

Housemates and Homosexuals

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Housemates and Homosexuals

by [Tigresse](#)

Summary

A slight twist on the way John Watson met Sherlock Holmes and how their close friendship, professional collaboration and unique relationship progresses as time goes on. Mainly JohnLock, mainly told from John's perspective, has a happy ending but it will take a little time for the boys to get there.

Cue: Sherlock is clueless about romance

Cue: John has a standard line 'I am not gay'

Their First Meeting

“Captain John Watson sir, thank you for giving me some time.”

Lieutenant Colonel Kayden Goldman extended his arm over his desk, shaking John's. “Firm grip, the right posture, you could be mistaken to be an actual field soldier Dr. Watson,” the older man said, motioning at a chair, “Please take a seat.”

Which John did, feeling really diminutive in an office cabin that was big enough to accommodate a basketball court and sitting in front of a man who was six feet seven inches tall. Kayden looked at a file, glancing through some pages while concentrating on one or two, while John waited awkwardly but patiently. “Okay,” finally the lieutenant colonel broke the long silence, “You saved my best sniper, Sebastian Moran. You also saved one of my other officers, Sebastian Smith. Reports say you took down a jeep of ten guerrilla fighters in Afghanistan, all on your own, using just plastic explosives and....what is this.....liquid nitrate?”

John nodded, “I had to improvise sir. There was no time and no resource. It was a surprise attack on the base and they were not ready to spare even the women and the injured.”

“It was a bloody good job and I see you were rewarded for it. However, you got shot and six months on, you've been given a voluntary retirement status.”

“Yes colonel, sir.”

“So, is this what I think this is about?”

John nodded, wondering if it was a mistake coming here. The lieutenant colonel had agreed to give him time within two days but that was due to the heroics he had displayed, not because he knew John or had anything to do with him. Thousands of soldiers died or quit the army every year, he was not supposed to help them all out. The state gave them all the medical care they needed and a decent pension.

“Captain?”

“Oh, I am sorry. No, I was just.....”

Kayden’s eyes narrowed, “Look doctor Watson, I understand your situation. Healed, with a degree, with a pension, to the world it just seems like you gotta plant yourself back into civilian life. But I know, from watching many others around me, it’s not a piece of cake.”

John relaxed slightly. So this man understood. Now the big question was – Will he help me or just give me a lecture and send me on my way, to fend for myself?!

“You need some push, something apart from just a few letters of recommendation, to begin anew and also be successful. You’re only thirty-two. You have a long life ahead of you, hopefully, and it’s not just about survival but also succeeding in whatever it is you want to do.”

John felt a wee bit of relief at that. So the big man had sensed what he needed and was ready to support him. Kayden looked through the file again and said, “So there are three things that you need for a fresh start. One, a good job. Two, a reasonably good accommodation. Three, an income that can cover your basic expenses in London, a city where shoebox flats cost a lot. Hmmm, let me see....” He lapsed into silence and looked through his phone, “There is a reason why the General has assigned me to four months of desk duties every year. I seem to have the network and contacts necessary to make my project, Ex servicemen Rehabilitation and Support, a success. It’s another thing that it gives me more time with my wife and kids.”

John bit back a grin. Of course, that was also part of the truth! Otherwise a much-decorated officer would have loved to stay with his platoon instead.

“John,” the lieutenant colonel called him out by his name, “I know this man named Mike Stamford who works at the Barts. He can help organize an interview for you, with the head of department for general surgeries and consulting physicians. If you do well and they offer you employment, the pay will be reasonably good for now and get even better after a year’s probation. But I cannot crack the interview for you. That, you must do for yourself.”

“Of course sir, I understand and will do my best.”

“Oh you better, I can’t help you with a second chance here.”

“Sure.”

“As for accommodation, I can ask him to help there too. He knows many people and might be able to suggest something. He is easy to get along with, quite a nice guy who teaches the interns and final year residents at Barts.”

“I know him sir. We went to medical school together.”

“Fantastic. Then we are all set....no, wait, there is something else I can do. For a year or two, I can keep your name on a special list. It’s called ‘Special Compensation Unit’ but the description reads as ‘Officers who have been disabled in action, whilst showing valor of the most extraordinary kind’. Usually it only goes to people who have lost a limb or a bodily function and that too those assigned to field service. But what you did was no less than such an officer and you suffered a near-debilitating leg injury.”

John sighed, “But I am fine now. Guess I can’t be included.....”

“You can be,” the colonel said, “On my recommendation. But I can only do a temporary provisioning here. In eighteen months or so, you will be removed unless you provide a medical certificate of any permanent disability. Hope you understand what I mean.”

John thought for a few moments and responded, trying not to sound too holier-than-thou and yet getting his point across as politely as possible. “If I earn an income from a job as a doctor, I am still entitled to the pension I receive sir, which is legal and perfectly valid. But if I also get disability cheques, won’t I be double-dipping into the public purse? I don’t mean to say this isn’t legal or I am breaking the law, because you wouldn’t allow that to happen in your watch, but does it still seem fair.....just putting my two cents on the table.” He stopped and looked a bit hesitantly into the other man’s eyes. *Holding a gaze is important*, especially in the army, where avoidance of any eye-contact is taken as a ‘shady’ step towards non-accountability.

Kayden Goldman listened quietly without emotions, then paused to think. Then he said, “I appreciate your honest feedback. But no, it’s *not* a bad idea for a soldier to get some extra support, provided it’s only temporary. While I appreciate what the tax-payers do and the

difficult life most of the workers in civil and corporate jobs lead, none of them risk their necks for the nation. A man like you, used to saving lives under pressure, with limited resources and support, will be invaluable for the society. I suggest you go for the lump sum payment for temporary disability and the normal pension scheme as a retired officer due to injury during active and warfront service.”

“Johnny the man,” Mike Stamford greeted John cheerfully as the former army doctor entered the now empty autopsy lab to meet his former college mate and current referee. Well, the lab was almost empty. One nurse was still there and she gave John a pointed look as she left.

“I see you still pull the chicks,” Mike said boisterously as he and John shook hands. “Well, I can modestly state that I am the sort of man most parents would like to see their daughters come home with,” John said with a wave of his arm and a snicker.

They exchanged a one-arm hug before Mike’s expression grew a bit serious. He looked down at John’s leg and the support he walked with and asked, “Hey, how bad is it really?” John shrugged and replied honestly, “Healing, but taking its time. Sometimes I have this shudder in my arm and right side, but it seems that’s psychosomatic. Have been visiting a shrink and she says I just need to get back into action, work and all that, which is why I am here. In terms of medical clearance and ability to do my job here, I have the necessary endorsements.”

“Well, I have never been in the army or....fortunately, in any form of trauma or violent incidents. PTSD is a very real thing but you appear to have done well for what I heard you had to face. Yes, I think getting back to work, *being busy and all that*, should help.”

“So then....the interview?”

“Yes, tomorrow at 10 am. Where are you staying?”

When John gave him the address Mike turned up his nose. “Sorry but that’s what I can afford on a soldier’s pension,” John said with good humor, “I need to eat and pay other bills too.” His former college mate seemed to agree but he had his own views besides. “We need to *fix*

that accommodation thing John. It's too far from Barts and if there are emergencies you won't be able to make it on time. We could assign a quarter for you but at this moment none are free. However, there is something else we can do for you.....or rather, I can do for you. Someone I know is looking for a roommate."

"Roommate?" John was aghast.

"Ehmyeaaah, is that a problem?" Mike asked, looking a bit uneasy.

"I know young dudes in their teens and early twenties do bunk down together but a roommate situation at my age? No man shares a room at this point in their lives, unless it's a brother or they are....."

Mike grinned, "Unless they are???"

"Sisters!"

They both began to laugh at that, John a bit nervously and Mike giving a full belly-laugh, until someone popped their head in through the door to check what was going on. John immediately grew sober while Mike welcomed the person, a young woman in her early thirties, into the lab. "Come in Molly, meet Dr. John Watson, former military captain, a surgeon who might join us very soon, as soon as next week. John, this is Molly, pathologist and a good friend to all, she's Miss Popular here!"

Molly was a bit mousy looking but she seemed like a nice, pleasant person and smiled broadly at John. He decided he'd like to meet a hundred Mollies every day because she seemed like a non-threat, someone helpful and kind. No wonder she was a popular, well-liked person.

"Hello Molly," John shook hands with her.

"Dr. John....."

“Watson. But call me John please.”

“John, pleased to meet you John.”

Whatever else she wanted to say was lost in the loud squeak of her phone. She looked at the device, raised her brows and quickly stepped away from them to answer. “She can help too, with the accommodation thing,” Mike whispered, “Plus you need someone on your side when you join. It’s not easy to find your way around here, it’s an enormous place with lots of people.”

Soon she came back, hassled and flustered. “He’s asking for a coffee, black, with a bit of sugar. He says it has to be exactly the way he described last time, but there was no last time. He never asked me for coffee before Mike.....”

“Calm down, calm down Molly, it’s fine, he’s just another man and not the country’s Premier or Prince of Wales,” Mike did his best to soothe her as she fretted, “Just take the sugar separately and ask His Highness to mix it by himself.” Her demeanor had changed completely from relaxed, easy and happy to restless and apprehensive and John found that very odd. Who had asked her for coffee? Was it her boss? Even if he was, this was just not done. She was not his beck-and-call assistant, she was a fully qualified pathologist. He gave Mike a quizzical glance to which the latter made a subtle eye movement, indicating he would talk about this later.

Once she was gone, Mike shook his head and laughed, “She *allows* him to do this to her.”

“Him is who?” John asked curiously.

“Sherlock,” Mike said by means of explanation, “He’s quite popular with women. But unlike Molly he is not the most pleasant or friendly person around. He can be quite acerbic, too brutal with his words and sometimes eccentric without limits. Still, Molly adores him and so do several other young residents and a few nurses, even a couple of male members of the administrative staff sort of go all gooey-eyed around him.”

“Seriously?”

“Yeah. Some people have that thing in them....they can repel and attract at the same time. But he is one *brilliant* individual.”

“Which department? Usually the geniuses are in cardiac or neurology or stem cell research.”

“He is not a doctor. He has a doctorate though, he’s a PHD in forensic sciences, a scientist and chemist who works on several independent projects and also....involved in the criminology field, if rumors are to be believed.”

John found that very intriguing but he had too much else to handle to think of eccentric geniuses. “Good to know and good for that man,” he said, “Now, as for my accommodation, how do you think Molly can help me? Where do I find her, after this?”

“I suppose *I can introduce* you to him right away, Molly being too busy getting coffee and all that,” Mike said thoughtfully, “It’s the same Sherlock I just spoke to you about!”

John had always identified as a straight man but that didn’t mean he didn’t appreciate the natural beauty or appeal in a man. He was not from the spectrum of toxic masculinity where it was a taboo to even talk about beauty or elegance, unless one was commenting on a woman’s breasts or her revealing outfit.

