

CHAPTER 7: JAMESON

Jameson Hawthorne slips away from his family and security to visit Ian Johnstone-Jameson, a man he believes to be his father, at an upscale London residence. Despite the opulence of the building and the guarded demeanor of its security, Jameson gains entry using an invitation card. The encounter is charged with tension as Jameson, driven by curiosity rather than emotional need, prepares to engage in a psychological duel with Ian. The lavish flat, adorned with artwork and marked by a stark black "B" in the marble foyer, sets the stage for their meeting.

Ian, a man in his mid-forties with an air of amusement, greets Jameson with a mix of familiarity and detachment. Their physical resemblance is noted, but Jameson remains guarded, refusing to reveal any vulnerability. Ian proposes a game: three questions from Jameson in exchange for answering one of his own. This exchange underscores the power dynamics at play, with both men testing each other's boundaries. Jameson's first question—about Ian's motives—reveals Ian's pursuit of pleasure, challenge, and victory, mirroring traits Jameson recognizes in himself.

The conversation delves deeper as Jameson probes Ian's definition of winning, uncovering his profession as a professional poker player and his strained relationship with his family. Ian's casual admission that his family is unaware of Jameson's existence stings, but Jameson masks his reaction. He strategically avoids asking about Ian's brothers, focusing instead on gathering leverage. The chapter highlights Jameson's sharp intuition as he deciphers Ian's tells, recognizing the man's carefully constructed facade of indifference.

As the encounter unfolds, Jameson reaffirms his self-reliance, drawing strength from his Hawthorne identity. The chapter captures the psychological chess match between father and son, with neither willing to concede emotional ground. Jameson's calculated demeanor and Ian's playful yet evasive responses create a tense atmosphere, leaving

readers anticipating the next move in their high-stakes game. The chapter ends with Jameson poised to ask his final question, hinting at deeper revelations to come.

