

# Murder at Jamestown

Chapter Ten: Justice Shall Be Done

## Jamestown Colony, 1614

Savages. It was ridiculous to think of them that way. Who were the savages, really? Jeremiah thought. He was the savage, that he knew for certain. Building the fort, building his cottage, he had felt like a man with secrets.

Because he was a man with a secret.

How could he ever leave that shame behind him? What he had hidden away? He was a monster, a monster who when pressed into a corner, became an animal.

He had begged God for forgiveness. Heaven knew how hungry all of them had been, how every moment that passed was a match between himself and the angel of death.

He had begged Francis for forgiveness. How his brother would

have mourned his soul if he'd known the depths to which Jeremiah had sunk.

As he prayed, he had built. What else was a man to do? How could he ever understand the intentions of the Almighty? His brother had died, and he had lived. The girl had died, and he had lived. Because the girl had died, he had lived. On her own flesh he had survived, and now she was eating him alive from the inside.

He wept quietly, at night or when out hunting. He yearned for freedom from the memories, and found that only in his work. Building, planting, hunting and harvesting held meaning for him. He was no longer the boy who had arrived on the ship, seeking his brother and a better life. He was a hardened man looking to build a fence, to keep out the memories, to keep out the terror.

Perhaps a wife would soften him. Perhaps he needed a companion who could understand that at times, when the Devil loomed largest in his heart, he would do any vile thing all over again simply to be forgiven and understood.

## Jamestown, Present Day

Ruth arrived in her usual fashion, out of breath and fluttering. She was a round, plump pigeon walking through the door, peeking her head left and right and tilting it side to side as she sought Kitty but also worked to look around the lab for any detail or juicy tidbit she might have missed.

Bryan buried his face in his hand, and Kitty could see him taking a very deep breath.

“Oh, Dr. CAMPBELL,” she exhaled, leaning forward and practically falling over herself to get to Kitty. Kitty seemed concerned that Ruth might actually fall--possibly into her own lap--and reached her hands out to steady the older woman. Ruth, taking this as a gesture of companionship, fell on Kitty’s arms and drew her into a firm embrace.

Kitty struggled to keep her airway clear, and her eyes flew wide with surprise. She craned her neck over Ruth’s shoulder to get a glimpse of Bryan, but he still had his eyes covered with his hand, and refused to meet her glance.

With no little effort, Kitty managed to pull away from Ruth and get the woman at arm’s length. Ruth fanned her face with her hands as if she’d run a long distance, and turned to rest her behind on the lab ta-

ble where Kitty was leaning. Her hips brushed close to Kitty, who had to move to the right to make space between them, which Ruth promptly took up again by shifting to the side until they were touching.

Kitty sighed.

“Ruth,” she began.

“Oh, Dr. Campbell, I know, I know!” interjected Ruth, laying a hand on Kitty’s arm and shaking her head while still fanning herself with her other hand.

Kitty gave Ruth a quizzical look.

“It’s all SO AWFUL, how can this have happened? How can we ever even know the whole truth?” she asked plaintively, grasping Kitty’s hand in hers as she spoke. Ruth’s eyes looked pityingly into Kitty’s, and she patted the back of the younger woman’s hand maternally.

“By asking questions and following a logical line of reasoning, actually,” Bryan blurted from behind his hands. His voice was exasperated, but he still wouldn’t meet either woman’s eyes.

Kitty suppressed a grin. Bryan’s mother must have been a real piece of work for Ruth to get under his skin like she did. Of course, Kitty wasn’t loving the smothering, either, but it didn’t make her as itchy as it seemed to make him.

“I think Dr. Brown has a point, Ruth,” Kitty said, distracting the other woman from staring at Bryan, who was taking deep breaths. “We can learn the truth, and I think it’s urgent that we do so.”

Ruth’s head whipped back toward Kitty. “Why?” she snapped, with more edge than Kitty would have expected.

Kitty took another look at Bryan, then said, “We want to be sure that the wrong person isn’t accused of killing Hank.”

Ruth smiled slightly and shook her head, “Oh, I’m sure that won’t happen.”

Kitty squinted slightly and asked, “How can you be sure of that, Ruth?”

Ruth blinked owlishly. “Why, because the killer gave themselves away, don’t you think?”

Kitty’s eyebrows shot up. “Do you know who did this?”

Ruth shook her head sadly, “I wish I didn’t, but I suspect that both you and I know the same thing.”

“And what do you think that is?”

Ruth looked back up at Kitty. “That Hank died because Stella loved him, of course. But he could never love her back.”

Now it was Bryan’s turn to snap his head up and look at Ruth in astonishment.

“What?” he asked, his voice reflecting his surprise. “What makes you say he could never love her back? Stella’s a sweet girl!”