As soon as he had entered the room, he noticed the reasons why women and some men liked this guy with the strange name and chased him despite his eccentric behavior.

Sherlock was not a conventional good-looker. He was tall, about six feet, but quite willowy instead of the usual gym-toned suppleness and all-muscle avatars men preferred nowadays. He clearly didn’t get much sun because he was pasty white, desperately in need for some Vitamin D. He wore his hairs in unruly waves and curls, which hung thickly around his a-bit-

too-long face with angular features and eyes that were a weirdly close-set. Still, there was a magnetic appeal about him and somehow all the oddities added together to create a stunning effect. His eyes were a beautiful blue-green, his lips a delightful bow shape, his cheekbones sharp and pronounced as if someone had sculpted them on his face while his sharp nose was contrastingly large and gave him an intellectual look.

And yet he had a boyish smile and the overall demeanor of a young and attractive man in his mid-twenties. Still, there was something different about him and he couldn't be counted with the average guy on the street, something rare and precious that made John wish he knew this man a little bit more than just his first name. As Mike introduced them, John was just about to ask him something when the first wave hit him.

Sherlock rattled off so many facts about him despite knowing practically nothing about him or his background, that John felt as if he was dreaming or in the midst of a weird experiment. How could this guy know he had a sibling, who in turn had a drinking problem, that he was a former soldier, that his current ailment was psychosomatic, that he was looking for economic options of lodging.....

"The last bit," Mike said, grinning and shaking his head when Sherlock finally stopped his spiel, "That was no deduction Sherlock. I told you that this morning when we met." Blue eyes twinkled but Sherlock kept his expression serious, "A bit of fluff is okay, I think. Anyways, there is a flat I have earmarked, it's spacious and in good condition, in a prime location too. We can share that one. Rent will be real low because it belongs to my nanny."

"You still have a nanny?" John felt a tremendous urge to tease him but Mike seemed quite horrified at that, "How old are you?"

Sherlock looked angry too at first, but then his expression changed to bemused. "Good one," the genius said, "She was my nanny once. I am twenty-seven now!"

John moves in

Chapter Summary

John was temporarily speechless. Then he said, “Is this going to be a regular thing?”

“Us being in the same room? Yes.”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

John could not get Sherlock out of his head that evening and night. All those things he had guessed about John, the littlest details to the overall situation of his life, kept coming back to him over and over again and the doctor got more and more curious about his soon-to-be housemate.

Mike had sold him the idea of sharing space with Sherlock. It was a successful and aggressive sale, which had made John wonder what his former college-fellow stood to gain from this. Maybe he just likes to help out, likes to see things fall in place, people getting a roof over their heads.

“He is a kind and good soul, very clever and witty and interesting,” the professor of medical sciences jabbered on as he treated John to a nice rice and curry lunch at a nearby café down the street, “He knows about a lot of things. Talk architecture and he will give you deep insights into several past eras as well as all types of constructions happening in the world right now. Talk sports and he will rattle off the names of all Wimbledon winners starting from the year the championship was invented. Talk music and he will tell you all about the famous composers and players down the years, from Paganini to Beethoven, Shostakovich to David Garrett. He plays the violin very well, in fact he’s so good that he could have easily become a music teacher at a leading private school.”

Maybe it was all those incessant talking and praising which had filled up his head, but when John found himself thinking about Sherlock even while he was sitting at the interview the next morning, he decided to just banish the young man from his head. *No way, I must concentrate now.*

The interview didn't go very well according to John and he came out a bit disappointed and disheartened. The HOD, Robert Royce, was impressed and pleasant, encouraging and accommodating, but the two others present were almost determined not to let him get a foothold.

More than his degrees, experience, his views on advancing methods of surgeries, his knowledge of the human body and emergency measures, they kept saying he would miss the army life and get re-enlisted and therefore wasn't a horse to bet money on, at least not for the long haul. So annoying.

"Don't lose heart mate," Mike said cheerfully when John called him, "Go check out the house, I mean the flat Sherlock talked about. I am sure all is not lost yet. They will contact you by tomorrow morning, that's what they said, right? So you still have a chance. Maybe they need to confer and discuss, take a collective call. If it was an outright 'no', then believe you me I would have received a call by now."

"You do realize that I might not be able to afford the flat if I don't have this job?" John sighed.

"Why John? You are getting a lump sum for your temporary disability compensation. Keep that as your savings and spend the pension. It's not that bad, it's about two grand a month and the rent will only come to three hundred pounds or so."

"THREE HUN.....did I hear that right?" John couldn't stop his voice from going high pitch, "Three hundred pounds. That is near impossible man!"

After Mike waxed poetic about taking risks in life with finances and how he was bound to get a job sooner or later, John was finally convinced to go and check the place out. He sighed, checking out his bank balance. He had seen his parents save diligently all life, only to lose everything to a nasty and prolonged lawsuit with some siblings, a lawsuit that was still being fought in the civil court. Then he had seen his sister, a brilliant financial analyst, throw away all her money in drinking and gambling and almost end up on the bread line before getting sober and finding a steady job again. He didn't want to face the same situation. Being broke was worse than anything else in the world.

Maybe Mike was right, he was being way too conservative and a doubting Thomas. He would get a job soon. Until then he could sure afford to pay this low rent. But he was 100% sure he had heard the figure incorrect or maybe Mike had heard it incorrect. How could anyone rent out a flat on Baker Street with no security deposit and a six hundred a month lease?

When he stood before the building where the flat was, he was more than pleasantly surprised. On the ground floor was a café and a convenience store. In the basement there was a space where a cookery class and several dance classes were going on in full swing. The top four floors had at least three flats on each floor, and the overall condition of the building appeared to be steady, well-maintained and rock solid.

The street was buzzing with traffic and pedestrians, yet there was a park nearby at the end of the road. There was a tube station one block down and several cafes and other necessary establishments like a salon, a drugstore, a launderette just across the street. “It has to be a monthly rent of three thousand pounds, not three hundred,” he muttered as he knocked on the door of Flat 302.

“S’opennn.....”

Sherlock’s voice, the deep one, he could identify it from a mile away. “Hi,” he said, stepping in and looking around, “I...I am sorry, are you all right?”

“Yeah,” Sherlock said, looking at him peculiarly, “Why this question?”

“Because the room looks like someone just had a battle here or a twister ripped through it.”

“Um no,” Sherlock cringed, “It’s just me and I moved in.....”

“Oh,” John was once again reminded of the kind of person Sherlock was. This was only a first taste of it. He chose not to react and nodded, “Very well then, we need to do some cleaning up. Then I will move my stuff in. How many rooms?”

“Feel free to have a look around,” Sherlock said, laying back down on the couch, his feet with shoes still on them, hanging over the arm rest. John rolled his eyes and set about doing his job, giving himself a grand tour of the place.

The more he saw, the more he was convinced there was some confusion about the rent. The flat was quite big, almost eighteen hundred square feet, and had a balcony where the sun shone whenever it was around. There were two bedrooms with attached bathrooms, a smaller room (that Sherlock had happily converted to his lab, John noticed), a kitchen and dining space, a small storage room and of course the spacious sitting room where Sherlock was currently parked. Both bedrooms had enough closet space and leg room besides the bed and dresser. In fact the bedroom, bathroom and closet John saw was roughly the size of the entire bedsit he was currently bunking down in.

He was looking closely at the bathroom, happy to see it was squeaky clean and had no leaks and mold, when he felt someone literally breathing down his neck. He turned and his nose knocked into someone’s chin.

“Jesus, Sherlock!”

“Mrs. Hudson.”

“Wha....?”

“Our landlady. She is waiting outside to meet you.”

“Oh, okay, but don’t sneak up on me like that, it’s very.....”

“Annoying?”

“Yes.”

Sherlock blocked John's path, stepping so close the doctor could smell him, feel his breath, sense his body heat, hear the rustle of his clothes. Clearly this man had no sense of personal space at all. "I *am* annoying John," Sherlock said in a cold, flat voice, "I never try to make others happy. I am not a people pleaser. So if you want someone pleasant, cuddly and giggly to share a flat with, you're in the wrong place."

John was taken aback. *But at least he is honest, he is self-aware admits to his flaws*, the good doctor thought and gave him a wide berth, *for now*. What left a lingering impact on him was the way Sherlock smelled. Cigarettes, cologne, a sweet and spicy underlying scent that was Sherlock's very own. "Yeah, well, okay, I get that," he said and walked past the taller man, "I'll go and meet Mrs. Hudson now."

Martha Louise Hudson was nearing sixty but had the ebullience and energy of a woman thirty years younger. She had once been a beauty but years of living tough and surviving situations had eroded her looks and given her a harder edge, both in terms of appearance and behavior. While she was sweet and wise and helpful, John could spot the tough bird underneath and knew she was not to be messed with.

"Very happy to meet you doctor Watson," she said, shaking his hand firmly, her grip strong and her hands a bit rough, "Sherlock told me he vouches for you and knows you very well; therefore I won't bother with a background check and waste any time. If Sherlock is fine sharing this flat with you, then so am I. I live in the opposite flat, by the way. I also own the basement space where I run cooking, baking and dance classes. The rest of the flats are owned by different people while the convenience store and the café are owned by....." she paused and added with a dose of extra affection, "By Mr. Partha Chatterjee."

"Stop dreaming about him Hudders."

Sherlock entered the room and gave her a cross look, "Tea, now!"

"I'll just get it."

She scuttled out to bring tea while John looked at him with surprise written all over his face. "What's so odd about a man asking for tea?" Sherlock shrugged.

“Nothing wrong. But the way you asked.....”

“Oh I know her well and she knows me, she has seen much worse sides of me. If I am living here then she has to provide tea, breakfast, the odd coffee, sometimes some fruits, milk, mouse traps and cages.”

“Mousetrap.....hello, are you telling me there a rat infestation here?” John asked, alarmed, “We need to do an extermination then, as soon as possible. I won’t move in unless this place is completely rid of all insects and rodents. I need basic hygiene and proper living conditions.”

“Relax, you can see the place is clean as a daisy after rains,” Sherlock said nonchalantly, “I need those for experiments.”

“A rat? For experiments? In the flat?”

“There is actually a difference between a rat and a mouse John. You see, A mature mouse can be distinguished from a young rat by its larger ears and longer tail compared to its body length than the rat. A young rat also has distinctly larger feet and head compared to the body than a mouse. Mice are usually light grey or brown in color with a lighter shade on their bellies. Also there is a difference between the two in terms of weight, total and absolute weight. Rats grow to a much bigger size than normal house mice, though field mice might be somewhat larger.”

“Sherlock,” Mrs. Hudson made an entrance, “Don’t unnerve your boyfriend. I told you the importance of taking things slow and not shocking the five senses out of him, just for fun.”

