

# Murder at Jamestown

Chapter Four: Spring Showers

## Jamestowne Colony, 1614

The walls of the fort stood strong. They were larger than they had been before the Starving Time, when nine out of ten settlers in the colony had met their perishing end. Where the south wall had once formed a barrier, the church now sat, proud and tall with its Tudor-style walls and imported windows. One entrance faced into the fort, and another toward the river, carrying fresher air during hours-long worship services.

There were no ships at anchor. They had returned to England for more colonists. Jeremiah had a clear memory of the last time his foot had stood on a ship's deck, likely the last time he would ever set foot upon a ship. Jamestowne was his home now.

Fewer than 60 had survived the starving time, and it had taken

every ounce of strength and courage they'd had to board the foundering vessel they hoped would allow them to survive the passage back to Mother England. But a death at sea was no worse than the death that certainly awaited them there in the New World: starvation, without even rats or dogs to eat, and after their death...to become food for the survivors. Few if any of the others had avoided such a ghastly meal, and Francis knew with absolute conviction that not one of them would ever give voice to the horror of those days.

When they'd weighed anchor and felt the breeze lift their spirits as the tide lifted their ship, they had sailed into the mouth of the James River. Jeremiah had wept and allowed himself to picture what his life would be like when he returned. No opportunities there, not for him, nor a brother neither, with Francis dead and buried in the red earth behind him. Jeremiah was thankful his brother had been dead and gone too long to be worth digging up, although others had not met the same holy fate.

Even without a trade, Jeremiah hoped his experience and time in the New World would grant him access to men with influence, that perhaps the story he had to tell of savages and fort building might allow him to build another life, even without his brother's help. And his head was so filled with wishful thoughts that at first he did not

truly understand what was before his eyes as their ship came around the bend and the waters below mixed with the salt of the ocean, their vessel floating on the brackish waves.

It appeared that enormous clouds filled the horizon. White and wispy, their edges crisp but the air around them constantly moving. No, not clouds. Wings? An enormous creature of the air?

Suddenly, Jeremiah understood exactly what the savages had believed they saw when his ship had first arrived on New England shores. He was seeing the same thing, with the same lack of comprehension: sails. The sails of ships, many ships, ships carrying hundreds of men.

English men.

The stranded governors, having spent the winter in Barbados, had arrived with orders from the Virginia Company. All members of the fort were to return immediately to Jamestowne and work to make the colony profitable.

Jeremiah now stood and wiped his face. Grime and sweat smeared across his forehead and dripped onto the roughspun shirt he wore open on his chest. The years since they'd turned the boat around and headed back to the colony had been hard, and the hardest moment was setting his foot back on the shore. He'd fought the strong urge

to vomit, and only the force of the weakened and anguished bodies crowding down the plank behind him had caused him to set a second foot in front of the first.

He leaned back over and dragged his hoe through the earth, sweat dripping down into his eyes as he trod the familiar path of memory. The heat of the day reminded him that worse weather was on its way, and only when the corn was lush and green and tasseling would he be able to rest assured of a solid meal each night during the long winter ahead. So he pushed on through the labor, knowing it was a demand that must be met, knowing it was a task he would never deem too onerous after the longest winter, the one that had forced him beyond all he thought himself capable of.

At least there was good trade now, and he had solid tools in his hands and a warm cottage to call his own. The Dutch arrived regularly with furs to trade for corn and tobacco, not caring much for growing their own. Their settlement at New Amsterdam was a gateway to the great snow-covered north, and the furs they brought kept all of Jamestowne cozy in their beds.

The settlers of Jamestowne did little enough hunting of their own. Only with special dispensation from the governor were they even allowed to leave the fort, and without a musket of his own, Jeremiah

had never been offered the privilege.

“Curse ye, Francis,” he swore softly to his lost brother as he worked, and not for the first time. “Left yer damned weapon down th’ well, and look ye where it’s got me. A farmer, an’ all, if’n ye believe that.”

He smiled grimly, at himself or at the soil or with the memory of his brother’s laughter in his ears, he wasn’t sure. Perhaps it didn’t matter much, anyway.

