

## The Murder of Cambridge, 1957

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One average day in Cambridge, England, everyone was going about their day as per-usual, including the village fuss-maker Olive Kennedy. Olive was the daughter of Bill K. Kennedy, one of the wealthiest men in the city and a relative of John F. Kennedy, who had his eyes on the prize of becoming the President of the United States of America.

Olive, at 61 years old, was known to be tenacious, feisty, quick-witted, knowledgeable and versatile. She was also very kind and big-hearted. On that day in 1957 - which turned out not to be so average after all - Olive would find herself relying on all of her personality traits.

There was a commotion in town. Everybody was rushing to the Allansford Estate. Olive was there in minutes.

"Let me through, let me through," Olive said urgently. But Olive was not allowed beyond the yellow police tape. "What's happened?" she asked in frustration.

"Unfortunately, Lady Allansford has passed away," a police officer explained in a solemn tone. "It looks like the poor old dear slipped and fell down the stairs."

Olive found this scenario hard to believe as her good friend, Beatrice Allansford, was one of the most spritely and sure-footed people she knew. It was very unlikely she would have tripped on her own stairs after spending the last 40 years of her life walking up and down them without a bother. Olive was certain things were not as simple as the policeman had assumed.

Olive had visited Beatrice numerous times and knew that there was a back entrance to the estate. As she crept along the hedge towards the hidden gate, she bumped into Beatrice's son Edward, who she overheard talking to himself.

"I'll kill him. The lying cheat has done this. He's caused her to kill herself. Just wait til I find him," Edward was muttering through his tears. He stopped as soon as he saw Olive. He tried to explain himself by saying that he was leaving the back way to avoid the crowds and media who were gathered out the front. He hurried off. Olive thought his behaviour was most odd.

Olive crept to the back door and let herself in. She could hear loud sobbing. She followed the cries through the house, first through the kitchen, then the breakfast room, then the dining room and finally the lounge room. She stopped at the open lounge room door and gasped quietly to herself.

There on the cold, hard floor at the bottom of the foyer stairs was Beatrice, still wearing her pyjamas and dressing gown. There was a curious brown stain on the front of her gown near her neck, but apart from that, she looked like she was asleep. This troubled Olive. How could she look so peaceful, her body so relaxed, when she had fallen down the stairs? Surely she would be bruised. Wouldn't her legs and arms be crooked and broken? Where was the blood?

Suddenly, a police woman saw her.

"Hey, who are you?" she asked.

The sobbing stopped and a young woman, Beatrice's daughter Scarlet, turned to see who the female detective was talking to.

"Mrs Kennedy, what are you doing here? Mother didn't say you were visiting today," Scarlet said.

"No, I just heard the terrible news and felt I should come," Olive replied.

"Well you shouldn't have. No one's allowed in here. We're waiting for forensics. I'll have you escorted out," the detective said.

"I'm so sorry for your loss, Scarlet. I'll miss your mother terribly," Olive said kindly.

"So will I, Mrs Kennedy. I can't believe she's really gone."

"Where is your father? Why isn't Augustus here?" Olive asked.

"I don't know. He was meant to be here. He was meant to be having breakfast with me today," Scarlet said sourly.

A policeman took Olive by the arm. Olive took one last look at her old friend's body and knew that she had most certainly not fallen down the stairs. As the police officer escorted her towards the back door, Olive again walked through the breakfast room. She noticed that a cup of coffee had been spilled on the table. Quick-witted Olive pretended that she needed to sneeze.

"Excuse me officer, may I take one of these napkins to blow my nose, please?"

The officer nodded and Olive reached for a napkin from the table. She blew her nose and then, smiling innocently, reached for another serviette which she sneakily dipped in the coffee. She carefully placed that serviette in her pocket.

As soon as Olive got home, she was greeted by Biscuit, a cocker-spaniel-basset-hound-cross who was the most trustworthy companion Olive had ever known. She thanked her lucky stars that the day she went to adopt a former war veteran dog, Biscuit's was the first face she saw. The basset hound in Biscuit had given him an extremely sensitive nose, which had been put to good use as a poison detector in the army.

Olive laid the napkin on the grass and asked Biscuit to sniff it. Biscuit immediately started barking furiously.

"I knew it!" Olive exclaimed. "Beatrice was poisoned. Her death was staged. But by who?"

Olive made herself a cup of tea and sat in the sun by her prettiest roses as she thought about the evidence. This was her favourite part - solving the crimes. But she was sad that this crime involved her good friend.

The murderer couldn't have been Edward because he thought Beatrice had thrown herself down the stairs. Who was the lying cheat he was talking about? It must have been Augustus, Beatrice's husband. But he can't have been the killer because he wasn't at the house, even though Scarlet had thought he would be.

"Oh no, not Scarlet? But why?" Olive thought. She sipped her tea and shook her head sadly at Biscuit. "I'll have to go back to the house."

Olive crept through the hidden back gate at the Allansford Estate and saw Scarlet crying under a tree. She walked over to her and put her arm around Scarlet's shoulders.

"What have I done, Mrs Kennedy?" Scarlet sobbed.

"I'm not sure Scarlet, do you want to tell me?"

"Augustus, dad, was going to leave us and marry a much younger woman. He wanted us to move out. We were going to be left with nothing, after everything mother has done for him. He was meant to be having breakfast with me today and he was meant to drink the poisoned coffee, but I went to get dressed and when I came back, mother had already drunk it and was dead. I didn't know what to do. Everyone thinks she fell down the stairs, but I killed her. How am I going to live with that?"

Olive looked sadly at Scarlet.

"I don't know my dear, I don't know."

The End