John almost fell off the chair when he heard that. He tried to convince himself he had misheard, but his memory kept thumping it down on him that his landlady considered him and Sherlock a couple. *Like a couple-couple*. He gave a sharp look to Sherlock, noticing how the man never made even an iota of attempt to contradict or deny the *boyfriend* statement, before he decided he had had enough of misguiding statements and must come clean before this old lady. “Mrs. Hudson, I do need a place to live in, very badly, but I don’t want to get in here basis *lies*. I am not his boyfriend Mrs. Hudson, nor am I someone he knows very well. In fact, we met just yesterday afternoon and *you know* what’s the best confession I have at this point, I am not a *gay* man.”

Sherlock didn't even react. He simply kept scrolling through his phone.

Mrs. Hudson's chatty side had taken a temporary break and her jaw was half-dropped. John waited, staring at her eagerly for her reaction, even berating himself a little bit for blowing this chance of living in an awesome flat in an awesome location. After almost thirty seconds, the old lady shut her mouth audibly and then smiled at him, "It's alright, I do understand. Love happens at first sight and the number of days you've known each other doesn't count. As for being gay or not, I know sexuality is a whole spectrum and some people like to remain fluid. I am very open-minded and liberal, I like to move with the times."

"Fuck me," John mumbled.

"I don't need to make money off this flat," she continued, handing a steaming cup of tea to Sherlock and another one to John, "So I only expect you to maintain the place properly, take care of all repairs and cleaning, keep it occupied and under use so it doesn't dilapidate."

Still in a trance, John nodded.

"Six hundred pounds rent. But don't tell the other tenants. They pay six to ten times this amount. I don't want a protest here and other landlords baying for my blood."

"John wants the place cleaned," Sherlock added, sipping his tea and attacking the milk bikkis with a vengeance, "Creams, chocolate, vanilla, strawberry, delicious!"

"It was clean," she said, frowning, "You dirtied it boy, now you will clean it up for your boyfriend. And he is a keeper, so don't get petty over such things. Help him clean or get that kid-gang of yours and pay them to clean up the place. What about your furniture John? Do you have any or are you going to move in with just clothes and other personal items. My flat is fully-furnished so you won't really need to buy something, however, I am sure you love-birds would like to add something that's a 'joint-purchase'."

John raised both hands and brought the conversation to a halt. "It's okay, I will do the cleanup myself. Thanks a lot Mrs. Hudson. I won't keep you then....I am sure you must have a lot to do."

Taking the cue, she left them alone, but not before she had wished them the very best in their new life together. John was about to snap at Sherlock for letting the landlady get carried away with the idea of them being a couple, when the curly haired man stumped him with a declaration. “You went for an interview today morning, which I can clearly see from the way you are dressed and the tie that you wore earlier, but which you’ve taken off and stuffed into your pocket since, and the amazing way you’ve coiffed your hairs. However, from your expression, body language and slight hesitation towards the amount due for rent, I can safely say they haven’t given you an answer yet. You are still doubtful about the job.”

John was temporarily speechless. Then he said, “Is this going to be a regular thing?”

“Us being in the same room? Yes.”

“No, this whole ‘I know things about you’ thing.”

“It’s called the science of deduction.”

“Okay, fair enough, your science of deduction. But do you really think that’s necessary? I mean, you’re quite spot on with most things, except that my sibling Harry is not a brother but a *sister*, short form of Harriet. Still, you’re telling me things I already know and that’s no value add.”

“I can also tell you things that you don’t know, *yet*.”

John gave him a puzzled glance. In the same confident tone Sherlock continued, “The job opportunity is not lost yet. Had it been so, you wouldn’t have even showed up. What they are doing is taking their time so you agree to their terms and conditions tomorrow, when they do offer you the position. I am sure the interview panel must have reacted in two different ways to you, one extremely positive and the other slightly confusing, negative and doubt-inducing?”

“Yes,” John replied, amazed at the way the other man was seeing right through things.

“The good-cop-bad-cop routine. When they call you again, stick to your guns and take what you deserve, not what they offer. Not even if they say it’s their final offer. Final is a relative term.”

Suddenly the idea of living with this man didn’t seem so bad anymore. John smiled, nodded and said, “Thanks, that helps, that’s very good insights...I will move in tomorrow evening, Sherlock.”

Chapter End Notes

It will be slow build....by my own standards LOL! Be patient. When smut happens, I promise it will be hot!

Violin at 2 am

Chapter Summary

John also realized Sherlock had no sense of personal space, nor did he ever intend to split the chores and errands. While Mrs. Hudson provided breakfast and tea in the morning and tea once again in the afternoon, John was left to work in the kitchen and rustle up lunches and dinners.

“A hundred and twenty grand for a minimum of six and a maximum of eight surgeries a month, twenty hours of consultation per week and four hours a week for research and development. Plus annual bonus before Christmas, ten thousand. A midyear bonus, five thousand. Health insurance, category 1 for myself and family members, that should include dental, Lasik, skin correction, the whole nine yards. Also, employer’s contribution to pension should be over and above this amount.”

Robert Royce and the head of personnel, Julia Riley, looked at each other, a bit confused. “We said we have given you a final offer.”

John was tempted to accept the hundred grand including employer’s contribution to pension funds and a single four figure variable bonus a year but he remembered what Sherlock had said. So far whatever the man had ‘deduced’ had been proved right, including the fact that he would soon get a call and an offer, so he decided to go the rest of the way based on his new housemate’s suggestion. “In that case we will probably have to re-think,” John said amicably, “Or conclude with a ‘no-thank-you’ handshake. No hard feelings here but I can’t accept this offer since it’s a few notches below what the current market-rate is. I am not just a consulting physician, I am a surgeon.”

“Dr. Watson, you’d be working for a very respected institution and with doctors who are extraordinarily gifted and successful. Look at the other things you stand to gain in terms of experience, skills and learning.....”

“I agree to all of that but it still does not compensate for a lower salary.”

“But then we.....”

“Julia,” Robert stopped her and she shut her mouth, “One minute please. John, can you give us about five to ten minutes? Don’t go anywhere though, maybe get yourself a coffee or tea and stay around the lobby or hallway. We will call you back in shortly.”

“Sure,” John stood up, thanked both of them and noticed the agitated look on Julia’s face, before he turned on his heel and left the room. He visited the washroom and was looking for the coffee machine when he saw a very familiar face down the corridor. “Hey Molly!”

“John! Good to see you again. Sorry I had to run yesterday, didn’t get a chance to talk to you properly. You started work already?”

“Nope, not got an offer yet but waiting for one. Even if I do get one, I’ll need this weeks’ time to sort out a few personal responsibilities. I have to move into my new flat and do some spring cleaning there. I can join only from next week, Monday.”

Her voice dropped, as did her ebullience. “Um....is it true you’re sharing a flat with Sherlock?” She asked, as if disappointed and curious at the same time. That expression and tone intrigued him and John lowered his eyebrows, “Yes, I am. To split costs we have decided to take up a flat together. It’s big enough for two people and the rent is not too much, a good bargain I say!”

She perked up again, “Oh! So the reason you’re moving in with him is to save costs and take advantage of a low-rent agreement?”

John nodded, “Yes of course, what else did you think it was.....” but before he could finish, he heard Robert Royce calling out to him. A bright and perky Molly whispered ‘good-luck’ before skipping down the hallway, as if she had just won a lottery. Confused and a bit amused by this experience, John went back into the room. This time he saw Benjamin Johnson, Julia’s boss and the overall Human Resource Lead, sitting there. Over the next ten minutes he agreed to all of John’s terms and conditions, albeit haltingly and with loads of ‘if’s’ and ‘but’s’. Finally he gave John a fresh offer and put forward one condition. John was asked to sign a watertight two-year clause of non-separation, a violation of which came with a hefty penalty. John grinned inwardly and happily agreed to sign on the dotted line.

“One month paid vacation. Two days off every week, mostly Sundays and Mondays. Senior surgeons get the Saturday-Sunday combination but once a month or so even you should get that. But everyone has to be open to attending to emergencies, irrespective of the day. The Hippocratic oath must always be applied.”

“Of course. That’s my duty and honor as a doctor.”

“Good, welcome aboard then, Dr. Watson.”

“Thanks Benjamin, thank you very much Robert, thanks Julia.”

The two men shook hands with him and left the room, talking about some patient’s bills. Julia snorted very softly, so only John heard. “Well negotiated, John,” she said. Then, as she walked past him, visibly smarting under the fact that John had managed to put one over her, she whispered, “You are very resilient and feisty! Stubborn too. No wonder you manage to be with *Sherlock Holmes*.”

Once again John wondered what made his housemate such a legend and so often mentioned. Why was everyone so ‘aware’ that he was going to share lodgings with Sherlock and so keenly interested in the dynamics of their relationship?

“I got dinner for us,” John said, smiling a bit awkwardly as he stood at the door, “Some wine and dessert too. Just to celebrate...this flat and also my new job. Yes, I have got the job at Barts. I am back to being a billable resource, as they call it nowadays.”

Sherlock was in short underpants. He looked at John, a bit dazed, and then at the sack of Chinese food, the bottle of Australian Rosé and the tub of ice cream. “Okay come on in then,” he said, “You’re staying here tonight it seems.”

John was about to step inside with all the items he had in his hands, silently cursing Sherlock for not even offering to relieve him off a few boxes and bags, when a loud squeal from a female voice made him stop, one foot in the door. Mrs. Hudson came rushing down the corridor and handed him a big bouquet of flowers. “Oops,” John went, going down on one knee as he tried to balance it all. “Pink roses, hypericum berries and yellow disbuds,” she gushed, “The first meal in the house needs to be romantic. Want me to help set the table?”

She almost walked past John when the doctor engaged her in a different line of conversation. Eventually John managed to dissuade her from interfering any further and shut the door. Sherlock had disappeared by then so he walked into the kitchen to set the food and flowers down, but was appalled to find a body bag there, all stretched out. *Where there is a body bag there must be a corpse*, his reasoning told him and he instinctively stepped back, turning up his nose. He sniffed at the air, thankfully there was no foul or suspicious odor anywhere. With both distress and disgust in his tone he yelled, “Sherlock, come here into the kitchen and kindly explain to me what is the meaning of this?”

Sherlock walked in, still scantily clad in his briefs. For an odd reason John’s eyes fell on his groin. The outline of the man’s genitals was visible through the flimsy stretchable cotton of the tighty whites. *No what am I doing? Even I have become a bit eccentric! Look away John, look away.*

“Put on some clothes, please,” he requested.

“I am comfortable this way,” Sherlock said, scratching at his belly, “What happened?”

“What is this?”

“Body bag. Careful there is one severed arm in there, for my experiments. I sent the rest of the cadaver back because I just needed one arm, that’s all. Molly can be quite a nuisance sometimes. In a bid to please me, she just complicates matters by overdoing things.”

