

Five Fingers Make A Fist

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INT. PARENTS' BEDROOM - EARLY 1990S - NIGHT

A cot sits in the bedroom opposite an empty bed. Within it lies the newborn JESSICA, crying. The door opens slowly. The sounds of a TV downstairs becomes more apparent and in steps MONIKA (3 years old, dark hair) holding a pair of scissors.

Monika walks up to the cot, glaring at Jessica. She reaches down and places the baby's fingers in the scissors' jaws. She pushes down, cutting the fingers off.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

ANNE and STEVEN (early 30s) sit on the sofa, watching a 1990s television. Jessica's screaming comes up from above. Monika enters, still holding the scissors in her bloody hands.

ANNE

Hi, love. Is Jessica keeping you up? She'll stop soon.

Monika begins to cry.

ANNE

Monika? What's wrong?

STEVEN

You alright, Monika?

ANNE

Oh, god Steven. There's blood all over her hands!

Steven jumps up and checks if Monika is hurt.

STEVEN

Shit. Where did you get these, Monika. You can't play with things like that. Where are you hurt?

ANNE

Steven, what has she done!

Monika continues to cry along with Jessica upstairs. Steven looks at the scissors and then again at Monika. He runs upstairs.

ANNE

Monika, what's wrong? Where are you hurt? Tell me! Monika, I need you to tell me!

Steven comes back down, holding Jessica.

STEVEN
Get in the car Anne, now.

ANNE
What's happening?

STEVEN
Get in the car!

INT/EXT - CAR/STREET - PRESENT DAY- DAY

Monika (now 28) drives down a typical London suburb road, surrounded by houses. The 3-year old-Monika's wails and Jessica's screams echo whilst she continues down the road.

Monika stops outside a Victorian terrace house. She takes a deep breath before stepping out of the car.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Monika, suitcase in hand, knocks on the door.

Anne (50s) answers.

ANNE
Oh, Monika. I thought you were coming tomorrow.

MONIKA
Oh, no it was today.

ANNE
Well... Come in.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Monika enters the house. The two awkwardly hug.

MONIKA
So, mum. How have you been?

ANNE
Oh, you know. Can't complain. How was the journey?

MONIKA
Alright.

ANNE
I'll take you upstairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR - DAY

Anne emerges from the staircase followed by Monika. Steven (50s) sits in the parents' bedroom at a desk with papers, the door open to the staircase.

ANNE

Steven, darling? Monika's here.

MONIKA

Hi, dad.

STEVEN

(looking up)

Oh...hello. I thought you were coming tomorrow.

MONIKA

Yeah...there seems to have been a misunderstanding.

Steven does not say anything.

ANNE

It's okay, though. Come this way.

As Anne and Monika continue down the corridor they pass a room full of boxes.

MONIKA

Am I not staying in my old room?

ANNE

Well it hasn't been a bedroom for quite a while now, you leaving the nest and all. We turned Jessica's room into a guest bedroom.

INT. JESSICA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Anne and Monika enter a bright room decorated in pink and purple. Pictures of a teenage Jessica and her friends still occupy space on the cupboards and desk.

ANNE

Here we are.

MONIKA

Thanks.

ANNE

Oh, by the way. Jessica and her boyfriend are coming for dinner.

MONIKA
Boyfriend?

ANNE
Yes, Tony. He's very nice. We
thought you were coming tomorrow
so...

MONIKA
It's alright. It'll be good to see
Jessica.

ANNE
Lovely. Anyway... I'll leave you to
it.

Anne goes to leave.

MONIKA
Thanks for letting me stay, mum.

ANNE
Don't worry about it. Monika... I
know you don't really tell us about
your life but... Are you and
David...

MONIKA
Yeah, he's gone.

ANNE
But what happe-

MONIKA
I don't really want to talk about
it.

ANNE
Okay.

Anne leaves. Monika starts to unpack but gets distracted by
the pictures on the desk.

INT. MONIKA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Monika steps into the room, crammed with boxes and junk. In
contrast to Jessica's room, there is no evidence that
anybody used to live there.

The muffled sound of voices can be heard through the wall.
Monika presses her ear to it.

STEVEN

But how long is she staying?

ANNE

I don't know, Steven, she didn't say. Try to be nice to her. I think she went through quite a lot in Manchester.

STEVEN

Hmmm, does Jessica know she's here?

Monika stops listening and sits on a box.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. 1990S MONIKA'S BEDROOM - DAY

The room is now occupied with a bed and various furnishings for a young girl. Ripped out drawn pictures are stuck to the wall. A 6-year-old Monika sits at her desk, drawing. The 3-year-old Jessica toddles in.

JESSICA

What you doing?

MONIKA

Go away.

Jessica walks up to the desk. Monika looks at her mangled right hand before focusing back on drawing.

JESSICA

Drawing.

Monika tries to ignore Jessica.

JESSICA

Are you right handed or left?

MONIKA

Right.

JESSICA

I'm left. Can I draw too?

Reluctantly, Monika gives Jessica a pencil. She then rips out her drawing and sticks it on the wall with blue tack where it joins the other drawings.

