

Anna-Leigh Brooks



Jamie

JAMIE

THE OLDER WOMAN - BOOK THREE

ANNA-LEIGH BROOKS

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PROLOGUE

CORPORAL JAMIE O'HALLORAN HAS been in the British Army for just eight years now. He's worked hard and continues to work hard, with his sights firmly set on his next promotion to sergeant.

Originally, he'd planned to reach this accreditation within seven years of joining the Army but messed up seven years ago after his failed romance with Jess, who incidentally is now his wife.

It's been a rollercoaster ride for Jamie, spending five years away from Jess and the village she lives in, he was engaged to be married to Tara, but longed for the passion and excitement he'd experienced with Jess.

Jess and Tara are polar-opposites. Jess was 5 foot 6 inches, tall, blonde, 36 years old and divorced when Jamie met her at the tender age of 19. After their failed romance due to Jamie's one-night stand, he left the base and village Jess lived in. He was distraught and completely heartbroken by his own immature actions.

Fast-forward two years and he had started a new relationship with Tara, the younger sister of his brother-in-law Jed, who is married to Jamie's sister, Rosie.

Tara is 19 years old, petite, 5 foot 3 inches with long blonde hair, she's known Jamie since she was 14 and it's fair to say she's been in love with him for pretty much the last five years. They formed a relationship after Rosie and Jed's wedding in May of 2022, four months before Jamie posted out to Cyprus for two years.

His romance with Tara blossomed while he was in Cyprus, so much so that he proposed to Tara a month before his posting back to the UK. He was sure he could love her; he knew he wasn't in love with her, but she was beautiful and more his age, he fancied her, that he was sure about.

Within a year of Jamie posting back to the UK, he became unsettled. He needed closure, he needed to know if Jess had moved on, married someone else or remained single; either way he needed closure.

He applied for a 12-week secondment back to his old base, the village Jess had lived in. He hoped she was still there, either way he'd decided he wasn't marrying Tara, he wasn't in love with her but he had to find out if Jess was still there and still in love with him the way he was with her.

He arrived on base for his 12-week secondment on Sunday 26th October 2025 to find Jess still lived in the village and not only was she still single, but she has a little boy Michael, who is four and half years old.

FIRST DAY NERVES

JAMIE'S WOKEN EARLIER THAN usual, his first day back with his regiment, it's been a long twelve months and an adventurous one.

He left his regiment engaged to Tara and arrived back one year later married to Jess and with two children, his son Michael who is five, soon to be six, and Charlotte who is three-months old.

Lying there cuddled into Jess, his sleeping beauty, he kisses the back of her head and pulls her in tighter, he never imagined his life would be like this, a feeling of wholeness and contentment, finally living in married quarters after spending years in the 'single blocks'.

He looks over to Charlotte in her crib sleeping peacefully, she no longer wakes for her 0500 feed she sleeps through until around 0630 which, thinking about it, gives Jess an extra hour and a half sleep, Smiling to himself as he thinks about this, it still amazes him how much sleep Jess gets or, more to the point, how deep a sleeper Jess is considering most mornings he's up and

back from his usual five to eight-mile run before Jess has even stirred, let alone realised he's left the house.

The mornings are dark, typical November weather, the new base is lovely, in the county of Wiltshire, with open countryside, it's exactly how Fred described it to him, although a few more houses and probably a new town has been built since he was here in 1987–1989, but the base is still the same.

The house they now live in on married quarters is a fairly big one for a three bedroom, Michael has his bedroom decorated already with his dinosaur wallpaper, curtains and bedding, Jamie made sure his room was done first, to help him settle in quicker.

Charlotte's room, the box room, is being painted this coming weekend. She's moving in there now, although Jamie feels a little apprehensive about it, Jess assures him, "She'll be fine, she sleeps through the night, now's the time for her own room," they have a state of the art baby monitor, with a TV screen, so Jamie can still watch her sleeping as well as hear her.

On the plus side, they'll be able to have sex and make love again without his daughter being in the same room, that is something he's looking forward too, his exciting uninterrupted sex life back with Jess, well, they can but try.

He's not going for a run this morning he has to report for 0800 and get introduced to his team, he's heard a lot about the lads he's going to be in charge of, plus he's arranged with Gavin to go straight to the gym after work, it'll help get rid of any tension he has and help him sort out his first day nerves, although by 1600, they'll be well and truly put to rest.

PLANNING A NIGHT OUT

JAMIE: “BABE, I’M NIPPING to the NAAFI bar to watch the footie tomorrow night with Gav and Tommo, yer don’t mind do yer?”

He hears Jess telling him it’ll be good for him to have a night out and mumbling about having a nice early night, although he’s not sure if she realises it’s Tuesday, a mid-week match, it’s not going to be a late one or anything like a night out on the town, that’s something he hasn’t done for a while, but it’s on the cards, the lads’ Christmas do, although, they haven’t told their wives yet, they’ll slip it in at the Christmas party, they’ll all be drunk except poor Clementine as she’s pregnant.

Gavin’s response to the WhatsApp message was typical of him, even though, to everyone’s surprise, he has been in a relationship with Lizzie, Jess’s best friend from her old job. She was one of the bridesmaids, he woke up in bed with Lizzie on the day of my wedding next to my wife instead of my room, the fucking knob.

Jamie: [Fancy a lad’s night out for old time’s sake?]

Gavin: [Ya bunch of fucking wasters, if ya think I'm going out with a bunch boring married bastards ya got another think coming, fuck off]

Tommo: [Yeah, when ya thinking?]

