving him crazy. Hundreds of shadows, mocking the fool who didn't know they required blood. James knelt in front of the stone and briefly touched it with his right hand. The laughter stopped. He had a knife, no sane person left home and travelled the roads, without some method of self-defence. James held up the knife and there wasn't a sound in The Glade.

How much though ? Did they want him to open a vein and drain a pint out, like a doctor relieving someone with a fever ? Or was just a drop needed ? No, they weren't into drops, they wanted blood, always wanted blood. He cut into a vein, allowing it to flow over the stone, until he began to feel a little light headed. Enough, it had to be enough !

"Rest a while James."

It was her again, the urchin who was far from being an urchin. She walked around him while his body recovered from the blood loss. He'd been using his shirt sleeve to stop the flow, tying a clean handkerchief round his wrist once the blood began to congeal. He'd passed some kind of test, he knew that, but was unsure about what to do next. James used the stone to pull himself onto his feet. Voices from the trees now, none of them mocking him anymore.

"Ask for what you want." They whispered.

"Tell us what you seek." Said the girl.

He knew of course, it was what he'd wanted all his life. How to word it though ? Her hand was on his, her hand as cold as a winter morning, cold as the dead.

"Your own words James. You're among friends now."

"I will buy this land and build a house on the hill, near the chapel." He said. "I seek a home for my family, a home for my descendant too. Most of all I seek knowledge."

They'd gone, the shadows, the girl, the whispering voices. He stumbled as he walked, it took him two days to recover his strength. The deal had been done, the sacrifice of blood had been offered and accepted. James Maynard and his ancestors would have a home at Glade Hall, for several centuries. The cost though was going to be incredibly high ! Would James have opened a vein if he'd known a little of the future ? Probably.

~ ~

~Now~

It was one of those strange things that must happen more often than people like to admit. The morning after her death, saw quite a few people complaining about her, cursing her and some actually hating her. Nick Goodwood in particular wanted her to be there in front of him, feeling the lash of his tongue. Of course, none of them knew yet that Wendy James was dead.

"In all fairness to her." Said Sean. "She has been working twelve hour days for quite a while now." Nick Goodwood knew that Wendy had been working hard, they all had. Only after he'd gone nuclear on them though and their jobs had been threatened. Why did they never work properly unless he was nasty with them ? Today he'd wanted a breakfast meeting to inform them about Oliver and now he'd have to go through it all again with Wendy. No he wouldn't, he'd delegate that job to Henry.

“Right ! We can’t wait any longer.” He said. “Henry... you can tell Wendy, when she finally shows up.”

“We know about Oliver.” Said Sean. “Declan heard all about it last night, from someone who drinks at the Copper Kettle.”

Sean’s cousin, Declan was busy nodding at everyone to confirm the story. It was annoying and unprofessional for them to hear about the death of a work colleague like that, but it also made Nick’s announcement a little easier.

“There will be time off given to attend his funeral and you are all expected to be there.” He said.

“I hate funerals.” Said Henry. “Damn morbid, especially when you get to my age.”

“I know, but his family will expect it.”

“He didn’t have a family.” Said Sean. “Only Dan who owns the pub and he didn’t like him that much.”

They were getting awkward again. Nick decided he needed to go into boss mode.

“We work for the local community !” He shouted. “They will expect us to show respect for a dead colleague. You will be given time off and you will attend the funeral ! Understood ?”

Some muttering, but lots of nodding heads. He didn’t even recognise two of the young lads Henry had hired to do the grunt work, but they obviously knew who signed their pay cheques.

“Do we know when it is ?” Asked Sean.

“About ten days time, Dan Freeman is organising it.” Said Nick. “I’ll let you all know when he has an exact date.”

“What was it that killed him ?” Asked Declan.

What indeed, they were all looking at him, all concerned about what had killed Oliver in such a short space of time. Nick hadn’t spoken to the hospital, he’d just had a long and rather confusing phone conversation with Dan from the Copper Kettle.