Ruth turned her attention to Bryan, a smug, superior look on her face. “Stella is a very sweet girl, and I am very fond of her. But she wasn’t exactly...Hank’s type, if you know what I mean?”

Kitty and Bryan both looked at one another in sincere confusion.

Ruth leaned forward between the other two and lowered her voice to a mock-whisper: “You know. Because he was...gay.”

Kitty’s jaw dropped. If she had expected anything to come out of Ruth’s mouth at that moment, this was probably the least likely item on the list.

“Wait, he was... Based on what, Ruth?” Bryan sputtered.

Ruth nodded sagely. “Oh, yes. He was.”

Bryan opened his eyes wide and leaned toward her, emphasizing his unanswered question.

“Are you asking how I knew?” Ruth said, now leaning back slightly and folding her hands in her lap. She seemed very confident in her words.

Bryan rolled his eyes, and looked like he was ready to leave the room altogether.

Kitty stepped in and said, quietly, “What makes you so sure, Ruth?”

Now it was Ruth’s turn to look surprised. “Well, you MUST have known, Dr. Campbell. Didn’t you see the way the two of them made eyes at one another?”

“The two of whom?” Bryan asked with more than a little asperity.

“Why, Hank and Dr. Greg, of course!” Ruth replied, and this time there was no superiority in her voice. She seemed genuinely amazed that this appeared to be news to the two heads of their project.

“So you’re...saying that Hank and Greg...” Kitty prompted, putting pieces together but not entirely sure they fit.

“Were together!” Ruth said firmly, nodding as she did, with a smile on her lips.

Bryan made odd pffftt noises that made it clear to Kitty he was at a loss for words.

“But, Ruth,” Kitty began.

“Now, I know, you might not have been raised the way I was, to look down on that sort of thing,” Ruth interrupted, her smug look back on her face. “But I say, we should all be more tolerant of others, and it’s just plain WRONG to judge someone when you haven’t walked this world in their shoes.”

She nodded her head primly, for emphasis.

Kitty opened her mouth at this seeming change of topic, but promptly closed it again.

Ruth leaned in as if sharing a confidence: “My dear departed momma would be horrified to hear me say that, but it’s my truth and I will speak it.”

Kitty could do nothing but nod at this. Luckily, Ruth rarely needed any encouragement to carry a conversation.

“You must have noticed. I mean, if I noticed, then there was definitely something to notice, don’t you think? And I could see the way they looked at one another, always trying to catch one another’s eye. And they would have these whispered conversations. Once, I think I saw them sneak off to be alone together!”

Her face was triumphant. Kitty shook her head to clear it from the overwhelm that usually accompanied one of Ruth’s speeches.

“Was there anything else you noticed about Hank? Before he died, I mean, that might help us find out what happened?” Kitty asked her.

Ruth blinked slowly, and said, “I mean...Like what, Dr. Campbell?”

Bryan exhaled heavily and finally sat. He appeared dejected, and simply trained his eyes on the floor, waiting for this conversation to

end.

“Like, did you think he was acting suspicious or that he seemed threatened by anyone in some way?”

Ruth shook her head, smiling sadly. “No, Dr. Campbell, I told you. I saw two men, yes, two MEN, I don’t judge, I am a woman of the world, you know. What I saw was two men, and they seemed very intent on one another. I supported them, and admired Dr. Greg for being so professional.”

“I’m sorry, what now?” Bryan said, as if he couldn’t help himself.

Ruth turned to look at him, her eyebrows raised. “Well, sure, Dr. Brown! I mean, with his position of authority, taking the care to keep his feelings under wraps like that, it really does take a man of character to do that. To put off love in order to keep the wheels of the organization running smoothly!”

She shook her head again, this time in admiration.

Kitty stared.

“Did you ever see anyone threaten Hank in any way?” Kitty asked Ruth.

Ruth shook her head, seeming to think it over. “No, nothing like that. Like I said, Hank was a very sweet young man, and it just breaks my heart that Stella was all bent out of shape over him. Of course, I

never mentioned to HER that I knew Hank and Greg were an item, what good would that have done anyone? Young love comes and goes, and I knew that given enough time, her feelings would fade, but you can never account for the furies of passion!”

“You’re saying that you believe Stella is responsible for Hank’s death,” Kitty said, clarifying.

Ruth nodded, her eyes on her clasped hands in her lap. “I don’t want to be right, Dr. Campbell, but I’m right. I think her emotions just got the better of her, poor thing. I mean, you saw the flowers.”

This last was stated simply, as if that solved the matter.

“The flowers?” Kitty repeated. “You mean the pansies?”

Ruth brightened. “That’s right! Pansies mean loving thoughts. And you heard Stella: she said her grandmother told her pansies are for thoughts unspoken. She must have left the flowers there for Hank after...well, I would like to believe it was an accident, wouldn’t you? She’s such a sweet tiny thing, I don’t want to think that she would ever HURT Hank, not on purpose?”