As the fort had expanded, relations with the savages had improved--or was it that as relations improved, the fort expanded? Jeremiah mused on this as he worked his way further down his furrow. He was digging parallel to the walls of the church, working every square foot of soil he could, as all the colonists did inside the fort. For all that there was less warfare, there was still tension, and none of the colonists chose to leave the safety of their walls if they could help it. Jeremiah may have complained, but the death toll on hunting expeditions was still high enough that he didn’t envy them their work.

Jamestowne Island itself was only scarcely connected to the mainland by a tiny spit, one that huntsmen crossed in order to find game. Jeremiah and the other settlers who could not yet afford to have a weapon shipped to them from England did their share by producing

surplus crops for trade. Others worked to build homes for the new settlers--the last ship had seen the arrival of over 100 women to help build families amongst the colony, the Virginia Company in its wisdom having realized that single men weren’t likely to maintain a long-term settlement but that men with wives and children would be more deeply invested in the success of the venture.

Jeremiah continued digging and shook his head. Just four years ago, he’d scavenged in grim dark corners that would forever remain secret simply to survive. Today, he was awaiting his marriage to Anne, looking toward the day three weeks hence when he would bring her home to his cottage, and imagining the children they would share. How was it possible that so little time could work so great a change? How had this colony survived such a nightmare to see such a dawn?

And why had Jeremiah survived, when so many others had not even had the peace of their own graves as a reward for their suffering?

He dug his hoe deeper into the soil and turned the earth over, the darker shade of the fresh red clay, colored darker by moisture that had been hidden underneath, reminding him too directly of the blood spilled by those who were no longer here.

## Jamestown, Present Day

Greg Wood wore a rumpled suit and a harried expression. It was more than his annoyance that he was carrying a large banker's box that appeared quite heavy; harried seemed to be his default emotion. It showed in the lines between his eyebrows and the way he puffed his cheeks out when he breathed. There was sweat on his forehead and dirt on the cuffs of his jacket.

He looked around, at first seeming to expect someone to come rushing to his aid, and then incredulously as no such assistance arrived. For their part, every person in the lab stood frozen, staring at Greg as if they'd seen a ghost waltz into the room with a noise maker.

"What, seriously? Fine, I'll do it myself," he huffed as he moved further into the room when neither Kitty nor any of the others budged as they watched Greg enter the lab. Kitty could feel her heart pounding--she had been certain that it would be Hank coming through the lab door, and that Stella's over-reaction had just ignited everyone's imagination. But it wasn't Hank, and they were all still wondering where the tooth with its characteristic fifth cusp indicating Native American descent had come from.

Greg dropped the box on an empty lab table to Kitty's right. She looked him over, remembering her first encounter with him. Greg

had been irritable then, too, and his resentment of Bryan Brown had been barely concealed. When Kitty had been introduced to him as the Guest Lecturer for the summer field school season, Wood had barely even shaken her hand.

Greg Wood worked for Archaeological Virginia, the group that co-operatively ran the Jamestown site along with the National Park Service, and who had given Bryan a limited charter for the summer. They were Greg's employers, and as such, had a great deal of control and influence over what happened at the site. Considering Jamestown was the first permanent English settlement in the New World, and widely regarded as the place where modern America got its start, that was quite a hefty level of influence, and in Kitty's experience, organizations with a great deal of influence were rarely more trustworthy than individuals with too much influence, and often more corruptible. Wood's aggressive and entitled manner had done very little to contradict that.

"I see you're here late, Bryan. Again," Greg said dismissively as he mopped his brow with a monogrammed handkerchief he pulled from his sport coat pocket. His cuffs were dusty but Kitty knew that the jacket was of highest quality, and had little doubt the handkerchief was equally expensive. The way Wood ostentatiously folded it up and placed it back in the inner pocket of his coat made it clear that he didn't mind if she knew it, either.

Wood carried the box he'd brought into the lab to a coset in one corner, unlocking it with a set of keys, and placing it on the shelf before turning back to the assembled group. He looked them over suspiciously as they stood watching him in silence.

His eyes narrowed. "What's going on here? Are you working or just taking up lab space that could be devoted to another project? And I mean really easily, there are plenty of other research groups..."

"Hey, Greg," Bryan interrupted, his voice quavering only slightly. "Have you seen Hank?"