“I know you’re all worried.” He said. “But Oliver’s doctor said he’d died from an ordinary infection that for some reason his body refused to fight. There is no super bug involved or anything unnatural.”

He glared at them all, he was getting quite good at it.

“I have heard some of the daft rumours and it has to stop.” He continued. “Oliver was killed by his own poor hygiene routine, nothing more than that. I will be arranging for you all to have extra training in that area.”

Normally he’d have expected a few moans, but they all looked pleased. The training wouldn’t be that expensive and his insurance company would probably like it. He dreaded to think about how much his employee liability insurance would cost now.

“Mr Goodwood ?”

Mrs Hargreaves was looking upset, she was stood next to a uniformed woman police officer and a man in a smart blue suit, who had spoken to him.

“Yes, I’m Nick Goodwood.”

The man was holding up a warrant card for him to see, though it could have been anything. Nick wasn’t concentrating; he even missed the detective’s name, as he told him Wendy was dead. Wendy dead ! It was madness, she was far too young to die. He’d slept with her a few times until he’d realised it was her way of manipulating the boss, him.

“I’m sorry.” He said. “I missed that. Wendy, dead..... it’s such a shock.”

“That’s understandable. We just need to ask you a few questions about her state of mind yesterday. Is there anywhere private, where we could talk ?”

Of course there was, dozens of hotel rooms, most still ready to be used. He still couldn't remember the detective's name though, but they must get used to that.

"Yes of course, I'll show you the way." He said.

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Emma was having a nightmare and she knew it. The crazy thing was that although she knew it wasn't real, she was still scared and unable to wake herself up.

"Who are you?" She asked.

The girl in front of her kept changing, from being a dead thing with rotting skin, to a vibrant and attractive young woman.

"Hermione." The girl answered. "I know who you are."

Emma was running after her, through the lower caves of the crypt and then on, into hidden caves that stretched right under Glade Hall and under the Maynard Chapel. Like a typical dream, things kept changing. One moment Hermione was alive and running, the next she was the dead thing again, floating above the ground like a ghost.

"Find me Emma, if you can?"

Running, more running, Emma can feel her heart beating too fast. The caves are gone now and she's in tunnels full of tree roots. Hermione can walk right through them, but Emma has to climb over them or squeeze herself through gaps.

"They need to feed Emma."

The Glade of course, the yew tree roots are going deep into the ground, looking for dead flesh to feed on. The girl isn't moving anymore, she's worse than the dead thing now, just bones. Another change and Emma is in a cave full of yellow quartz crystals and there are bones at her feet. The rats have been at them, scattering them about, but Emma knows who died there.

"Hermione." She mutters.

"Find me Emma, find me!"

The shout rattles about in her head, making her feel nauseous. Emma wakes up, trying to get her breath. She's gasping for air, her heart still hammering in her chest. They're there, her parents and Dean, all still in their night things and looking worried.

"Find me." She mutters.

"Thank God you're awake."

Her mother sits next to her hugging her, as Emma leans forward and vomits over one of their expensive Indian rugs. The smell of her own puke sets her stomach off again and she retches until her stomach has nothing left to push out. She realises she's still in her nightie and covered in a blanket, but sat on a sofa in the family lounge.

"I'm sorry."

"Nonsense, you can't help it."

Her father sits next to her, she's never seen him look so worried. Dean is sat opposite to her, on a chair beside the old stone fireplace. Emma still can't remember leaving her bed, their bed.

"Tommy found you at about three am." Said her mother. "He told us it isn't the first time he's found you sleep walking."

So Tommy had done it, he'd actually carried her home and woken her parents. Emma was upset, but she couldn't really blame him.

"It's all the strange things happening; they're playing on your mind." Said Dean. "The dead dog nailed to the floor, blood in the cellar. And you've been reading about the history of Glade Hall."

Her father found a box of tissues and used most of them to mop her vomit up off the rug. Removing the smell would need proper cleaning though and even then, it would linger for weeks.