JESSICA

Why do you rip them out?

MONIKA
I'm not allowed scissors.

Anne enters.

ANNE
Jessica, why don't you come with me?

JESSICA
I'm drawing.

ANNE
Come with me, Jessica.

Jessica gets up and joins Anne. Monika and Anne's glances meet. Anne takes Jessica by the hand and walks her out. Monika goes back to her drawing.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. MONIKA'S BEDROOM - DAY

28-year-old Monika sits on the box, staring at where the desk used to be.

She spots an loose floorboard.

There is a knock at the front door.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Anne opens the door to reveal Jessica and Tony (mid 20s).

JESSICA
Hi, mum.

Jessica and Anne hug warmly.

ANNE
Hi, Jess. Hi, Tony.

JESSICA
Sorry we're late. Traffic was absolutely mad and -

Monika comes down the stairs.

JESSICA
Mon! Oh my god, how've you been! I didn't know you'd be here yet.

MONIKA
Hi, Jess.

Jessica runs up to Monika and embraces her.

JESSICA
It's been way too long.

Tony approaches. Jessica breaks the hug. Monika notices her mangled hand as she pulls away.

JESSICA
Oh, and this is Tony.

Tony extends his hand, which Monika takes. Tony smiles coldly.

TONY
Hello, Monika. I've heard a lot about you.

MONIKA
Have you?

Tony holds Jessica's mangled hand whilst keeping eye contact with Monika.

TONY
Oh yes.

Jessica does not see anything amiss.

JESSICA
Where's dad?

ANNE
Oh, he's upstairs doing something or other. Take a seat. I'll get some drinks.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The three sit down on the sofas, Monika opposite Jessica and Tony.

MONIKA
So, how long have you two been together now?

JESSICA
Oh, about 8 months or so.

TONY
Or so? Are you not counting every day?

JESSICA
I'm not that interested in us.
Sometimes I forget I know you.

Tony acts playfully hurt.

TONY
You're cruel.

MONIKA
Well you seem to get on very well.

TONY
(looking straight at
Monika)
Well I suppose I wouldn't dream of
harming her.

Steven enters the room, smiling.

STEVEN
And how is my lovely daughter,
today.

Jessica gets up and hugs her father.

JESSICA
Dad!

STEVEN
(laughing)
Hello, lovely.

He kisses her cheek. Anne enters with a wine bottle and glasses. She places it on the table and everyone takes a glass.

JESSICA
Well look. It's all the family
together again.

Following Jessica, all except Tony bring their glasses together.

STEVEN
Come on, Tony. You're part of the
family too.

Tony joins them.

JESSICA
By the way, Mon. Is David coming
down?

MONIKA
No. No he isn't.

JESSICA
Oh that's a shame. I haven't seen
him in years.

ANNE
They're not together anymore, Jess.

JESSICA
Oh no, sorry Mon.
(to Tony)
Mon and David've been together for
years. Since uni.

TONY
What happened?

MONIKA
(taken off guard)
Um... usual stuff, I guess. Nothing
specia-

TONY
But it must have been something.

JESSICA
Is David okay?

TONY
(jokingly)
Does he have all his fingers?

A pause.

ANNE
I'm just going to make the final
preparations for dinner

MONIKA
I'll give you a hand.

Anne seems like she wants to refuse Monika's help but does
not at the last second. The two leave for the kitchen.

Jessica hits Tony in the side.

JESSICA
(whisper)
Why the hell did you say that!

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Monika and Anne step into the kitchen where a saucepan boils on a hob and the oven whirs. Cheese sits on a chopping board on a counter. Anne goes over to the saucepan.

MONIKA

Shall I cut some cheese?

ANNE

...alright.

Monika picks up a knife and starts to cut the cheese.

ANNE

Are-are you...still seeing your psychiatrist?

MONIKA

No.

ANNE

Are you sure that's wise?

MONIKA

I don't need a psychiatrist. That's all ages ago.

ANNE

Yes but-

Monika turns around to face Anne,

MONIKA

Do you think I would do something like that, now?

She turns back to the cheese

ANNE

Okay. Sorry, I only wanted to..

MONIKA

I know.

ANNE

Bring the cheese into the dining room when you're ready.

Anne leaves as Tony enters.

TONY

Are you allowed to use knives then?

MONIKA

I take it Jess has told you that

(MORE)

MONIKA (CONT'D)

story, then.

TONY

It's a pretty big thing not to tell someone. Not something you can really hide.

MONIKA

I guess not.

TONY

Did you tell your ex what you did?

MONIKA

No.

TONY

I suppose you can do that. You don't have to live with it every day. You can just go on with your life like nothing ever happened.

MONIKA

You seem to be being pretty judgemental on somebody you've only just met.

TONY

Well I think your actions give you quite an introduction.

MONIKA

You're not wrong there.

TONY

I'm quite a good judge of people and, from your reputation, it's pretty obvious what you are.

MONIKA

Listen, mate. You're not really telling me anything I haven't heard before.

