

*Enjoy a short preview of the next Mind Writing chapter, as the full chapter will be coming to Patreon in early December, and will go public sometime in the month.*

*I've had a great deal of fun writing this series, and the feedback and support that I've been given has been huge. Some comments I've received off the back of Chapter 03 - Shona was to include further use of the gift, so this chapter deals more heavily with that. And, of course, how Jamie's powers affect the people around him, and the temptation he feels when faced with a difficult situation.*

*The preview here isn't too racy, but it sets up a few situations that will be delivered upon in the finished piece. Enjoy!*

*Love, Iri x*

---

*-- Part 4 - Holly --*

I focused on mum and the *guy* - bringing their honesty up, and up, and up. No hiding *anything* from me. Fuck, I could feel anger eating at me, daring me to go further. Because I could go further. So much further.

But I held back - every problem I'd had so far was because I had gone too far with my gift, and I was about to start throwing shit at the wall when this could be nothing.

As I approached, my mum clocked me, pushing the man aside a little. Too little too late.

'What's going on?' I asked, knowing their *honesty* would pull out details.

'Jamie,' my mum started. I took after her - dark hair, dark eyes, all that. The face she wore, the expression she chose, it was almost pitiful. 'I'm so sorry, we should have told you sooner, but, me and your father, we didn't know how. We're separated.'

I let out a breath, my attention shifting to the man at her side. 'Who's he?'

'Dan,' she said. 'Your father and I, we've been...' she hesitated, but my gift was more powerful than her shame. 'Swinging. For years. And, we met a couple. Dan and Holly. We've fallen in love, as have your father and Holly.'

'So... what, you've fucking *swapped!*?' I asked, incredulous.

Dan nodded. 'This shouldn't have been how we met, Jamie.'

'Shut up,' I said, using my gift to lock that order in. His mouth clapped shut, and I pushed my mum for details. 'What... how long has this been a *thing*?'

She thought about it. 'A few months, on or off, when you were still in school - Erin still is, of course. Your father, he and Holly started things off behind our backs, and then me and Dan found each other for comfort. It was... ignorable at first, but I couldn't put it aside any more. I love Dan, Jamie, and he cares for me in ways your father hasn't bothered with for years.'

I laughed, incapable of believing what I was hearing. 'Six months? Am I that *thick* that I didn't see this happening for *six months*?'

‘Well, we’ve been discreet, darling. And you’ve been busy with Ali, and then organising school, and I know you and that girl Hannah from your work have started something up.’

How she knew that, I had no idea.

I staggered back, seeing Dan’s hand in my mother’s. ‘I need space,’ I said.

Mum nodded. ‘We still love you, Jamie - this has nothing to do with how your father or I feel about *you*.’

But I wasn’t listening. I just walked away, before the temptation to use my gift on anyone else took over.

With a final breath of clear-headedness, I removed the ‘shut up’ order on Dan, and walked away, through the village, away from that fucking mess.

I didn’t care where.

Following my feet, I found myself wandering back towards Shona’s house - interesting that my instinct wasn’t to call it Ali’s house anymore - but I knew she was out working. So, I sat on the wall of her front garden, and stared up at the cloudy sky, trying to process.

*Separated.*

*Swingers.*

*Dan.*

*Holly.*

I was irate. I could feel it, in my gut. Not just angry. Positively *fuming*. How could they keep this sort of thing from me?! How could I be so *dense* as to miss it? And who the *fuck* was Erin?!

My entire childhood, they’d seemed so happy. And, sure, they were working late or taking trips - but I thought they were just getting ready to no longer have me in the house. Parents to a single child, I figured it was going to be a big life change for all of us. I tried not to overthink it.

Clearly I wound up under-thinking it.

I scoured my memory for a ‘Dan and Holly’. Whether their names had been mentioned for Christmas cards, or as part of a birthday party or something. Had they *ever* appeared in my life, even in passing?

I didn’t know Dan’s face, but that didn’t mean I’d *never* met him.

My phone buzzed, pulling me out of my stupor. Hannah had messaged me again.

*You coming?'*

I sighed. Might as well. It’ll distract me at least. Allow me to process the new world. Everything was changing, and quickly. Soon enough I wouldn’t even be here to watch my parents split. To watch *Dan* move in, or *Holly*. Whichever.

At that moment, I decided. I hated them.

I walked to work, my chest tight and my feet fast, barely looking up as I barrelled through the quiet country lanes, the grass and mountains in the distance sullied by the incoming rain. Nothing was beautiful today.

When I arrived, Hannah spotted me through the glass doors, and rushed out to me. I was a little confused - the place looked dead, but she was flustered.

‘Hey,’ she said, pulling me in by the hand. Usually I would be taken aback by such a casual thing - we weren’t *together*, so for her to hold my hand was a bit... familiar. At least in public. Not that anyone was here, I supposed.

‘Hi,’ I said as she took me to the counter. ‘What’s going on, then?’

She nodded towards Cooke’s office door - closed. ‘He’s been in there all morning.’

‘That’s not unusual, to be fair.’

But Hannah shook her head. ‘You should have seen how he looked at me, Jamie. And, you know, I’ve seen him look at me before. Creep. But this was different.’

‘Different how?’ I asked, feeling my anger - which, on the walk had just started to abate - fire up again.

She sighed. ‘I don’t even know. But... it was more than just a leer. He was drinking me in, Jamie. And, then, he locked himself in the back office and hasn’t come out. And I’ve heard...’ She stopped, hesitating.

‘What?’

‘Grunting. I’m serious, I think he’s getting himself off in there and I can’t... I can’t work for that fucking guy if he’s gonna lock himself in the office and snap one off over me, Jamie I just can’t.’