"Maybe." Said Emma. "I've never walked in my sleep before."

Her father was back beside her, holding her hand.

"Tommy said you'd promised to see a doctor, get some sleeping pills." Said her mum.

The odd thing was that she did remember saying that, but it felt like something that had happened in a dream. She hated doctors and considered that seeing them was for emergencies only. If she was bleeding from every orifice or found out she was pregnant, then she might voluntarily see a doctor.

"I'm fine mum." She said. "Dean is right. I just need a few days that don't involve dead things nailed to the floor."

"I can arrange an appointment with a doctor in Oxford." Said her dad. "That might be a good idea. Just to make sure it's nothing serious."

Emma felt the tears begin and found it hard to talk properly as her crying became more intense.

"No dad!" She pleaded. "It'll be some old guy, who'll talk to me as though I'm a kid and send me for lots of awful tests."

Her tears were making her hands wet, as she tried to keep the stinging tears out of her eyes. Why did tears sting? It just seemed unnecessarily cruel.

"Don't bully her to go." Said Dean. "That's not right."

Dean her knight in shining armour! Dean Jenkins the fearless, riding in to save her from tests, hospitals and doctors in general.

"No, no, we'd never do that." Said Alice. "It's just that we, I mean I, feel so helpless."

"I'll rest." Said Emma. "For a few days. All I'll do is talk to my friends on Facebook and watch TV with Dean. I promise."

Her parents were exchanging looks, but it was Dean who was holding up a large key in his right hand.

"It'll mean moving to one of the rooms in the old student accommodation block." He said. "But they're the only ones to have old fashioned keys."

Her knight in shining armour was beginning to look a little tarnished.

"We guessed you wouldn't want to see a doctor." Said her dad.

"It's for the best dear." Added her mum.

"You're going to lock me up at night?"

Dean was grinning at her, usually a good sign.

"And me with you." He said. "I'm moving rooms too. There are a few decent sized rooms, probably used by the college staff. It has its own facilities and a small kitchen."

"It'll stop you wandering about at night." Added her mum.

"Great." Said Emma. "No problem, but I think a few days of peace and quiet will do the trick."

Henry was at the lounge door, politely knocking, even though he was already in the room. He looked quite upset by something.

"Sorry to disturb you." He said. "But there's been some awful news.... About Wendy."

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Emma had been given the job of toddler sitting, after being shooed out of the lounge, so that her parents could talk to the police. They were probably scared that another piece of bad news might cause her to sleep walk again, or give her some kind of breakdown. She could see the fear in her mother's eyes as she'd been sent away to look after Jerry Jr.

"You can use my study." Her dad had told her.

Emma had heard about Oliver dying of course, it was all the builders and cleaners seemed to talk about. He'd been a grubby individual who'd allowed a wound to become dirty and infected. She was open to the idea of the house being haunted, but thought that Oliver was a definite case of death from natural causes. As for Wendy James ? She was certain to hear about it, whatever it was, from Sheila, or Mrs Hargreaves. Dean was trying to carry her little brother, who was having none of it. "Best to let him walk if he wants to." She said. "We're not really in any hurry."

Jerry Jr gave a little whoop as he was placed on the ground and hurtled towards the stairs.

"No !" Said Emma, grabbing him and holding his hand.

"He can move when he wants to." Said Dean.

"Oh yes and he can be quite an escape artist."

They weren't in a hurry and the toddler set their pace, as he negotiated the stairs up to her father's study. Emma hadn't forgiven her parents for excluding her from the conversation with the police and it must have shown on her face.

"They're only trying to protect you." Said Dean.

"I know, as parents go I've been lucky. At least they didn't send me off to have my head examined."

Her brother missed the top step with his foot and his face connected with the carpet. Instead of crying, he gave them a huge grin and turned to walk towards their room.

"He's tough." She said. "A future Rugby fullback my dad says."

"And heading the wrong way." Added Dean. "This way Jerry."