Jamie: [Weekend after Christmas party]

Nobby: [Great timing, get the wives drunk and tell them, good thinking J]

Gavin: [Ya bunch of pussies]

Tommo: [Clem can't drink, she's pregnant]

Jamie: [I'll get Jess to tell her 😊]

Tommo: [👍]

Gavin: [Well looks like I'll have to fucking join ya, make sure ya all get home safe, don't want no angry wife knocking my door down because you bunch of pricks can't handle ya drink]

Jamie: [Nice one Gav, Lizzie coming to the Christmas party?]

Gavin: [Yeah]

Nobby: [Be careful Gav, people will think you're settling down, they'll have yer married off next]

Tommo: [I can see Clem picking out her hat already Gav]

Gavin: [Fuck off, ya bunch of wankers]

To be fair Gavin has really been smitten with Lizzie, it must be something to do with being the older woman, she's tamed him, well, him a little anyway. But for Gav, to be with the one woman for over eight months and not sleeping with the local trollops is unheard off, I do believe 'me brother from another mother' has finally found love.

THOUGHTS OF YESTERDAY

WALKING INTO CHARLOTTE'S BEDROOM to check on her before he goes for his run, Jamie still hasn't got used to her being in her own room, it's been a week now, as much as he loves the fact he and Jess made love last night without disturbing her or disturbing him more to the point, he actually enjoyed it, for the first time since Charlotte was born he couldn't have sex or make love properly with his daughter just six feet away.

Leaning over her cot watching her sleeping, he can't believe how much she's grown, she's fourteen weeks old already, he just wants time to stop, he wants her to stay his little girl, his baby, looking at her he can't believe how much she looks like Michael already, but has Jess's tender features.

He leaves the house at 0555hrs, puts his pods in and heads towards the gates, he has a new route mapped out, a couple of the young lads from his team are joining him for a run. He's warned them he runs with pods in listening to music, so no point trying to strike up a conversation.

Meeting Ashley and Ian at the gate, he shows them on his phone the planned route, they have their rucksacks on, they're not very fit in Jamie's eyes, well not as fit as he would like them to be, he's going to help them reach their peak, push them all he can, after all they're his responsibility. He has also arranged extra PT sessions in the gym for all the lads.

Jamie: "Right then, let's get this show on the road, yer got yer weights in the rucks?"

Both Ashley and Ian nod as he pulls on their rucksacks, laughing at them telling them that could have put more in, the two boys rolling their eyes and tutting at him, they get on their way, before they know it eight miles will be a breeze.

The dark mornings are not something Jamie likes. He remembers when he first split from Jess, he would go out running early hours of the morning, maybe 0300 or 0400 latest, it would be pitch black. He doesn't know how he never had an accident or worse got hit by anything, but he knew the area and he knew the village Jess lived in didn't come to life until around 0700.

He thinks back to those two weeks after splitting from Jess and the pain he was in mentally and emotionally. He would stand outside her house for what seemed like hours in the dark of night watching it, wishing he was back there. He wanted to knock the door and tell her he was sorry, sorry for what he did, he wanted her to forgive him. He loved her and had no idea how he was going to ever stop loving her, or even if he could.

He thinks back to June 26th 2020, the night he planned to propose to Jess, how close he came to ending it all, only for Gavin walking in on him, he'd left his door on the latch, he had her engagement ring in one hand and a bottle of pills in another, the

look of horror on Gavin's face shook Jamie. His cocky, foul mouthed buddy, screaming at him, "What ya doing J! Don't you fucking dare, I mean it mate, I love ya, we all do, you'll get over it, its early days J."

Gavin snatched the bottle of pulls out of his hand and took him to the gym. He pushed him harder than Jamie realised he could be pushed, from that night on Gavin never left his side, even with his own promotions Gavin would always make sure Jamie was at the gym with him or out running with him, their bond grew even stronger in those early days.

Jamie turns his music on, he realises he's run the first three miles with his pods in and no music playing, he rolls his eyes at himself and turns his music on after all he doesn't like to think of those sad times. He screwed his life up and nearly cost him his chances of promotion from Private to Lance Corporal, which he'd happily received in September 2021, three years after joining the British Army.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Anna

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*Leigh
Brook*

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I'm a former Trade counter sales assistant working for a joinery company within the construction Industry, a mother to 4 grown up children living in the suburbs of Coventry with my beloved Staffordshire Bull Terrier dog 'Eddie'

I've always loved reading right from a very early age, I would rather have a good book in my hand than watch a TV programme or Film & I'll always have story to tell, I simply can't tell you anything without elaborating and going into great detail, you could say I have a 'creative mind' and this is evident in my writing,

When I started to write the 'The Older Woman' I never envisioned that it would lead to anything other than an 'exercise' as a result of a conversation at the start of Lockdown with a dear friend who is also a published author of '46 Miles' - Mr Jarra Brown.

It may surprise you to know that I didn't own a laptop until mid-July when we finally came out of Lockdown, so as hard as this is to believe and it still amazes me now to think about it, I actually wrote *The Older Woman*, *Ring of Hope* and the first few chapters of 'Jamie' on my mobile phone!!!

If you enjoyed this book, please do leave a **review**. They are the lifeblood of independent authors and your comments will help with the Amazon algorithms, or wherever you purchased this book from. Thank you!

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The Older Woman Series

The Older Woman

Ring of Hope

Jamie