“This is a dining table Sherlock, you do not put cadavers here.”

Sherlock looked at John as if he had been asked to stand on his head. “No? But then there was nothing else to put there, so....” John interrupted him, “That still does not mean you put anything other than food on a table that’s called ‘dining table’. Now clean this up, I need to put this food and wine and now these....flowers, somewhere! Or maybe you could keep them somewhere while I clean up.”

Sherlock took the flowers and tossed them on the kitchen counter, right next to the sink. Then he put the rest of the food on the kitchen island and said, “Yes, you can clean up the table. I shall keep the arm in the refrigerator.”

“No, you will *help me* clean up and set the table,” John insisted, “If we are sharing this place, we share the chores and errands too. Wait a minute, you meant to say you will put the arm....a human arm into the fridge? Our refrigerator?”

“Yes, the one over there,” Sherlock said innocently, pointing at the huge built-in refrigerator in one corner of the modular kitchen, his expression completely neutral. He behaved as if it was the most natural thing to do, put cadavers and eyeballs in the fridge. John’s face went to pale first, then it became heated and red and finally grew almost purple with rage. “Sherlock Holmes, I don’t have many rules for cohabiting with you but three things are a total no-no. You will do *all your experiments* in that room you’ve occupied, the one which could have been my home-office or a den. Everything related to experiments must be strictly limited to that room and only that room. Buy a new refrigerator or freezer if necessary but this one in the kitchen, it’s only meant for food and beverages, not dead people and body parts.”

Sherlock got up and calmly started to walk towards the refrigerator.

“What are you doing?” John called out, dismayed.

“Taking out the eyeballs.”

John woke up with a slight crick in his neck and a feeling of stiffness and cramps on the right side of his body. He also felt disoriented, like one felt while waking up in an unfamiliar place.

Then he remembered the evening before.

Sherlock and he had eventually had a nice meal together despite all the weird stuff he had witnessed and all the eccentricities Sherlock had thrown in. The seafood noodles, the side of mushrooms in oyster sauce and garlic chicken had tasted utterly delicious and the rosé had proved to be the perfect accompaniment. Sherlock had refused dessert (John noted he didn't have a good or even an average appetite) but John had helped himself to a large portion of the dessert cake and stowed away the rest in the 'refrigerator'.

Then they had started talking, spending quite some time listening to Sherlock's theories about crime and criminals and John's account of the war. Then, at some time during midnight, John had moved to the bedroom assigned to him. Sherlock had stayed back....

No, he was *right there*, sleeping half on *top* of him.

John's gasped, half sitting up and wincing when a bolt of pain and cramps shot through his right side. Now he knew what was the source of that. Sherlock was lying over him and had effectively used him as a pillow. Naturally all his blood supply had been cut off, with the curly haired man's entire weight spread out over his leg, shoulder and arm.

When John tried to push him off, Sherlock snuggled deeper into him, grinding against John's thigh. Gosh, he was hard, *very hard*. The worst part was that John was *hard too*, rock-hard.

"Sherlock, Sherlock, wake up, please wake up," he gently nudged the younger man at first and, when it didn't work, pushed at him harder, "WAKE UP! You must be thinking I am someone else." He paused and when those green eyes opened to look at him, unseeing and glazed over with sleep, he whispered close to the man's ears, "This is me, your housemate John Watson. Not your girlfriend. Please, move a little because I need to take a piss urgently." Realization finally dawned on Sherlock but he didn't seem the least bothered to wake up on this bed or in this room. With a small nod he blinked, yawned and rolled away from John, leaving the older man with pins and needles in his arm and leg.

When John emerged half an hour later from the bathroom, having used the facilities, shaved, brushed and showered, Sherlock was fast asleep on his bed, completely buried under the

covers. The young doctor pulled out some clothes from his overnight bag, a pair of comfortable denims and a full sleeved T-shirt, and walked into the closet to change into them. He heard Sherlock's phone ringing outside somewhere but the man on his bed snored on. Shaking his head, John walked out of the bedroom only to stop in his tracks abruptly.

Mrs. Hudson and four teenaged boys were outside, spring cleaning the flat. One was cleaning the microwave, one was cleaning the living room and two were moving some furniture while Mrs. Hudson dusted some spots and sprayed disinfectant on them. *Fuck, now she will be totally convinced we are a couple. I just came out of a bedroom and Sherlock is still asleep in there.*

"I can't believe how easily and quickly Sherlock turns a perfect tidy, clean and freshly painted flat into something of a mess," the landlady complained in a good-natured manner, "The boys and I will clean it all up today, don't worry John. Sherlock still asleep? There's tea on the kitchen table, I am sure you need a cup."

She saw his blush, noticed his mortified expression and misunderstood the whole thing again. "It's all right really," she was gentle, almost affectionate, "The boys and almost everyone else on this street are very LGBTQ friendly. There are lots of queers here, plus same sex couples. Next door there are married ones."

John wanted to counter those points, deny, scream, rage with frustration, but he knew the stakes were heavily against him. From last evening's fiasco when he'd been spotted entering the flat with what appeared to be the trappings of a 'in-home-date' and now emerging from the same bedroom in the morning, he had nothing really to favor his 'truth', that he was not gay and Sherlock was just a housemate.

"Yes," he replied briefly, swallowing all other words, "Tea."

Over the next three days John found Sherlock to be a package of opposites, a complex and unpredictable man who needed to be handled with care and caution. He was alternatively annoying and charming, endearing and provocative, pleasant and irritable.

Mrs. Hudson and her gang of teens had cleaned up the place and John moved in one a Friday, four suitcases, a duffel, two cartons and five pieces of furniture fitting nicely into a small transport truck. He had sold most of his furniture and retained only the nicer, classier ones. One of them was a very comfortable and large lounge chair, a 'chair-and-half' with a deep and comfortable seat and an equally comfy upholstered back. John had bought it recently, intending to spend most of his evenings on them whenever he got free from work.

Sherlock occupied it the moment the chair arrived and even as John tried to get him off it, talk him into giving it up and even issued a threat or two, the thick-skinned young man seemed determined to stay put and refused to budge. He also took over one more item John dearly loved and had been gifted by one of his former military comrades, a gorgeous lamp shade from Chinese Taipei, a full length one which could be placed anywhere on the floor in any room. The beautiful, colorful shade complemented and cedar wood stand and illuminated the entire room end to end in vibrant hues, yet retaining an incandescent and soft glow that soothed the eyes.

Sherlock had taken that one and kept it in his room. John had no choice but to look on, dismayed, as his two favorite items of decoration and furniture were usurped the moment they had arrived. In a fit of panic he kept everything else in his room, including a nice cozy bean bag.

"That is my lamp shade," John said one time when he peered into Sherlock's bedroom.

"Yeah, you have good choice," Sherlock responded.

John also realized Sherlock had no sense of personal space, nor did he ever intend to split the chores and errands. While Mrs. Hudson provided breakfast and tea in the morning and tea once again in the afternoon, John was left to work in the kitchen and rustle up lunches and dinners.

The night before John was supposed to join Barts, Sherlock managed to outdo himself in creating an annoying situation for his housemate. He began to play the violin at 2am.

"OHMYGODDDDD.....HOLY....." John cursed, already on the floor since he had fallen off the bed, "This is just not happening."

He knocked on the bedroom door but Sherlock clearly couldn't hear him over the sounds of his own violin strains and after half an hour John went to bed with ear plugs on.

The missed date

Chapter Summary

On their way back, John kept staring at Sherlock in awe. What he missed was that whenever he looked away, Sherlock also stared at him in open admiration and delight. “So,” the doctor said, “I saw some miracles today. You identified the criminal just by the way he held his pen!!!”

He saw Sherlock grin impishly and tap at his own temple. He also noticed a hint of color on those cheeks. Was he.....blushing?

“That was really well done doc.”

John took off his mask and smiled slightly. He had just completed a surgery. “Thanks Janet.”

Janet was a senior nurse, a pretty brunette who had ambitions of becoming a doctor sometimes in the future. She had taken quite a shine to John and tried to go the extra mile in helping him out. About five days into his job at Barts, John was sure Janet was about to ask him out. He didn't mind that at all, since being single was never on his agenda. He just didn't have the money earlier to take a woman out. Now of course he *could*, with the dirt-cheap accommodation, the well-paid job, the disability assistance sum sitting pretty in his bank and the average but decent pension amount also hitting his account every month.

Time for some indulgences, but before all, time for some shopping and grooming.

As he washed his hands, Janet brought him his coffee and stood there even after he had dried his hands and taken it. “I sense you have something to say Jan,” he said with a twinkle in his eye, “Wanna tell me here or do you want to take it to my cabin?”

“Cabin.”

“Sure, come.”

Once they were in his tiny but neatly appointed cabin, she leaned against the desk and said, “What are you doing this weekend doc?”

“Waiting for someone to ask me out,” John replied, thereby laying to rest all doubts from Jan’s mind about his intentions and aspirations. It worked well because her eyes lit up instantly and she flashed a wide smile before saying. “In that case, how about dinner and a play tomorrow?”

John bit back a pleased grin, “That sounds just about right. So for dinner, what would you prefer? Seafood? Italian? Indian? Thai? Mediterranean? I will book a table for two at one of the finest restaurants I know for each category.”

“Then I shall buy the play tickets,” Janet said, “I don’t believe in the man doling out the pennies for the entire date. You can afford the fancy restaurant, I am sure I can afford the play. Which one do you wanna watch? There is an interesting one at Old Vic.”

“Yeah, let’s freeze on that one,” John said, “And I am all for women’s lib!”

“Thank God all those rumors about you and Sherlock are just that, rumors,” she blurted out. When his expression went from pleasant to deeply concerned, she quickly added, “I mean, not everyone can share accommodation with Sherlock Holmes. He’s a good looking bloke, very talented too, he is a rich one as well.plenty of family money, but after seeing how he treats Molly, it’s really hard to form a great picture about him. Rumors have swirled for some time, you being his housemate sort of fanned them a bit.”

John understood what she meant. He was determined not to let these rumors escalate. The more one discussed, the more things spiraled out of control. So he resolutely shut the topic by saying, “I will text you the restaurant address. Shall we have Italian cuisine tomorrow?”

He came home to an empty flat that evening, around six o' clock. It was cold and the windows were all open. The first thing he did was turn the heating on, before he proceeded towards his bedroom. Just as he was about to enter the room, he caught a bit of a movement from the corner of his eyes, somewhere in the kitchen space. John's soldier instincts kicked in and he decided to take this head on, but with calmness and tact. Someone was in the flat and he could be *a) armed robber* or *b) a petty thief*, or in the worst possible case *c) a psychopath*. In any case he needed to get to his gun and place himself in a position of advantage. He knew *just how* to do that.