Emma still had muddy feet and just a blanket to cover her nightie. Jerry was probably being the wisest out of the three of them.

"No." Said Emma. "Leave him, we might as well shower and get dressed."

Her brother had a thing about chocolate buttons, she always kept a packet in her bag. A small handful of them settled him down and they took it in turns to shower and dress.

"Pictures !" Yelled Jerry, pointing at her camera.

"It has been a while and you've grown so big !"

He chuckled as she placed him on the window seat and took several pictures of him, illuminated by August sunshine. Emma put the camera in its carry case and carried it over her shoulder.

"I'll email the pics to mum. We still talk more by email than face to face, even when she's living here."

She liked her father's study, it was full of nerdy gadgets and a really fast computer. Dean went in search of coffee and something for them to eat, while Emma inserted her camera's HD chip into the PC. Jerry Jr was sat on the floor near her, licking the remnants of chocolate buttons from his fingers.

"Mum will love these." She told him.

Six good pics of him and three that went straight into the recycle bin. The six she sent to her mother were good, the morning light had caught his dimples just right. She looked straight at her little brother.

"You are definitely getting fat though." She said.

Emma had an idea, the pictures from the cellar were still on the memory chip. She hadn't found the time to transfer them to her own laptop. It was the innocuous pictures she wanted, nothing that showed any details about the Saxon gold or the smashed TV camera. Emma logged into her own Facebook account and opened Twitter too.

'Our new house has pre-roman walls in the cellar.' She typed.

Keep it light, keep it frothy. Don't hint at anything more than just a few dusty walls and bits of old pottery. Besides, her father would go bonkers if she started spreading yet more rumours about

Glade Hall. She attached three pictures that just showed bits of old walls. Ok, now the teaser, which she hoped someone picked up on;

‘Yay, our new home was visited by Dig Quest.’

Another three completely boring pictures of rusty trowels and bits of ruined walls. One more post, then she’d give it a day or so for Google to work its magic and show her pics to anyone searching for Dig Quest. Their house ! Stupid ! Of course, she needed to mention Glade Hall.

‘Glade Hall – My new home and featured on Dig Quest.’

The same three boring pics, but now her home was linked to the defunct TV show. The episode with Glade Hall never had been shown in full. Dig Quest had made twenty episodes, but only seventeen had been broadcast for the full forty two minutes. The missing three had been included in the end of show special, along with a lot of amusing out takes. It was all on YouTube and Emma had already watched it through several times. One of the ditched episodes had been a washout. Rain so torrential that all they’d managed to get filmed, were shots of miserable archaeologists trudging about in Wellington boots. Another episode had been stopped when rather a lot of shiny artefacts had been found.

‘We condemn the seeding of digs.’

Was all that was said, but they were obviously implying that the owners of the land had deliberately left valuable antiques lying about. Some people it seemed, would do anything to get their village on the TV. As for Glade Hall; there were no hints of anything like dig seeding, they just showed quite a bit of the outside the house and the grounds and said nothing of any significance was found. Crap of course, they hadn’t even shown the long dead language carved onto the ancient walls in the basement. Why pretend they found nothing ? Why bury that episode ?

“Jenkins the fearless has found us breakfast !”

Dean came in with a tray, loaded with all the things she liked to nibble at in the morning. He’d enlisted one of Henry’s labourers to carry a second tray for the coffee and drinks.

“Brilliant ! I’m starving.”

She put some muesli into a bowl and covered it in milk. Dean had given Jerry half of a large fresh baked flapjack and might live to regret it.

“Your fault !” She said. “He’s worse than a pet Labrador once you give him anything sweet. He’ll follow you about for hours now.”

Emma drank her coffee and decided to look after the friends she’d been neglecting. Facebook had a few people teasing her about taking Dean home for the holidays. Two messages and she was hooked. By the time she’d been through her friends list on Twitter, an hour had vanished.

“I must do something productive.” She said.