Greg glanced around the room with the exaggerated appearance of searching for the missing Hank, then back at Bryan. "I was going to ask you the same thing. That kid was supposed to be helping me with these boxes."

"Wait, why would he be helping you carry boxes?" Kitty asked.

"Why wouldn't he be helping me?" Greg parried, nastily. Kitty could see him pushing out his chest and moving surreptitiously closer to her as his nostrils flared. Wood's brown curls fell over his forehead like Clark Kent's, an effect exaggerated by his horn rimmed glasses, but simultaneously contradicted by the ugly look now on his face.

"Well, Greg, it's that he's not, you know, on your team," Bryan interjected weakly. His chin was quivering.

Kitty knew that Bryan was just trying to avoid conflict. More

than anything else in the world, Bryan wanted people to get along, not because he was a pacifist, but because conflict made him uncomfortable.

"You're new here," Wood told Kitty, ignoring Bryan almost entirely, "so maybe you don't know. But every project here goes through AV, and if I need the assistance of one of your..."

Here he looked around and sneered.

"One of your students...then I am free to ask for it and entitled to get it."

"Well of course you are, Mr. Wood!" Ruth said, a little obsequiously.

Brandon rolled his eyes. Stella sniffed and wiped her nose, her gaze on the floor.

"Does that happen often?" Kitty asked him, her tone neutral.

"Do you find reasons to ask for the crew's help frequently, I mean?"

Wood looked at her and said nothing.

"Like tonight, for instance. Did you ask Hank's help tonight, and that's why you thought he'd be helping you with the boxes? Or did you just assume it?"

Wood drew in a slow breath and then responded, "I passed him in the hall earlier and told him I needed his help moving some files, if that's what you mean."

Looking around at the assembled group, Wood ended by saying, “But obviously I’ll be doing that on my own? Since you’re all SO hard at work.”

He stared at Bryan, who to his credit did his best to stare back. More or less. None of the crew made a move to go toward him, even Ruth, so Wood grabbed the lab door and yanked it open hard, his face a rictus of aggrieved privilege. He pulled so hard, in fact, that the door slammed against the wall behind it and smacked him in the arm on the way back. He jumped, hard, and grabbed his bicep as though he’d been shot, then gave an angry glance around the room once more before stalking off down the hall.

“I see he hasn’t improved since I met him,” Kitty said quietly, her eyebrows raised and lips slightly pursed in reaction to Wood’s behavior. “Oh, Dr. Brown, I don’t see why we can’t all get along, I really don’t,” breathed Ruth with

A tone of sorrow in her voice.

Bryan just pressed his lips together and took long, slow breaths through his nose.

“That guy,” Brandon just said, shaking his head. “I mean, I get what he’s saying, he’s totally the one with all the weight around here, but man...”

“Turd,” Stella agreed quietly. She seemed to have gotten her sniffles under control and was returning to a state of calm.

“I’ll go talk to him,” Bryan said. Everyone in the room looked at him, in various states of surprise at this statement.

Bryan looked back at them, then shrugged and said lamely, “You know, later.”

Brandon twisted his mouth, his expression fairly screaming his opinion that Bryan was pathetic and weak. Ruth shook her head sadly.

“In the meantime, we need to take a closer look at that tooth,” Kitty said to them all, working to move the group forward.

“What are you hoping we’ll find?” Bryan asked her.

“We’ve all been pretty upset tonight. It’s a waste of time to stand around making guesses or acting on fear. Agreed?” They all nodded.

“I want to be sure we’re not confusing two different things,” she said slowly, as she slipped on a pair of latex gloves and leaned over the tooth where it now lay on a rubber-lined metal tray atop the lab table. “It’s possible this is fresh blood, but an ancient tooth, and we’re all just jumping to conclusions because we’re...”

“Jumpy?” Stella said, making a lame attempt at a joke.

Kitty gave a wan smile, then squinted more closely at the tooth.

“Make me a liar?” she said to Bryan under her breath.

Bryan took a deep breath in, seeming to steady himself, and leaned down to join Kitty in hovering above the surface of the table.