In less than a minute John pounced on the intruder from the side, blindsiding the man and easily overpowering him and slamming his pistol butt on his head. The man groaned, cursed and stilled, probably incapacitated for a while.

That was when John saw someone else, another figure crouching in the other corner of the kitchen. He was about to lunge at that one too when a bright light was flashed on his eyes, causing him to squint and pause midway. Damn! He wished he could switch on the lights now and see how many more were hiding there. Somewhere at the back of his mind another thought itched, *why were these people in their flat?* They had just occupied it a week ago. They hadn't made any enemies nor were they immensely rich with plenty of cash/jewelry/art etc stashed in the house.

"Stay right there doctor."

"Who are you? What the fuck do you want?"

"Drop the gun, now."

"I only take orders from my superiors in the army and I am not even in the army right now. Your barking is not going to make me change my mind. Probably a bullet between your eyes will help drill some sense into you."

"I got a gun too. I am being polite enough to inform you. I could have just shot you in your other leg and proved it, instead of informing."

That was when John caught that whiff. Sherlock! This was Sherlock. What the fuck was this guy up to and who on earth did he just wrestle with and whack on the head? Gosh, it was so confusing and weird to live around this man! John had been warned but right now he felt he hadn't been warned enough.

He straightened his back, holstered his gun and went to switch on the lights. As bright lights gleamed around them, he saw Sherlock and no less than three more men emerge, one of them being the one he had taken down. He was holding an ice pack to the back of his head.

Sherlock spoke in a strange language with those men and they left, all of them giving him a glare each. John was boiling by then and he gladly glared back and reached for his gun symbolically, making them all back off and proceed towards the door, tails tucked between their legs. The moment he heard the front door shut, John flew at Sherlock and grabbed his collar, pushing him against the wall, their faces inches apart. Sherlock's eyes widened for just a moment before he simply stared back at John, not a shred of alarm or any other emotion on his face. "What was the meaning of *this*?" John asked angrily, "What the *fuck* are you trying to do in *our flat*?"

"Just testing your agility and ability to handle a possible attack."

"Who are you to test me exactly? And what do you mean a possible attack? The last time I checked, these kinds of attacks don't really happen to regular, normal people."

"Normalcy is only perception. Normalcy is a bane. It's something we should get away from, not strive to attain."

"I have had enough of your chaff. I am not amused Sherlock, you will tell me what this is, what it really is."

"Calm down and take a seat John, I can explain. And while you are at it, brew some tea for both of us."

"Make tea.....what?" John looked on, dismayed, as Sherlock pushed past him and took a seat at the breakfast counter. Unprepared for this moment, this situation or this behavior, John just

went ahead and started the kettle, muttering under his breath about housemates and crazy geniuses. Minutes later he disdainfully slammed a mug before Sherlock before he took a seat next to him. "Now tell me," he demanded.

"Where is your tea?" Sherlock asked innocently, sipping his.

"I have a feeling I might need something stronger after this," John snarled.

"Relax, it's not something you'll find revolting or too complex to understand, despite your limited intellect," Sherlock said, rocking back and forth on his barstool seat, holding the mug with both hands, "But it's something you should be prepared for, something which might impact you as my housemate. You see John, I am not just a scientist and forensic specialist, I am also a consultant. I am a....consulting detective."

"How is your profession relevant to this.....wait, did you say detective? As in, a private investigator? The sort of private-eye who finds out more about people's lives and unearths their dirty secrets?" John paused and looked into Sherlock's flat expression, "What exactly is a consulting detective then?"

"Allow me to explain," Sherlock seemed bemused by John's confusion, like a titan looking down on a Lilliput with some amount of compassion but also a dollop of pity, "It's not that difficult to understand. I am a detective, a consulting detective who investigates and solves crimes and nabs criminals, with or without the help of the Yard or Mi5, or any other legal authorities. I am not a private eye, which means I don't spy on rich men's plastic wives and take pics of them making out with their boy-toys, nor do I investigate what employees do in their downtime and report those to the bosses. My work, as compared to a private investigator's, is slightly more elevated in responsibility, involves a lot of complexities and attracts a lot more danger. That's precisely why I wanted to see if you are up to it."

John's jaw had dropped.

"Problem?" Sherlock asked.

"No, is this for real, you are a detective, a real one?"

“Yeah.”

“Wow, that’s pretty cool, huh?”

Sherlock’s eyes gleamed with genuine happiness. John’s praise had affected his mood and he sipped his tea with renewed enthusiasm. “I work for various clients, for the Yard and also for my elder brother, Sir Mycroft Holmes, the recently knighted head of Mi6, he’s very annoying by the way.”

“So sleuthing is your alternate profession?”

“It sure is.”

“Um.....”

Sherlock looked at John meaningfully and right at that moment both men knew it was a very good idea. John was a man who missed an element of danger in his life, Sherlock was a man who had lived on his own for too long and missed having someone around him who could be a satellite, someone who orbited around him but also had his own identity, and John seemed like the perfect candidate.

“I would love to work with you,” the detective said, “Though I am pretty sure your presence will be mostly superfluous at first but I’m sure you’ll catch on sooner or later. Currently I have a case to handle, it’s about the sudden death of a filthy rich Count’s aging Golden Retriever.”

The whole situation had turned on its head by then. From extreme annoyance and frustration, John was now feeling energized and motivated to explore, to find out more about this exciting life. It was so much cooler to share a flat with a sleuth than with a scientist and forensic expert. The danger seeker in John felt stimulated and his soul, long buried by the injury-driven retirement from the forces, got a sudden lease of life. “So then this case,” he said, pouring himself some tea, which Sherlock noticed with a smirk, “You are surely not

investigating the death of a pet dog. That's not the real case. You feel there is something else that's being missed there, am I right?"

"This time, you are."

"Whatdyamean? When was I wrong?"

"Not wrong but slow. When I had the flash light on your face and said 'I'll shoot your other leg' you should have understood immediately it's me. How would an unknown assailant or intruder know such details about you?"

John snorted, "I still figured you out."

"Yeah but..."

"I smelled you."

As soon as he had said those words, John bit at his own tongue and cringed visibly. *What the fuck did he just say?* It gave all kinds of wrong signals to the other man and he wished he could take them back, but words were like arrows and they hit home just the same. "I was not aware of that strong sensory perception of yours," the green-eyed man said with a shrug, "That is something I have developed over the years, along with my eyesight and hearing abilities. Still, I have no clue how you smell."

"So," John changed topics, "This case, when are we going to meet the count?"

"Tomorrow morning. We start at 7 am. Warwick. You in? Want some adrenalin rush?"

"Oh yes, gladly, absolutely!"

The case turned out to be very intriguing.

John and Sherlock were welcomed by the Bergo family with equal measures of happiness, disdain and nonchalance. Count Bergo was relieved to see Sherlock and along with his third wife, a much younger and very clever Scottish woman named Michelle, helped Sherlock and John with detailed information and a hot breakfast. Bergo's children from his earlier marriages, two men in their twenties and a woman in her thirties, were decidedly hostile. They felt this was a total waste of time. Michelle's daughter from a former partner was neutral, as was Bergo's nephew and their house-guest, a forty-something male journalist who was writing an article on the family and their connections with Mussolini. The nephew was about thirty, a bright guy adored by the count, who worked for their family business and lived under his roof.

Soon Sherlock established that the death of the dog was actually accidental and the actual target was the old family retainer who was walking the animal. It was assumed the old retainer had run away but he was actually clubbed to death and lying under the walkway bridge over which the mutt had been shot to death. Eventually that was connected to a family heirloom, a priceless diamond that once belonged to Marie Antoinette, which the count's mum had given her son before she passed. It was worth several millions and the culprit was none other than the journalist, who was actually Bergo's first-born, a son born out of the wedlock to a teenage sweetheart who, out of scorn from being abandoned, had filled her son's head with poison. That son, born and raised in the States, had disguised himself as a journo and visited the estate to con his dad and take the jewel, and killed the old retainer since he refused to steal the jewel on his behalf. He killed the dog when the canine had tried to attack him. "It was my share of the wealth, I too am your son," the unrepentant criminal thundered.

"If only you had just *asked*," Bergo said sadly.

The disdain and nonchalance turned to hero-worship and the count, relieved and sad in equal measures, paid Sherlock with a cheque of 25000 pounds and also handed him a six inch figurine of Madonna, made of ivory and studded with some pearls. It was a rare collectible. "But why this?" Sherlock asked while John promptly took it on his behalf and pocketed it quietly.

"This is a gift, from me and my wife and children," Bergo said with a smile.

On their way back, John kept staring at Sherlock in awe. What he missed was that whenever he looked away, Sherlock also stared at him in open admiration and delight. “So,” the doctor said, “I saw some miracles today. You identified the criminal just by the way he held his pen!!!”

He saw Sherlock grin impishly and tap at his own temple. He also noticed a hint of color on those cheeks. Was he.....blushing?

Just then, as they sat on the train back to London, John saw 6 missed calls on his phone. Before he could blink the same caller called for the seventh time. It was *Janet*, his date for the evening!

Adventures and Misadventures

Chapter Summary

She appeared a bit disappointed. “Gosh, people are right. It’s not her. It’s him.”

She had this ‘I get it now’ kinda look on her face. “Janet, you have to be a lot clearer if you want me to be on the same page.”

“Sherlock.....” And that was the last straw for John. Why drag poor Sherlock’s name in this?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

John did a facepalm and hesitated for a moment. He heard Sherlock’s deep voice, “Is that your date for the evening?”

“Yes,” John said, “I forgot.....”

Sherlock’s eyebrows wiggled and the corners of his lips twitched, as if he was trying hard to suppress his chuckles. He was clearly quite amused by this comical lapse of memory on John’s part and even though John felt pretty shitty about the way he had stood Janet up, he too saw the humor in the situation. They started to laugh together and even exchanged a high-five before the detective pointed at John’s cell-phone and mouthed ‘Take it’. She was calling for the eighth time this time and John, despite being super-embarrassed, didn’t think it was appropriate to just ignore the poor lady’s calls. *Made a big mistake, gotta suffer the consequences too.....*

“Janet, hi, listen, I am.....”

“Doctor, so the date isn’t happening.”

“Um.....no, I had to....um, travel....”

“I had bought the tickets.”

“I can’t do much aside from apologizing to you for this. I am sorry Jan, I didn’t mean to forget but I had to accompany Sherlock for something critical. It slipped my mind completely that we had set up a dinner date this evening.”

“I don’t mind something coming up, but I do believe you could have called me and told me, at least. I would have called another friend or a cousin to watch the play with me. I kept waiting for your call, kept calling you when you didn’t call.....okay, I guess there’s nothing else to say.”

“Except that I will make it up to you,” John said, bright idea striking him at that moment, “Why don’t we move this date to tomorrow?”

