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Chapter Thirty-Eight: 6:30am (pps309-314)

Craig find the Ferrari keys gone

EF: How did they find the barn?

AZ: Punctuate the ups and downs a bit more

6:30 a.m.

Remind us after how much struggling. Would it open easily with snow piled against it?

Craig and Sophie at last found the door to the barn and hurried inside.

Craig hoped they had not been seen crossing the yard. *How scared is he?*

As they had ploughed through the thick snow, heads bent, he had glanced several times at the house. In the dark he could not see the building itself, just the lighted windows. The snowfall was still heavy, further obscuring his view, but he had been able to see vague figures moving about in the kitchen.

As far as he could tell, no one had been looking out. *Relief?*

He stopped for an instant in the doorway and took one last glance back. He saw nothing alarming, and quickly closed the barn door.

He was shivering, and Sophie's teeth were chattering like castanets. They breathed warm air gratefully. Sophie threw off her anorak and sat on one of the big hospital-style radiators that heated the barn. *Would it be normal for a lawn to be heated?* Craig would have liked to take a minute to warm himself, but there was no time for that—they had to get help as fast as possible.

The place was dimly lit by a night light next to the camp bed where Tom lay. Craig looked closely at the boy. There was no sign that he had thrown up again. He seemed to have recovered from the effects of Sophie's vodka, and was sleeping peacefully in his Spiderman pyjamas.

Craig's eye was caught by a gleam of light reflected off something on the floor beside the pillow. It was a photograph. Craig picked it up and held it in the light. It appeared to have been taken at his mother's fortieth birthday party, and showed Tom with Sophie, her arm around his shoulders. Craig smiled to himself. I'm not the only one who was captivated by her that afternoon, he thought. He put the picture back, saying nothing to Sophie.

He considered whether to wake Tom, but it seemed pointless. There was nothing the boy could do, and he would only be terrified. He was better off asleep.

Craig spoke to Sophie in a low, urgent voice. "Your phone—where is it?"

"In my suitcase, by the bed."

Craig went quickly up the ladder that led to the hayloft bedroom. On one of the narrow single beds he could just about make out a heap of blankets that presumably covered his sister Caroline. She seemed fast asleep. Like Tom, she was better off that way, Craig thought. If she woke up and found out what was going on over in the main house, she would have hysterics. He would try not to wake her.

The second bed was neatly made. On the floor next to the bed he could see the shape of an open suitcase. Moving cautiously in the near-dark, he crossed the room. As he bent down by the suitcase, he heard, very near to him, the soft rustle and squeak of something alive, and he grunted [?] a startled curse his heart hammering in his chest; then he realised it was Caroline's damn rats moving in their cage. He pushed the cage aside and began to search the case.

Working by touch alone, he rummaged in the contents. On top was a plastic shopping bag containing a gift-wrapped parcel. Otherwise it was mostly clothes, neatly folded: someone had helped Sophie pack, he guessed, for he did not take her to be a tidy person. He

Can he recognize this by touch? If so, let us feel this with him.

was momentarily distracted by a lacy bra, then his hand closed over the oblong shape of a mobile phone. He flipped its lid, but no lights came on. He could not see well enough to find its on-off switch.

He hurried back down the ladder. There was a standard lamp by the bookshelf. He turned it on and held Sophie's phone in the light. He found the power button immediately, and pressed it, but nothing happened. He could have cried with frustration. "I can't get the bloody thing to come on!" he whispered.

She held out her hand for the phone, and he gave it to her.

She pressed the same button, frowned, pressed it again, then jabbed at it repeatedly. At last she said: "The battery has run down."

"Shit! Where's the charger?"

"I don't know."

"In your suitcase?"

"I don't think so."

Craig became exasperated. "How can you *possibly* not know where your phone charger is?"

Sophie's voice went small. "I think I left it at home."

"Jesus Christ!" Craig controlled his temper with an effort. He wanted to tell her she was a stupid fool, but that would not help. He was silent for a moment. The memory of kissing her came back to him, and he could not be angry with her. His rage evaporated, and he put his arms around her. "All right," he said. "Never mind."

She rested her head on his shoulder. "I'm sorry."

"Let's think of something else."

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EF – 1st line...or phone chargers...

“There must be more phones.”

He shook his head. “Caroline and I don’t carry mobiles—my mother won’t let us have them. She won’t go to the toilet without hers, but she says we don’t need them.”

“Tom hasn’t got a mobile. Miranda thinks he’s too young.”

“Hell.”

She pulled away from him. “There was one in your Grandpa’s car.”

Craig snapped his fingers. “The Ferrari—right! And I left the keys in. All we have to do is get to the garage, and we can phone the police.”

“You mean we have to go outside again?”

“You can stay here.”

“No. I want to come.”

“You won’t be alone—Tom and Caroline are here.”

“I want to be with you.”

Craig tried not to show how pleased he was. “You’d better get your coat on again,

then.”

Sophie came off the radiator. Craig picked her coat up from the floor and helped her into it. She looked up at him, and he tried an encouraging smile. “Ready?”

A trace of her old spirit came back. “Yeah,” she said. “Like, what can happen? We could be murdered, that’s all. Let’s go.”

They went outside. It was still pitch dark, and the snowfall was heavy, bursts of *stinging pellets* shotgun fire rather than clouds of butterflies. Craig took Sophie’s hand. Steering by the courtyard lights, he led her to the end of the barn, away from the house, to reduce the risk of being seen. Then they crossed the yard to the garage.

Hard to open?

The side door was unlocked, as always. They stepped inside. It was as cold in as out. There were no windows, so Craig risked switching on the lights.

Grandpa's Ferrari was where he had left it, parked close to the wall to hide the dent. Like a flash, he remembered the shame and fear he had felt twelve hours ago after he had crashed into the tree. It seemed strange, now, that he had been so anxious and afraid about something as trivial as a dent in a car. He recalled how eager he had been to impress Sophie and get her to like him. It seemed so long ago.

Also in the garage was Luke's Toyota. The Nissan Patrol had gone: Luke must have taken it home last night, Craig figured.

He went to the Ferrari and tried the door handle.

It would not open.

He tried again, but the door was locked.

"Fuck," he said [?]feelingly.

"What's the matter?" Sophie said.

"The car's locked."

"Oh, no!"

He looked inside. "And the keys have gone."

"How did that happen?"

Craig banged the roof of the Ferrari with his fist in frustration. "Luke must have noticed last night that the car was unlocked. He must have taken the keys out of the ignition, locked the car, and taken the keys back to the house for Grandpa."

"What about the other car?"

Craig tried the door of the Toyota. It was locked, too. "Anyway, I doubt if Luke has a

car phone.”

“Can we get the Ferrari keys back?”

Craig made a face. “Maybe.”

“Where are they kept?”

“In the key box.”

“Where’s that?”

“On the wall of the boot lobby.”

“At the back of the kitchen?”

Craig nodded grimly. “Just about two yards from those people with the guns.”

*Good punctate up or ↓
suggest ↓ you punctate up or ↓
downs a bit more.*