Dean was still playing with her brother and they both ignored her. She moved all the pictures off the memory in her camera and onto her cloud storage. Oh well, the day was hers, she decided to quickly look them over and dump anything illegible. Emma had taken hundreds of pics, often letting her camera take a dozen in a row. Despite the conditions in the cellar, the vast majority of her photographs were excellent and looked far better than she could have hoped for. Ten or so were just blackness, and those went into the recycle bin. Like her mother, she could be a little obsessive and once she’d begun to look at the pictures, she decided to examine them all and move them to correctly named folders. It was a bit anal, but she had promised her parents that she’d rest for a few days.

“Dad needs a better chair.” She said. “This one digs in your back.”

Dean was fast asleep, with Jerry on his lap, both of them gently snoring. Dean always seemed to be asleep, it was like dating a large Dormouse. Emma went back to her pictures, creating a folder for Saxon gold and another for Steadicam. She was looking at the last picture she'd taken, when the hairs on her neck began to stand on end.

"Dean ! Wake up and look at this !"

No response. She'd known there was something there, but to see it caught in a picture. Emma felt sweaty for no good reason as she looked at the shadow she'd caught watching them, watching her. It had red eyes the colour of hot coals and claws, definitely claws. It wasn't a shadow, it wasn't a creature, it was something totally unnatural. Her eyes had just seen the glare of the flash, but the microchips in her camera had found something to focus on, something to intensify. Her heart began to race at the realisation that the thing with claws and red eyes, was still there, still in their home.

"Dean ! For fuck sake wake up !"

He was only just coming to as she stood up and glared at him. What was wrong with him, hadn't he heard her shouting ?

"Sorry." He said. "I was up most of the night, with your parents."

Of course he had, she felt awkward now and guilty for swearing at him. Something took her attention away from Dean, they were a person short.

"Where is Jerry ?"

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Agnes hated the sunlight and rarely moved around the house until well after sunset. The child though, the heir to the new owner, his wanderings had disturbed her. He was alone, completely alone.

"Not to be touched." She muttered. "Important to them. They'll hurt me."

Not physical pain, any risk of that had passed away with her physical body. Agnes had ceased needing to worry about pain, thirst or hunger, when Cromwell's troops were still walking through her village and rounding up those loyal to the old king. The witches pulled at her, making her feel hollow inside. Agnes seemed to dissolve slightly when they did that to her, as if part of her was mixing in with the ether. He was the worst though, the one who usually claimed the deepest pit in the cellar. Once he'd turned her almost inside out !

"Bastard !" She muttered.

The child seemed to hear her and see her, after a fashion. The young often did have the sight, until they reached puberty. He was pointing at her and laughing.

"Lady ! Pretty lady !"

Agnes extended her hand towards the boy. So easy to grab him, so easy to end his life and offer him as her sacrifice. Last time she'd defied them though, he'd pulled her inside out and it had taken days for her to find herself. Not really inside out of course, that was just how it felt. He ripped her apart and sent her somewhere even more dreadful than Glade Hall. It had terrified her, that place. Maybe if he sent her again, she might not be able to gather herself back together, might not be able to return. Agnes drew her hand back.

"Cookies !" The boy yelled.

He was looking through the garden doors, where half a dozen men were cleaning out the pool. One of them was eating a large circular biscuit. Agnes wanted the boy, wanted the rewards his blood would bring. Yes, she would kill him, they weren't in charge. No one was really in charge, unless they could turn you inside out. The boy child was running towards the doors and Agnes almost had him.

The light though, the light outside was terrifying to her. As her hand stopped an inch or so away from his neck, the boy ran through the door and towards the workmen.

“What have we here ?”

“He’s a happy little chap. Keep hold of him until his parents come looking for him.”

The workmen had him now, no doubt feeding him the things he called cookies. Agnes allowed herself to dissipate, her essence drifting into the fabric of Glade Hall. She’d lost him for now, but one day.... The boy would be hers.

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