There was silence on the other side but he could hear quickened breathing, could almost feel the tension through that silence. Except that....the breathing sounds and tension were not from Janet but the man right next to him. Sherlock was glaring at him and the moment he looked back, the detective got up from his seat and walked towards the toilets. Baffled by the reaction, John decided to call off the date for now. There was always next week.

“Jan, tomorrow might not be....”

“Actually, it doesn’t work for me either. I am working on Sunday.”

Thank God for small mercies, John thought with a relieved sigh. He spoke a few more words with Jan, then hung up once she seemed a little calmer and better placed to accept his apology. After he disconnected, he got up and chased after Sherlock, something nagging at the back of his mind. Why did Sherlock appear so displeased about the date he was setting up for the next day? Why?

He found Sherlock two compartments down, typing something on his phone. The moment he spotted John he said, “I have a case tomorrow as well. Stolen top secret papers from a minister’s office. Chances are that these papers, if leaked to the media or transferred to some

Russian spies, could cause heavy damages to our country and the image of our government. Will you accompany me?"

The next day was spent on the case but unlike the Count Bergo case, this one spilled over to the weekdays. John juggled his work as a surgeon and Sherlock's sidekick on his cases, working himself to the bone, and by the time the end of the week approached, both men were so tired, exhausted and completely sleep-deprived that they were like zombies walking around in a daze. John was exhilarated by the case results, which ended with a nerve-racking chase through the streets of London and a shootout, but he was also mindful that he was just incapable of performing surgeries in his current state. Fortunately for him, he had finished his quota for the week and the next two days were free.

When they reached home on Wednesday night, Sherlock did something strange. He just climbed on the coffee table, curled up and started snoring.

"Oh Goddd, no, don't, this isn't your bed, Sherlock, Sherrlooockkk," John tried to move his dead-weight but failed, "Hey, wake up, let's take you to bed....." But Sherlock simply shooed him away like a fly and continued to sleep there, snorting and snoring and trying to get all of his wiry arms and long pins on the limited space. John took a deep breath, used all his remaining strength and stamina (he was not a soldier for nothing) and hoisted Sherlock over his shoulders. He managed to lurch towards the bedrooms and, to his dismay, found Sherlock's bedroom locked. Fuck!

No choice but to take him to my own room then.

Too tired and at the end of his tether to think of anything else but sleep, John dropped Sherlock on the bed, took off his shoes and socks and belt, then gave up on the rest of his clothes and let him curl up. He dropped his own clothes quickly, leaving his undershorts and undershirt on, and got in on the other side of the bed. He pulled the covers over both of them but Sherlock soon hogged them all, almost mummifying himself on the blanket and snored louder than before. John stared at him in dismay and shook his head, before he dropped on the bed out of sheer exhaustion. He was asleep as soon as his head had hit the pillow.

John woke up to find the bed shaking and soft moans and pants and sounds of sheets rustling. At first he thought he was just dreaming or imagining things, until the haze of sleep cleared and a bit too loud of a moan startled him completely. It didn't take him too long to realize where he was, who was with him and what was happening right next to him on *this very bed*.

Sherlock Holmes was masturbating and apparently having a good time while at it.

John was caught in a weird situation where he was stuck between a rock and a hard place, literally. Being next to his housemate while they were doing some self-service was mortifying but what made this even worse was that he was hard too, hard as a rock and erect as a pole, and felt a strangely compelling need to jerk off side by side with the other man. As soon as that thought occurred to him, John closed his eyes and held his breath, hoping he didn't give Sherlock the impression he was awake. No way was he going to be able to handle this situation without making it worse and more embarrassing. Best option was to stay quiet, pretend to be asleep, and hope Sherlock fell asleep soon after he had cum.

He heard the other man's moans reaching a crescendo, he felt the hand speed up and bed shake harder, he sensed Sherlock was tensing up.

Suddenly he actually 'saw' all that happening. Behind closed eyelids he saw the handsome young sleuth in his naked glory, spread out on the bed, pleasuring himself and making those delicious sounds that went straight to John's cock.

What the fuck, what are you doing John? This is a man you're fantasizing about. You're getting off on his orgasm while he's probably thinking about some chick or some porn clip he had seen earlier! Clearly it's been too long since you had a sex life or a female in your arms!

John tried to shut off his sense completely, chanting
IamnotgayIamnotgayIamnotgayIamotgay... over and over again in his head.

Sherlock then groaned out and said something familiar, which John purposefully blocked out because he was just so.....distressed by the effort of ignoring the man next to him! Things on the nightstand shook violently before Sherlock's movements ceased and he began to pant.

John lay silent, almost on the verge of an orgasm, and completely confused as to why he was not grossed out by this.

Or rather.....*why was he so aroused by this???*

Thankfully, Sherlock slept almost instantly. John waited for a further five minutes before he tiptoed to the bathroom, closed and bolted the door, ran the water in the sink and then jerked himself off to one of the best and most explosive orgasms of his life.

“Hello doctor.”

John was about to wrap up for the day when the sound of a soft, sweet voice made him look up from his briefcase. A redhead, petite and slender, with big green eyes stood there, holding a gift package in her arms. “Yes?” He asked pleasantly. *She is pretty.* He noticed.

“You are the angel who saved my father’s life,” she said, stepping into his cabin hesitantly, “I must say I am twisted the nurse outside to allow me in. I had to meet you, thank you for what you have done, for saving my father who is the only parent my younger brother and I have left and so....I wanted to give you this,” she thrust out her arms, offering the package to him, “We have a small tailoring and garment shop in the suburbia. But our work is good and we sincerely hope you will like this....it’s a shirt, from our own shop. I-I stitched it myself.....please accept it as a token of our gratitude.”

John felt rather overwhelmed. He was used to patients and their families thanking him sometimes, sometimes they offered chocolates, cake or flowers, usually given by the kids of the house, but this was a far more personal gift. He felt a bit embarrassed to take it and yet he couldn’t be rude enough to refuse it outright. “I don’t think I need to be thanked so deeply for doing my job,” he replied, “You didn’t have to do this really, Miss....”

“Carrie, my name is Carrie.”

“Well Carrie, thank you so much. I am glad I was able to do what I love to do, save lives.”

“You’re welcome. It’s personalized, I mean the shirt. Monogrammed with your initials on the cuffs and front pocket. Hope it fits you well.”

“I am sure it will, thanks again.”

She gave him a shy smile before she left and was soon replaced at the doorway by a rather peeved Janet. *So Janet was the nurse she arm-twisted to gain entrance into my cabin. In other words the day just got better.* John braced himself for an earful, something he had been expecting from Janet for a while. The entire week she had avoided talking to him but he was sure she was saving up all the anger for a final outburst.

“The weekend starts in three days,” she said curtly.

“I am aware. It’s a Wednesday, so yes, the weekend starts in three days.”

“I remember someone promised to make it up to me. C’mon, doctor, we are both the same people as we were a fortnight ago, aren’t we? Then what has changed?”

“Yes, I did promise you, but.....” John paused and *hesitated*, wondering why he did so. Two weeks ago he had stood Janet up, then cancelled their plans during the week, then didn’t contact her over the next weekend, and now that another weekend was upon them he didn’t feel *too enthused* to go ahead with any new plans. But *why*? He *did* like her. He did find her reasonably good looking and clever and funny and.....not *interesting* enough.....not anymore.....something *had* changed.

“Is it Caroline Keene?” She said sharply.

When John made a face, his expression riddled with confusion and annoyance, she sobered up a bit and added, “The girl who just left, her name is Caroline, or Carrie. I see that she is giving you gifts now. You operate on so many people, as do most surgeons, it’s what doctors

at hospitals do! We are all paid to do these things, surgery, consulting, nursing. We aren't given gifts to do our work, are we? Then what's her good reason to come over, lie to me that you were expecting her, and give you a gift?" John was still absorbing those words when Janet said something else. "I can understand if you and Sherlock are together and I was barking up the wrong tree. But if it's about her, then I am really disappointed. Then you should have told me 'no' right at the beginning."

"Jan," he said as calmly and politely as possible, "We'll talk later when you're calmer, saner, when common sense is more common. I do admit I had stood you up but may I remind you that it's something I have apologized for and we are not a long-term couple where such things need to be mentioned time and again. We haven't even started dating and you're already showing a possessive side that I find repulsive. If Carrie or Caroline or whoever else wants to give me a gift, it's *their business and mine*. The next time, do not eavesdrop or barge into my cabin again."

He regretted his outburst immediately. Her eyes were filling with tears. Raising his hand in a gesture of honesty and sincerity he said, "Sorry, I said a bit too much. But I'm not okay with some things and you did cross the line. It was a bad idea trying to date someone at work....."

She appeared a bit disappointed. "Gosh, people *are* right."

"What? What does that even mean?"

"It's not her. It's *him*." She had this 'I get it now' kinda look on her face.

"Janet, you have to be a lot clearer if you want me to be on the same page."

"Sherlock....." And that was the last straw for John. Why drag poor Sherlock's name in this?

"Going home now," he picked up the briefcase and gift package with a sigh, "Talk tomorrow. Have a good evening and take care of yourself, maybe head home sooner than usual, give yourself some time to relax and catch up on sleep. Mornings are always wiser, believe me."

Two weeks passed and John felt his life couldn't get any more exciting or eventful. While his work at the hospital got noticed and appreciated, both by fellow doctors and the Head of Department Robert Royce, his life outside of it was even more colorful with Sherlock's cases.

They solved the mysteries together, from a case of a missing pearl from a museum to missing codes with an Mi6 project, an attempted homicide and a murder that was staged as an accident. Every single time Sherlock proved to be extremely intelligent, displaying a sharpness that could easily cut through iron and steel. John couldn't help but be proud of him and in awe of the man's rare gift.

But there was one little problem. He had no time or life outside the responsibilities of a surgeon and a co-investigator. While the matter with Janet had been simmering under the surface and John kept shoving it under the carpet in the faint hope that if he didn't look at it long enough it would go away, there was a new romantic interest which had flared up. Carrie, the young lady who had gifted him that exquisite and custom tailored shirt. She had not only shown great interest and effort in dating John but also seemed to be a sweet, kind and understanding woman who wouldn't display the temper or possessiveness shown by Janet. John delayed it a little before finally setting up a date for a Sunday. That week he had a Sunday and Monday off.

On Friday Sherlock woke him at midnight. "Hey," he sat up, rubbing his eyes and noting that Sherlock was all limbs and skin, clad in *just his boxers*, "What is it? I have work tomorrow."

"There is a case."

"Oh, what case is it?"

"Sixteen people have been poisoned under mysterious circumstances. We need to investigate. The case comes from Scotland Yard."

“Um....”

“You will come with me as always, right?” Sherlock was stunned to see the hesitation.