Ruth looked appealingly to both of them in turn, seeking out support for her hypothesis.

Kitty tried another tack. “Ruth, do you know anyone named Marty Ganguly?”

Ruth gave a small girlish giggle. “Oh, my, Gangooly?” She

stretched the vowel sound to an unnatural length, amused at the sound of it.

“That’s right,” Kitty said.

“Oh, no, Dr. Campbell, I don’t think I’d forget a name like that. Oh, my.” She giggled again.

Kitty told her, “Ruth, did you know that a man named Marty Ganguly was investigating Greg?”

Ruth stopped giggling immediately. She shook her head, her mouth a silent O.

“He’s a forensic accountant.”

Ruth looked very confused. Her eyebrows drew close together and she said, “I don’t...I don’t know what that has to do with Dr. Greg? Why would anyone be investigating HIM? He’s such a good man, such a good administrator.”

She nodded emphasis at this description of Greg.

“It’s possible that he knew something about Greg that was incriminating in some way,” Kitty told her.

“Like what, though?” Ruth asked, almost desperately. “What could he have thought he knew? I’m sure he was wrong, whatever it was!”

“And there’s a chance that Hank found out about it.”

Ruth shook her head. “No, that did not happen.”

“Ruth, is it possible that what you took to be a relationship between Hank and Greg was really Hank discovering that Greg was in some kind of trouble, something this Marty Ganguly had uncovered?”

Kitty asked her.

Ruth shook her head again, looking confused and a little angry.

“No, I don’t think that. It was so obvious that they were...”

Her voice trailed away.

Ruth took a deep breath in and then out, and asked, “What kind of accountant did you say?”

“Forensic,” Bryan interjected. “The kind that finds financial crimes.”

“And he worked for the Association?” Ruth asked, indicating the Archaearium around them, as if the building represented the organization and its funding.

“He worked for a company called Magnolia,” Bryan told her.

Ruth shook her head again, firmly. “No, there weren’t any magnolias there.”

Kitty tilted her head to one side, looking at Ruth.

“Where?” she asked.

Ruth seemed far away in thought, “There weren’t magnolias, just rue flowers.”

Kitty narrowed her eyes shrewdly.

“You mean pansies, don’t you, Ruth?” she said quietly.

Ruth nodded, in a daze. “Pansies and rue, that’s right.”

She was frowning slightly, and Kitty put her hand on the woman’s arm. “Ruth, we didn’t mention the rue. Just the pansies.”

Ruth didn’t seem to comprehend, but Bryan did.

He looked back and forth between the two women and then said, “Ruth, what did you do?”

Ruth turned her head slowly to look at Bryan. Her mouth was working but no sound was coming out.

Kitty stepped away from the table where she’d been leaning and turned her body to face Ruth. Placing her hands on the other woman’s shoulders, she peered directly into Ruth’s eyes and said, “Ruth, did you discover Hank’s body before we found it, all of us together?”

Ruth looked back at Kitty, and her lip quivered.

“Oh my God,” Bryan whispered. “Ruth! You didn’t!”

Ruth’s eyes slowly began to fill with tears.

“I thought....I thought I was helping him,” she said in a voice that was barely audible.

“Helping him?” Bryan said, a definite edge to his voice.

Kitty gave him a warning glance and he moved away from the table, physically putting a hand over his own mouth, clearly not trusting himself to remain silent.

“How did you think you were helping Greg, Ruth?” Kitty asked more gently.

Ruth looked into Kitty’s eyes. “I thought they were in love....”

Kitty nodded. “Right, you said that. You thought they were in love. And so how did you help Greg, Ruth?”

Ruth swallowed audibly. “I went to the copy room, and I saw him....”

Kitty waited patiently. Bryan waited impatiently.

Ruth continued, “And I thought, oh MY! What has that poor man gone and done? Did he think we would judge him for loving this boy? Because I didn’t!”

She shook her head emphatically. Kitty willed her to continue.

“And then I saw there were rue flowers, and I thought, well, my grandmother told me that rue flowers are for regret, and maybe this was all just an accident, because I had seen the two of them heading into the copy room just a couple hours before, and I thought, isn’t that sweet? They just want some time alone!”

At this last, she let out a sob. Bryan grudgingly reached into his pants pocket and handed her a handkerchief. Ruth looked up soggily, with a grateful expression, and took the handkerchief, grasping Bryan’s hand like a lifeline while she wiped her tears away. His face was appalled, and he seemed frozen in fear, uncertain how to get his hand

back and settling for angling his body as far from Ruth's as he could while allowing her to maintain her grasp around his reluctant wrist.

"And then what, Ruth?" Kitty asked her.