“There was the Starving Time, yeah?” he began. “So...that would leave hypoplasia on an ancient tooth. As far as I know, Hank comes from a pretty middle-class family, so any hypoplasia present would rule him out.”

Kitty nodded. Working with plant remains for most of her professional life had exposed her to another sub-field of archaeology on a regular basis: bioarchaeology, or the study of human remains in archaeological settings. When bones and teeth are discovered in ancient or historic excavations, a great deal could be learned about the people to whom those remains belonged that would allow scientists to put together pieces of the puzzle that the other artifacts hinted at but didn't explain.

“Oh, Dr. Brown,” said Ruth, her eyes alight. “What's hypo-whatever mean?”

Bryan closed his eyes again, and Kitty could see that dealing with both Ruth and Greg in the space of ten minutes might be enough to do him in.

“When malnutrition or disease affects an individual, and we often see this in prehistory or early colonial history,” Kitty jumped in, “the enamel forming on the developing adult teeth would stop growing.

This meant that as a youngster was developing, and their adult teeth were forming in the gums, if bodies lacked the nutrition to correctly create the outermost layer of the tooth, it shows a band of pits and grooves where the enamel wasn't created, like a gap in the enamel where there just wasn't enough food coming in for the body to even make it.”

Ruth looked appalled. Brandon looked intrigued.

Kitty continued, “The tooth would appear to have a faint stripe running horizontal across the body of the tooth and documenting the period of time when there wasn't enough food or when the individual was significantly ill.”

“How can you know that?” Stella asked.

Kitty told her, “You know that I study human and plant interactions, right? My specialty is how human groups in ancient times used plants, for all kinds of reasons, but the biggest one is always...”

“Dude, eating!” Brandon interjected.

Kitty nodded. “From studying agriculture and the transition away from hunter-gatherer groups in prehistory, we know that hypoplasia was not something seen in populations where the people were constantly struggling for food or living hungry all the time--if that were the case, the teeth would be uniformly damaged, not just in segments, like a hypoplasia. What Dr. Brown is talking about is specifically a sign of healthy individuals who were suddenly thrust into circumstances where

they could not get enough to eat.

“Of course,” Kitty turned to Bryan, still holding the tooth under the microscope as she spoke, “that would only apply if we were talking about someone who was a child during the Starving Time, and from what we know, there were no children present at Jamestown then.”

“So even if there is hypoplasia, it might not be Hank?” Bryan asked, some measure of disappointment in his voice. He’d clearly been hoping for a quick solution to rule out their crew member.

“But it doesn’t matter,” Kitty said, turning the tooth over in her hands and bringing it under the microscope lens so she could magnify it for the camera. “No hypoplasia present.”

Bryan sighed.

“What about bone isotopes?” Kitty asked, looking up from her position close to the table top, her eyebrows raised in question.

Bryan nodded. “Sure, we have the equipment here. Well, the Archaeological Virginia office does, anyway.”

“Will they let us use it?” Kitty asked him.

Bryan shrugged. “Sure, I don’t think they can stop us. It’s in our research charter. Greg just wants to see the results, but he’s can’t actually prevent us from sharing their tools. He feels that anything discovered or even examined on equipment funded by his organization

should by rights go first to AV, then to the individual researcher.”

Kitty stood up straight, still holding the tooth.

“So, he always wants to share your results?” Kitty’s expression was calculating.

Bryan made a pained face. He shrugged again, an almost helpless look on his face. He glanced nervously around at the crew members, who had been watching closely the entire time and were hanging on every word. Brandon in particular had a hungry look on his face, as if any hint of drama would be his next meal.

Kitty picked up on Bryan’s discomfort and seemed to realize for the first time that they had an audience--and that maybe it wasn’t such a great idea. Adopting an air of authority, she turned to face all of them, still holding the tooth in her gloved hand.

“Alright, so what we know is that we have a tooth, and we don’t know whose it is. We also don’t know yet where Hank is, but that doesn’t mean by definition that the two are related, right?”

The group nodded.

“So, with that in mind, everyone, here’s what I’d like you to do: Stella, go with Ruth and see if you can find Hank. You said you saw him last when he left the site and came into the Archaearium, right?”