“Sorry Sherlock,” John said with an apologetic smile, “I have a personal commitment on Sunday and two pre-scheduled surgeries tomorrow. If this can wait till Monday I am game.”

The brunette looked astounded, as if shaken to the core by the fact that John *could have* some commitment that was not work-related and which *didn't* involve Sherlock. John felt half-sorry for refusing him but stuck to his guns. Better that way. Sherlock should know he had a personal life too, one that belonged only to him. He didn't budge, despite Sherlock's crumpled expression. After nearly five minutes of a staring contest, Sherlock finally said, “Alright then.”

Chapter End Notes

Yes John is blind and also in denial. Sherlock is dorky and unable to express. These things don't get cured overnight. Be a bit patient with the boys. It's a slow burn!

The Diva Detective

Chapter Summary

“What if something happens to me during this case and you’re not around to help....to save me?”

Will John Watson regret not accompanying Sherlock and going to a date instead

Sherlock woke him again sometime later on the same night. This time John was a bit irritated and turned the bedside light on, checking the time on the digital alarm-clock he always kept on the nightstand. “Christ Sherlock, it’s only four-thirty am. What’s gotten into you?”

“John I may not say this enough or often,” Sherlock was still wearing boxers and shivering this time, though John could tell he wasn’t even aware he had so little clothes on, “But I need you on all my cases. You are a great sounding board. You talk, suggest, question and that’s how I also question myself and spell out answers, sometimes I form the answers as I speak with you. It’s so much better than talk to the wall or the skull.”

He was referring to a skull he had, which now rested on one of the mantelpieces in their living room. Apparently his best buddy before John came in. Did that make *John* his *best* buddy now? The former military-man was not sure, neither did he ask Sherlock for confirmation. In a month they had certain formed a close bond and John could easily call Sherlock a friend, but he wasn’t so sure Sherlock felt the same way. The man could be so icy at times and so very unpredictable at others that it was hard to pin down what was going on in that pretty head of his. “I understand that,” he replied, “But I have a full-time job that demands my attention and time and once that is over I....”

“I never asked you for time during those days you have surgeries or consultation work....”

“Hang on, allow me to complete. Once my work is done, all I do is work on cases with you. No one can just work 24/7. I need my downtime too. I have things I’d like to do, people I’d like to see, hobbies that are important to me.”

“Like what?”

Now he was looking like a petulant child, pouting and sulking and scowling. John grabbed his arm, “*Sit*, sit down, we shall discuss this properly. And wear this, my robe, even if it’s a bit too short. Your teeth are chattering so loud Mrs. Hudson can hear it from her flat.”

Sherlock sat down.

“I have actually learned carpentry and know how to work with wood and glass. I like to make things, create things, like ships and model houses and chariots and all that. It helps me relax and I find it very therapeutic. It’s sort of like you playing the violin, only less noisy.”

“You are refusing the case work so you can build a wooden house or boat?”

“No. Wood-carving is of the things I like and I will restart that hobby soon. But that’s not why I am taking a rain-check for Sunday. On Sunday I have a *date*. I had stood up Janet earlier and she is still very sore about it. But this time it’s a different person and I intend to keep my word.”

Sherlock frowned, “Date?”

“Yes, a date,” John replied and started telling Sherlock about Janet, the way the nurse went the extra mile for him earlier and how she had later become rather sullen and rude towards him, ever since he missed the date and the next date was never planned. He then got up and went to his closet, showed Sherlock the shirt Carrie had given him, showed him her social media picture and told him about his intention to meet the woman at a downtown pub and spend the evening with her.

Sherlock hadn’t said a word all this while but the moment John finished speaking, he rattled off a speech that took the doctor completely by surprise. “Janet is a woman known for her temper and controlling nature. Do you even know she has dated two other doctors in the past, Dr. Renner from the laparoscopy department and a Dr. Gessler who was a visiting dermatologist. By the way, the first name of Dr. Gessler was Stephanie and she was a Fraulein and not a Herr. Janet is a know bisexual who prefers a male partner but will always continue to be attracted to females as well so.....unless you have kinky desires like threesomes with your wife’s girlfriend, she is not a good choice.”

John took a while to respond. Even when he did, the words wouldn't come out. "Sherlock, it's not just a fabricated story, right?"

"No. Check with Molly. Check with other nurses. Check with Dr. Renner who still works there."

"Oh well, yes she did show a temper but then....look, many people are sexually fluid and don't really identify as Gay or Straight....."

"As for this woman, *Carrie*," Sherlock spoke spitefully, using a crooked tone while taking her name, "From her choice of pub to the gift she gave you, I can tell you she is a gold-digger. She is a woman who has seen some hard days and wants to escape it through marriage, with a man who is stable financially and rock-solid in terms of commitment. She gave you a personalized gift not for helping her father recover from a gall bladder infection but because she wanted to draw your attention towards herself. On top of that, she chose a pub where a pint of the cheapest beer costs more than fourteen pounds....."

"Sherlock enough," John stopped him, stern expression on his face and his voice quite harsh, "That is just enough. I can't take any more of your bullshit."

Sherlock's jaw dropped, as if he had been clubbed on the head.

"You don't even know her. I agree you might have known about Janet but Carrie....seriously, you can say all that about her from a gift, from just a choice of a pub?"

"Yes. That is called deductive reasoning....."

"Then I don't want your deductive reasoning on my dates, my love life or my friends and girlfriends. If there is something not so good about them, let me figure that out for myself. I am no babe in the woods, I am a man in my early thirties and I have dated in the past. If I choose wrong, then I shall happily accept the suffering. Besides all that, do remember this is only a date. I am not proposing to her."

Sherlock again looked so stunned that his expression was almost comical. Then his face acquired that puppy dog look that John found so hard to resist, every single time. “What if something happens to me during this case and you’re not around to help....to save me?”

Oh God no, he is doing this to dissuade me from going out with Carrie, all so he can have assistance and company during a case which he is much better at solving than I could ever be. John did feel a bit dissuaded already but this time around he decided not to fall for his housemate’s emotional manipulation. If he agreed to drop the date today, Sherlock would do this again and again and yet again. “You have been solving cases long before you knew me,” he said gently, to take the sting off the ‘rejection’ message packed in his words, “I am sure you know how to keep yourself safe. Me being on a case with you is like you being in the surgery room with me. Moral support yes, lots of learning yes, but it’s as useful as a spare prick on a wedding night.”

“So you won’t come to North London with me, for the case?”

“I just said no Sherlock.”

“You didn’t say ‘no’, exactly.”

“Then I am saying ‘no’ now. Don’t play with words. Go and get some sleep and this time....no, no, not here, in your room and your bed! I will be locking my bedroom door this time. I have to sleep well the night before surgeries or I might end up cutting off some vein and bleeding the patient to his untimely death. I am sure you don’t want such a mishap and see me lose my license as a surgeon, right?”

Grumpily Sherlock walked out of the room and John locked the door. When he returned to bed he saw the detective had left behind his cell phone on John’s bed. “God, what do I do with this fellow?” He called out loud and went to Sherlock’s bedroom to give it back.

To his surprise he saw Sherlock getting dressed. “Where are you going?” He asked, “It’s only five am.”

“I have a personal life too.”

Sherlock snatched the phone from John’s hand and literally stomped out of the flat. John watched him, a bit stunned, before he shook his head and smiled. “Brat!”

“You live with a man?”

John frowned, “Why is that a problem?”

The date had been going quite well until John had started noticing some aspects about his female companion that were conspicuously close to Sherlock’s deductions. One of the things he had said about Carrie the morning before was her attention seeking techniques and John could see one rather glaring example already. Not only had she insisted that he wear the white shirt, monogrammed with his initials, to the pub; she also took pictures of him and herself, posting it immediately on her Insta and captioning it as ‘The handsome doc in a shirt *I designed* for him’. John, always a private person, bristled slightly at her attention grabbing side, something he hadn’t noticed before. Why would she post pics of their very first date to her seven hundred odd Insta followers? *Wasn’t this premature?*

But matters came to a boil when she questioned his choice of housemate.

“No problems really,” she flashed a sweet smile, “But as they say.....two grown men living together when both can easily afford separate accommodations, it’s like screaming from rooftops and proclaiming, ‘Hey world, *I am gay, we are gay*’.”

“You are quite a judgmental little thing, aren’t you?” John said a bit curtly, “And who exactly are ‘they’?”

“People.”

“Narrow minded and intrusive people who have no lives of their own and who happen to be homophobic? That kind?”

“No, I just meant to say.....” she was taken aback and fumbled for the right words, “That-that it’s not good for your image and if I were to go back home with you tonight, it would be an awkward situation with another man present there, that’s all.”

She is rushing things. She has already asked me my salary. She is trying to throw my housemate out. She is far more sinister than she came across earlier. Sherlock was right and it's I who feels like an utter idiot right now. John felt a sense of shame and self-loathing that could have easily made him just lash out at her when his phone went off. “Excuse me,” he said and walked away from their table.

“Hello.”

“Dr. Watson?”

“Yes, John Watson here.”

“This is Gregory Lestrade, from the Yard. I....um....sort of bad news.....Sherlock is injured.”

John was a doctor. A surgeon, no less. Illness and injury were things he handled as part of his regular work. He had seen some pretty gory stuff in the army too. His nerves were supposed to be rock steady and his mind absolutely calm in this situation. But the truth was the complete opposite. His right hand had started to shake, the same kind of tremor that his PTSD had familiarized him with, but which he had finally managed to shake off quite a few months ago. He felt his pulse race, his heart thump in his chest and oh that horrible sinking feeling in the stomach that made him feel queasy and nauseated.

His heart kept berating him over and over again for abandoning Sherlock, for dismissing the fears brought up before him. He could hear Sherlock's words the moment he closed his eyes and see that glum, sad face. "What if something happens to me during this case and you're not around to help."

"Drive a bit faster, a little faster, take that gap between the two cars, come on, don't lift your foot off the accelerator and slam it on the brakes, you can....." he kept up an annoying and very loud tirade at the hapless cab driver as the latter tried to negotiate the dense and crawling traffic on the streets of London, that too at peak hours in the evening. At first the man behind the wheel tried to do as he said but after narrowly avoiding a few accidents, the cabbie shot back at him, telling him to shut up or else they would both end up in the hospital too, with broken bones.

When he was finally at the clinic where Lestrade had asked him to be, he stumbled and fell the moment he tried to step out of the cab. Embarrassed to find out that he had tangled his foot in the seat-belt, he dusted himself off and barreled in through the front door.

"Dr. Watson?"

John saw a handsome man of about forty walk up to him. That must be the Detective Inspector from the Yard. John had heard a lot about him but never met him before. "DI Lestrade," he said, hoping for the best while preparing for the worst, "H-How is Sherlock?"

"Call me Greg."

"How is Sherlock?"

"He's better. He is in Room 502, the elevators are on the right....."