"And then I thought, well, if it was an accident..." She looked at Kitty appealingly, guilt in her eyes. "I mean, what was the harm of throwing people off track? If it meant that maybe Dr. Greg didn't get in quite so much trouble? It wasn't his fault, for who he is! He didn't mean for it to happen, I'm just sure of it, I know it was an accident, and we don't even really know it wasn't Stella, do we?"

"So you left the pansies?"

Ruth nodded, dejected.

"Ruth," Kitty told her. "We need you to show us exactly where you found Hank."

Ruth shook her head violently.

"Oh, no, Dr. Campbell!" she moaned. "I can't! I don't need to, I didn't touch anything!"

Kitty felt sorry for the woman. She was clearly distressed. She was also clearly disturbed if she thought her actions were innocent.

"Ruth, if you left those pansies, then you may have seen something that we missed."

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Five minutes later, they stood in the copy room. Hank's body was still there, and Kitty could see the impact of the hours passing: it wouldn't be much longer before some form of refrigeration was necessary. And since she was working under the assumption that the police would be there long before she was ready for them to arrive, she thought the natural biological timeline might offer her the best gauge for whether she was asking the right questions, and getting closer to the truth. Picking the lock.

"Ruth, show me where Hank was when you first saw him," she asked. It wasn't really a command, but Kitty wasn't really giving friendly requests at this point, either.

Ruth closed her eyes and gestured mutely to the wall behind the copy machine, which was pulled out toward the center of the room and which had shielded Hank's body from view.

"He was behind the copier, oh, it was awful, all I saw was his feet..." Ruth's whispered voice trailed off.

Kitty reached into her pocket and fiddled with the tools she had stored there. If only they would help her open up the truth of how Hank had died.

"But why, you know?" Bryan said under his breath.

"What's that?" Kitty asked him.

He shrugged that little half shrug, and reluctantly said, "That's

what bothered me when we found him. Why behind the copier?"

Kitty looked back at the way the machine had been pulled away from the wall, remember how heavy it had been, that it had taken three of them to move it in order to gain access to Hank's body.

"I mean, Hank's a strapping guy, he didn't weight a ton or anything but he's no Stella. It must have been a giant pain to shove him back there. Why bother?"

"Well, to hide him, don't you think, doctor?" Ruth asked, sniffing, a tone of confused disdain in her voice, as if this were the obvious answer and she found it difficult to believe Bryan hadn't seen it first.

"Bryan's got a point," Kitty said. "There are other ways to hide a body. Why not the cabinets?"

She gestured to the cabinets along the side wall, which she knew were filled with office supplies, but which could have easily been emptied to accommodate Hank.

Kitty moved forward and looked more closely at the copier. It HAD weighed a ton. It had actually been surprisingly heavy--which was always her experience with office machines, they always weighed so much. But wasn't the one at her old department on wheels for that reason? Wasn't this one on wheels to make it easier to move?

She looked down at the floor, which was carpeted. The copier did, indeed, have small casters on the base, which should have made

repositioning it simple. But the floor was carpeted in a grey industrial berber-style carpet. The wheels sank into it, and Kitty could see that to get them rolling would require some leverage, or rocking the machine slightly.

This was a VERY heavy copier.

There was a shadow underneath the machine she hadn't noticed before. But it wasn't angular, like what she would expect. It was irregular and rounded. And shiny in the overhead fluorescent light.

"Oh, Bryan..." Kitty moaned softly as her eyes and brain caught up.

Bryan looked pale. "I don't like the sound of that."

Kitty moved forward, dropping to her hands and knees. She could see Hank's outstretched hand as she peered under the copier, but she could also clearly see that what she had mistaken for a shadow was a pool of blood. And it wasn't Hank's.

"Bryan, I need you to take a deep breath."

The sudden gasp from behind her made it clear her friend had taken the advice immediately to heart.

Still crouching, Kitty looked up at Ruth and Bryan in turn.

"There's blood coming from the copier."

"FROM the copier?" Ruth asked. She was still sniffing, but couldn't resist the allure of drama.

Kitty nodded. “Bryan, help me move it.”

“No! Why?” His voice had the edge of panic to it that Kitty recognized as his need for someone else to call the shots and tell him what to do next.

“The access panel on the back. That’s where the blood is coming from. I don’t want to damage Hank’s body by opening it where it is, or moving any evidence. But we need to get inside.”

With a green face and shaking hands, Bryan moved to the end of the copier opposite Kitty and between them, they heaved and got the wheels rolling well enough to rotate the machine 45-degrees, into the center of the room. Taking her sleeve over her hand, and casting one anxious glance at her friend behind her, Kitty grabbed the side of the heavy plastic panel that covered the copier’s innards and gave it a firm yank.

The clasps holding the panel shut gave a sharp POP that made all three jump. But that was nothing compared to the shock of seeing a small man with olive skin, wearing a short sleeved shirt with a necktie, tumble out onto the carpeted floor.