Both women nodded. Stella wiped her nose on her sleeve. Ruth puffed out her chest and began literally rolling up her sleeves, as

if ready for a fight. Or a full day of scrubbing floors.

“Alright, so search the offices and labs here in the building first, and see if he’s here. For all we know, he’s taking a nap in one of the empty cubicles and everyone is getting worked up over nothing.”

Brandon let out a soft scoff. “Nap? Not a chance.”

Kitty looked at him, questioning.

“That guy? Come on, Doc,” Brandon said incredulously. “Hank was, like, the ultimate Eagle Scout. If he’s off in a cubicle someplace, he’s doing push ups and, I don’t know, curing cancer. For free.”

The look on Brandon’s face said this was the ultimate in foolishness.

Stella gave him a hard stare. “So what? So what if he’s a nice guy? Just because he can do more push ups than you, you’re going to make fun of him?”

Brandon rounded on her, his hand reflexively forming a fist, standing very close to her and his face inches from her face.

He took a deep breath and steadied himself, but he didn’t back away from Stella’s face as he told her, “I don’t care how many jumping jacks he can do, I care that he spends all his time making the rest of us look bad. I bet Wood didn’t even ask him for help, I bet that loser OFFERED.”

Now it was Ruth’s turn to sniff, this time in contempt. “Speak

for yourself, sour grapes.”

Brandon shifted only his eyes over at the older woman, whose face wore a haughty expression.

Stella whispered bravely, “Jealous.”

Brandon blew air out his nose, then abruptly wheeled on his heel and stalked away to the other side of the lab table where he promptly adopted an air of studied indifference.

Bryan spoke up, breaking the tension.

“Hank is a really great kid,” he told Kitty. “He works hard, he pays attention. I’m sure if he’s not here, he’s somewhere...”

“Being great?” Brandon interjected sarcastically, then returned to pretending the others didn’t exist. He turned his head as if to stare out the window, but the pitch black of the night outside only reflected the bright lights of the lab back on the glass, leaving Brandon staring at his own reflection. He didn’t look away.

Bryan shrugged lamely, looking relieved not to be making eye contact with Brandon, who let another soft scoff escape from his lips.

“Brandon,” Kitty said to him, “I’d like you to take the tooth down to the isotopic analysis lab and get Dr. Wood to process it for us.”

Brandon made a face revealing inconvenience.

“He’s not going to like it,” he told her in clipped tones, still not looking at her. “Guy’s a butt.”

“It’s late, I know,” Kitty said, pretending not to understand Brandon’s implication that Wood had other reasons for wanting to avoid helping Bryan and his crew. “But see if you can use your charm to sweet talk him. Something tells me he likes you more than the rest of us? I’ve heard you’re an excellent negotiator.”

Preening with the compliment and praise, Brandon reached reluctantly for the tooth Kitty offered him, now securely sealed into a small zippered plastic bag.

“I’ll see what I can do,” he told her, importantly.

If he hadn’t been so tall, Kitty would have sworn based on Brandon’s behavior in the past ten minutes that he was in the third grade, max.

As the three filed away out of the lab, Kitty turned back to Bryan, whose face was flushed and sweaty. Now that they were alone, he relaxed a fraction and faced her, eyes closed.

“It’s kinda been a thing, I guess,” he said apologetically. “Not because of me, mind you, you know I hate confrontation.”

Kitty made a wry face at the understatement. Bryan waved it away with a slight roll of his eyes.

“It’s that he wants to see the results FIRST, you know? Like, we send off artifacts for analysis and Greg doesn’t want us to read the

report before he does.”

“Do you think that’s a little...weird?” Kitty asked him.

Bryan appeared to struggle internally for a moment before finally bursting out, “It really...pisses me off!”

Kitty laughed aloud at this. “Good for you, Brown!”

Bryan’s face was chagrined at his own momentary surrender of control, but he continued by saying, “We found some ceramics last week, you saw them,” he told her, gesturing to the stacked racks of trays against the wall.

“And we sent them over to use their isotopic analysis equipment to characterize the lead pigment.”