TONY

Good. 'cos it's all true. Jess sent me in here to apologise but I wanted to make sure we're on the same page.

MONIKA

Oh definitely. You don't like me. I don't like you much either, but

(MORE)

MONIKA (CONT'D)

don't worry. I won't cut you up.

Monika fake smiles at him. Tony leaves.

INT. 1990S CLASSROOM - DAY

The fourteen-year-old Monika sits at a row of tables in a maths class surrounded by other students. They use compasses to solve the problems as the teacher drones on.

A boy the row in front, Ahmed, turns round to face Monika.

AHMED

(whisper)

Hey, Monika. Is it true you chopped
your sister's fingers off?

Monika flushes deep scarlet. Chris (shirt untucked, tie barely done), the boy sitting next to her, starts.

CHRIS

What?

AHMED

When her sister was a baby. She cut
all her fingers off!

MONIKA

Shut up.

CHRIS

That's sick.

MONIKA

Shut up!

CHRIS

You are some messed up girl. How
could you do that to a baby?

More and more students are turning their attention to the conversation.

SCHOOLGIRL

What did she do?

CHRIS

She cut a baby's hands off.

Tears start to well up in Monika's eyes.

Chris pokes his compass into Monika's fingers.

CHRIS
Was it sort of like this.

MONIKA
SHUT UP!

Monika snatches Chris' compass out of his hands and stabs it into his arm.

TEACHER
Monika!

Monika removes the compass. A red "O" begins to bloom on Chris' white shirt. Monika looks up at the teacher, as shocked as he is.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Monika enters holding the board with different cheeses and places it on the table which already has a variety of starters already, including a plate of bruschetta.

Monika sits down opposite Jessica and Tony, next to Anne. Steven sits at the head of the table.

JESSICA
But that's not the point. The prison system is supposed to be about reform, not punishment. if you kill them, that's not doing any good.

STEVEN
You say that but if somebody did that to you, I would want to see them punished.

JESSICA
But justice should be impartial, otherwise it's just revenge.

MONIKA
What are you talking about?

JESSICA
Mum and dad's new MP wants to bring back the death penalty. Dad thinks it's a great idea. Could you pass the Bruschetta?

Monika starts to hand Jessica the plate.

MONIKA

You don't think some people are
ireddee-

TONY

Watch out

Jessica steadies the plate with her mangled hand but does not grip it. Monika lets go of it before Jessica uses her other hand. The plate falls, covering Jessica in bruschetta.

MONIKA

Shit! Sorry.

TONY

Are you okay?

JESSICA

It's fine.

Jessica picks up a napkin and starts to clean up. Tony takes it from her.

JESSICA

I can do it myself, Tony.

MONIKA

I'm sorry, I thought you had the
plate. I forgot about-

STEVEN

(very calmly)

Forgot? How could you forget?

Monika looks up at her father, meeting his cool gaze.

A pause.

Monika runs out of the room.

INT. MONIKA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Monika runs into her old room. She closes the door. She walks up to the wall and then sits down with her back against it.

Monika erupts into tears, letting everything out.

After a while, there is a knock on the door. It opens revealing a sympathetic Jessica. She enters and sits beside Monika. They say nothing for a moment.

MONIKA

I'm sorry I did that to you.

JESSICA

Ah, don't worry. It's only food.
It'll come off in the wash.

MONIKA

I don't mean that.

A pause.

JESSICA

Right.

MONIKA

I don't remember doing it. I've
imagined it in all sorts of
different ways but I don't remember
what actually happened... Or why I
would do that... I was three years
old! But now I have to live with
that for the rest of my life.

Jessica stays quiet.

MONIKA

When I went to uni, nobody knew
about my past. People didn't judge
me before they knew me. I could
start again and not have to be
reminded all the time.

JESSICA

Is that why you stopped coming
back?

Monika nods.

MONIKA

Nobody would've missed me anyway.

JESSICA

I did. I was pretty angry that you
cut me out of your life.

A knock on the door and Tony appears. Jessica goes up to
him.

JESSICA

It's alright, Tony. We're just
having a chat.

TONY

Are you sure you don't want me to
stay?

JESSICA
What do you mean?

TONY
Are you sure being alone with her
is a wise move?

JESSICA
(disgusted)
Fuck off, Tony.

She closes the door on him and returns to Monika, crouching to face her.

JESSICA
When I was a kid, there was a time
when I hated you for my hand
but... That's not what comes to
mind when I think of you. You're a
different person now and... I'm
glad your back in London. I've
missed you.

MONIKA
But even mum and dad-

JESSICA
Screw mum and dad if they can't see
past that... And Tony. You are not
what you did. Anyway, now you're
around again they'll see who you
really are. Now, are you coming
back downstairs.

Monika smiles

MONIKA
Just give us a minute.

JESSICA
Okay.

Jessica leaves. Monika dries her eyes and moves towards the loose floorboard. She opens it up and reveals a pair of scissors.

6-YEAR-OLD JESSICA (OS)
Shh, I got these for you. Don't
tell mum and dad. Hide them.

Monika puts the floorboard back.

END