Kitty nodded at this. Isotopic analysis, the chemical examination of the composition of an item, could reveal the diet of an individual, or the likely geographic source of a particular paint found on a broken piece of ceramic plate. She knew that Bryan had hoped to learn if a particular piece of pottery was painted in England, for example, or made in the New World, or if it had another source altogether, like Amsterdam, which would imply that it arrived in Jamestown by trade with the Dutch. Knowing the specific geographic source of even the tiniest piece of a broken plate would tell the archaeologists quite a lot about the trade patterns, what crafts were being practiced inside

Jamestown settlement, and how soon the colony had transitioned from being reliant on England for every single item in the village to sustaining themselves with the work of their own hands. Made in the USA, as it were.

“So he says he’ll do the analysis, no problem, right?” Brown continued. “But then we follow up a full week later, thinking he just forgot to hand over the report, and he won’t give it up. Says he hasn’t had time to read it yet.”

“Did you think that was a little weird?” she asked.

“Kitty,” Bryan said, all nervousness gone, “I thought it was really weird. Seriously.”

Kitty tilted her head to one side. “I mean, he has some stake in the data, right?”

Bryan shook his head, looking into her eyes. “Yeah, but not like this. He has a stake in the research that comes out of any excavation on the site, I’ll give you that, but what does he care about the raw data?”

“Unless,” Kitty said simply.

“Unless,” Bryan nodded.

“You think he might be trying to leapfrog you?”

Bryan’s eyes welled up slightly and he bit his lip again. Kitty

gave him a warning look, and he fanned his face with one hand.

Once he’d gotten himself together, he told her, “This site is so rich. You know that, Kitty. Twenty years ago, everyone who knew anything about Jamestown told William Kelso that he was insane--there he is, an unknown scientist who insists that the original fort didn’t wash away like everyone said it did, and he pushes and he pushes to get permission to dig, and they finally give it to him, laughing behind their hands the entire time.”

Kitty knew the story. Knew the anecdote about the scientist kneeling alone, in the middle of an undisturbed green grassy lawn, just a trowel and a screen, digging a hole. Then a mother and a child walked past and the child asked what the man was doing--the mother, according to the now-legendary story, told her son to “Come away, darling,” because clearly this was a crazy man digging for imaginary treasure.

But he hadn’t been crazy. He’d been right.

“So then he uncovers evidence, real evidence, that the entire fort is still here,” Bryan went on, passionately, no tears in sight. “He finds post molds from the very timbers that built the walls of the first Jamestowne fort 400 years ago, and he’s vindicated.”

His face was flushed again, but this time with excitement, and

Kitty could see the fervor in his eyes. “There is so much left to learn! And I’d be lying if I said I didn’t think it was a career-making site. So if someone steals data, or even gets to it first and leapfrogs me to publish...”

“Then they’d get all the credit,” Kitty said, nodding knowledgeably. Academics might look like an ivory tower from the outside, but they were all back-stabbing and rancor on the inside. And Kitty knew full well that university groups got far more credit in academic circles than privately-funded researchers--giving Greg an even greater motivation for getting at raw data before Bryan had the chance.

Brandon came into the lab then, somewhat laconically, looking like a man who had conquered a great task.

Kitty turned her attention to him, expecting him to speak, but Brandon simply stood in front of the two scientists, holding a piece of printer paper and basking in their combined attention.

Kitty sighed. “Yes, Brandon?”

He gave her the upward tick of the chin that she’d noticed when they first met, then said with a gesture toward the paper he was holding, “I got you some results.”

His chest puffed out a bit as he said it.

Kitty waited.

Brandon smiled slowly.

It was late. Kitty was tired. She’d started out her day with the increasing pressure of her Itch building behind her eyelids, the minute-to-minute work of resisting temptation, the distraction of her tools in her pocket calling to her in their siren song. By evening, she’d known it was going to overwhelm her, even as she’d tried to fight it. In the end, she’d gotten her release, and then WHAM! Just when she was at her most relaxed, she’d been hit with this mystery. She couldn’t decide now if it was helpful to be in a relaxed state, or if she’d have been better off avoiding the locks. Maybe if she’d known there was a mystery waiting for her inside the building, she never would have left the parking lot, and she would have turned all that tension and energy into getting to the bottom of this.

Or maybe there WAS no mystery, and this was just the case of some high school field trip where a kid lost a tooth and Hank was fine and it was a big misunderstanding.

But Kitty’s gut told her otherwise.

Trying to be patient with Brandon’s constant need for affirmation, Kitty asked him, “And what were they, Brandon?”

He shook the paper in front of his face and squinted, like someone who needs reading glasses but won’t get them.

“Yeah, so he was a jerk about it, but he gave it a rush or whatever,” Brandon told her as he scanned the lines of type. “He wanted you

to come get it, but I turned on the old charm and he handed it over.”

He grinned as if he’d solved the Cuban Missile Crisis with his left bicep.

“And he said to read this part to you: analysis reveals dietary evidence of high quantities of C3 plants, with a likely origin in the mid-western states.”

Bryan looked at Kitty.

“So what does that mean?” Brandon asked.

“Plants high in C3 are like wheat or rice,” Kitty told him, closing her eyes and thinking quickly. “And plants high in C4 include corn.”

“And what, you can tell what people ate just from their teeth? That’s wild!”

The glint in Brandon’s eye made her think that there was something beneath the surface more than the bully she’d seen so far. He sounded genuinely interested, and she softened toward him somewhat.

“Right, exactly,” she told him. “Here in Jamestown, we would expect the human remains to show evidence of a diet high in corn, very high, in fact. Corn was THE staple crop for these settlers for at least the first ten years they were in Virginia.”

“But this says…” he referred back to the paper. “This says high in C3.”

“Right. Most modern diets are high in C3 plants, because so much of our food is produced from wheat, even things you don’t think

of. Everything from bread to tortillas to breakfast cereal. So while an individual might eat a corn, and there is a large amount of corn in our diets today, there’s far more wheat.”

“So…this isn’t a tooth from a Jamestown settler,” Brandon said, sounding like he was working it out. “Right?”

Kitty nodded, and looked over at Bryan again, who was staring steadily at his hands.

“And wait!” Brandon said quickly. “It wouldn’t be an Indian either, would it? Because that’s where the settlers learned to grow corn.”

“Native American, and yes, that’s correct,” Kitty said.

Brandon chewed on this for a moment.

“Then…whose tooth did we just drill into?” he asked.

“Hank is from Madison, Wisconsin,” Bryan said softly.

Suddenly, the lab door burst open, and this time it wasn’t Greg with a box full of papers.

“We found him!” Stella said in a voice strangled with tears. “We found Hank!”

Kitty and Bryan both snapped their heads around, and Bryan let out a choked sound. His face went pale.

“Where is he, Stella?” Kitty asked urgently.

Stella froze against the door frame just as Ruth came into view, and the older woman caught her up in a massive hug.

“Oh, you poor thing! Bless your heart, you must be so scared, I mean, that was QUITE a sight, and I don’t blame you a bit. You just cry all you want, honey, you let it all out, now.”

Ruth patted Stella’s heaving shoulders with her hand and made eye contact with Kitty. She shook her head sadly.

“He’s in the copy room, Dr. Campbell,” she said in a loud whisper, as if keeping a secret but not very well.

Bryan looked back and forth between Kitty and Ruth, and asked with an edge of panic in his voice, “And he’s OK, right? Isn’t he?”

Again Ruth shook her head sadly, as Stella’s weeping increased in volume.

“I don’t see how he could be, Dr. Brown, not bent in half and stuffed behind the Xerox machine like that, anyway.”

She went on patting Stella’s shoulders as Kitty pushed past them both into the hall.

“Bryan!” Kitty called out behind her as she took off down the corridor.

Brown stood still, pale as a ghost and a hand frozen halfway to his mouth. It was quivering, and it appeared that only the other hand he had placed on the lab table near the magnifying camera was keeping him from collapsing to the floor.

“Bryan!” called Kitty again. “I need you to come with me to the

copy room.”

Brown didn’t seem to register what she was saying.

“Bryan!” Kitty said once more, this time with a hint of anger in her voice. “He’s your student! Let’s go!”

Brown snapped out of his paralysis and moved through molasses to get to the door and join Kitty in the hallway. She led the way at a rapid pace down the tiled corridor and through a pair of double doors marked “Administrative Wing.”

The two hustled past offices, some doors open and others closed, and headed deeper into the darkened building.