Greg Lestrade's two deputies, a tall thin man with a hawkish face named Phil Andersen and a brown-skinned and curly haired voluptuous woman named Sally Donovan, walked up to him. With an owlish grin Andersen said, "I told you the virgin has finally been deflowered."

“Oh no doubt,” Donovan added with a vixen smirk, “The freak would have never allowed anyone to assist him on cases if he wasn’t getting some.....you know what, from him. You refused to believe us when we told you earlier.”

Greg Lestrade knew the two sergeants were loyal to him, almost to a fault, and were mostly efficient with their job as well, but he couldn’t just stand there and hear insults thrown at his friend. “I know he is difficult to get along with and sometimes it’s hard just to be cordial towards him,” his voice was authoritarian and the two immediately backed off, “But he is a genius, a man who is one in a million when it comes to intelligence and analysis. As a criminal profiler there is no one better than him and as an investigator he is perhaps one of the very best I have known. His powers of deduction are awesome. Maybe it’s good if you guys learn something from him instead of just criticizing him.”

“Boss we did wish to learn,” Donovan said, “But he’s such an arrogant prick.”

“Arrogant prick saved my life. He also solves our cases. He is an asset to the Yard.”

“Sorry sir.”

“Apologies Detective Inspector.”

“Accepted. Has that body been sent to the morgue?”

Having assumed the worst, John felt such a huge sense of relief when he saw Sherlock sitting in a hospital gown and making deductions on the nurse, he started laughing like a madman.

“John,” Sherlock called out, “You won’t believe what happened at the crime scene today....”

“You are his partner,” the nurse said, looking and sounding fed up, “You can help him then.” She handed him the bowl of soup and walked out of the room with a haughty expression on her face, clearly displeased by whatever Sherlock had said to her. “I told her she was *overweight*,” he rued, “That didn’t go down well with her. Also told her that because she had always been disinterested in sex, her husband was having an affair with the neighbor.....and she got *upset*. People just cannot handle the truth, it seems.”

“God, you gave me a scare.....”

“Honestly speaking, I scared myself pretty badly too.”

Big Brother Appears

Chapter Summary

John Watson hates being called 'petite'

“What happened?”

John checked on Sherlock as he asked, noticing scratches and bruises on his face, wrist, a gash near his collarbone and finally, a bandaged foot which was the result of a bad sprain and ligament damage. Without even knowing it, he was standing pressed against Sherlock's leather frame while the detective leaned on him slightly, his cheek to John's shoulder.

As John wallowed in guilt and regret, Sherlock described the situation in an easy, carefree manner, showing his spirit was totally unscathed despite the violence he had been clearly subjected to. “Got surrounded by them because I couldn't manage to inform the Yard guys on time. I mean, I did inform but I didn't text them the exact location in....plain language. Used Morse code, which you taught me partially, and ended up giving a slightly wrong spot. By the time they came, I had taken two down but the other three got on to me and I got thwacked around a bit. I think I also....ouch.....” he stopped as John gently pressed his chest. Their eyes met and Sherlock nodded sheepishly, “Got a cracked rib as well, I think.”

He perked up the next moment, “But we got them. Case is solved.”

John took a deep breath and released it slowly. “This is all my fault, isn't it?”

“No, *how*?”

“If I had been around, I could have watched your back or at least used the Morse codes right.”

“Then all I have to do is learn Morse properly. To be honest, I didn’t think it was necessary. I fell asleep half way through the lesson you were giving me.”

John chuckled mirthlessly, “That explains why the great detective didn’t learn it properly. It is always a will-issue for you, never a skill-issue.” To this Sherlock chuckled back and then flinched as he moved, revealing more soreness and aches across his body. John lifted the hospital gown and shut his eyes in sheer dismay. Sherlock might have been casual about it but the honest truth was that he had been whacked quite bad. There were bruises all over his lean, pale body, angry marks that made the doctor swallow a lump in his throat.

“Sherlock,” he was aware he was choked up, repeatedly clearing his throat was not helping at all, “I am.....”

“Jawn, don’t tell me you’re going to *cry*.”

“Not the right time for jokes.”

“Believe me, I was hoping you’d cheer me up because it does hurt like a bitch.”

“You need some pain meds, have they done X-Rays and other checks for you, lemme see the reports, oh yes they have, Hmmmm, good, yeah those are all clean, you are in no danger my friend but you have to take it easy for at least a couple of weeks. Now have some soup, the nurse was trying to feed this to you, wasn’t she?”

“Ewww!”

John ignored the face Sherlock made and started to feed him the soup, explaining why he needed something in his stomach as he was drugged up to relieve pain or the possibilities of infection. After some initial protests Sherlock went along, but he was messy and John had to threaten putting a bib on him like one would do to an infant. Sherlock in turn explained the case to John who asked him a few questions, prompting Sherlock to be Sherlock and answer with the usual ‘Not easy for an ordinary person like you to grasp it but I’ll give it a shot’. The easy camaraderie continued until the bowl of soup was near empty and John had managed to feed him a small slice of bread as well.

Suddenly he was aware of someone's presence at the doorway.

Actually, there were *two*. Lestrade and Mrs. Hudson.

"Awww, aren't you two the most adorable.....how are you now Sherlock?" Mrs. Hudson walked in, taking Sherlock's hand and gently rubbing it between her own. "Let go Hudders, I am not cold, so stop warming me up let go," Sherlock protested, snapping at his former nanny.

Greg Lestrade walked in and smiled at John, "Well, I am glad we met, though it could have been under more fortunate circumstances. I have to say, had you been around this might have been avoided. Sherlock was speaking about your hand to hand combat skills, your presence of mind in a confrontation situation and your expertise with your firearm. Surely a soldier would have been better off handling that fistfight than a detective."

"He got trussed up quite bad. No critical injuries though. But he did give it back to them too, didn't he?"

"Oh *he sure did*. Together you could have made mincemeat of them."

Don't rub it in, please Greg, just don't. John's shoulders slumped as he finally acknowledged his mistake, "I should have been there with him. Instead I chose to go to a pub and have a drink. Needed a bit of time off to relax after a pretty hectic month."

"I am sure your boyfriend understands and so do I," Lestrade said easily, "You have a full-time job to do too. By the way, I am very happy for you both. It's been a while since I saw Sherlock with anyone, so....."

"Wait, wait, *please*," John felt the need to stop him at that point because the whole conversation was getting completely blown off course, "It's *not* what you think really. It's not that at all. Sherlock and I are not really a couple. I am not really....." He was cut off by the

DI receiving a call and excusing himself. “.....gay,” John finished, staring in dismay at Lestrade’s back as the man stepped out of the room.

“Give it a rest doc,” Mrs. Hudson called out, “There is no need to deny something that is as conspicuous as a pink elephant in the corner of a board room. Not looking at it wouldn’t make it go away, you know. Now come on, let’s help Sherlock to the bathroom. He won’t use the thing here on the bed.”

“You stay here,” John offered immediately, “I shall help him.” He slung Sherlock’s arm over his shoulder and helped him to the bathroom, but only after gauging his injuries and determining if he was indeed in a position to be moved. Eventually Sherlock used the bathroom while John stood just outside the door, holding it slightly open. When he heard the toilet flush he walked back in and helped Sherlock wash his hands and brush his teeth. Mrs. Hudson had brought a few items with her, a new toothbrush and a small tube of toothpaste, along with two nice, crisp and freshly washed hand and face towels and a tube of face wash. She had also brought his shaving kit.

“Why all this?” John asked, “He will be discharged tomorrow evening or the day after morning.”

“I want to shave tomorrow morning,” Sherlock insisted.

“At home you don’t shave for days,” John argued.

“But at the hospital I’d like to shave every day,” Sherlock rolled his eyes.

“Now-Now, *no fighting* boys,” Mrs. Hudson broke up the argument before it could flare up, “You can have your little *domestic*....back at the flat. For now, you have to keep it *down*. Come on, Sherlock, you need to sleep now. I will stay with him here tonight.”

“No,” John said, “I will.”

“Jawn will,” Sherlock said, yawning wide. Sleep was catching up to him finally, the results of a long day, the meds and the last bit of adrenalin leaving his body. His body went slightly slack and he blinked sluggishly.

“And you keep insisting you are *not* a couple,” Mrs. Hudson whispered into John’s ear, startling him. She was grinning but there was also a look of extreme peace and happiness on her, as if she was watching her son settle down and get comfortable in life, with a partner she approved of. John, despite his extreme urge to correct her again, decided to just let it go and give Sherlock the silence he needed to fall asleep.

Sherlock had fallen asleep almost immediately. As the evening proceeded towards the early stages of the night, the soreness and pain from injuries often flared up so John was pretty pleased he had managed to pack Sherlock off to bed by 8 PM. The events of the day, whatever he could imagine through the account Sherlock had given him so far, kept coming back to him again and again and he decided to go out for a walk, to clear his head.

“Go, take a walk, looks like you need it,” Mrs. Hudson said, “I will be here at least till ten. Do you want me to call one of my friends and have some food brought in here for you?”

“Nah,” the good doctor replied, getting up from the chair and stretching his limbs, “I’ll pick up something on my way back in.” Eventually John had picked up a couple of chicken coleslaw sandwiches and some apple juice and bottled water from a nearby store and parked himself on a chair next to Sherlock’s bed, eating his dinner in silence. Mrs. Hudson had lingered around for a brief while and left once John was done with his food. The doctor came at 10-30 pm for the routine checkup and assured John that all was well with his friend. “I’ll be back tomorrow morning at 8 am for the morning rounds, call the nurse if anything is needed during the night. I’ll be around all night Dr. Watson.”

Relieved and also exhausted, John sat on a chair, putting up his feet on a stool. After watching a few minutes of a BAFTA-winning film on his phone, with the sound turned off, he dozed off.

He dreamt of some place nice, where everyone was happy and everything was bright and sparkly. An aura of happiness hung around and he saw Sherlock playing the violin while he

worked on a wooden ship he was building from scratch. He heard Mrs. Hudson somewhere in the background, chatting merrily, her voice mixing with the violin strains and other ambient noises from Baker Street.

He realized he was dreaming of Baker Street and a life that.....*what was that?*

That was when he woke up to a nasty surprise. He felt something cold pressed to his temple and, being a soldier, it took him two seconds to figure out that this was a gun. His eyes first searched for Sherlock and found him peacefully asleep on the cot. Thank God for *that*! Next his eyes lingered over to the digital clock on the nightstand which said it was 2:21 am. God, this was going to be a long night.

Taking a deep breath he asked, “What do you *want*? Whatever it is you want, we can talk it out. He’s not in a position to negotiate so I’ll do it on his behalf. Lower the gun, I am going nowhere, I can’t escape and *leave him behind*.....so please!”

The gun was pressed a bit harder into his skull before it was removed. Then a smooth, cultured, polished voice said, “Follow me.”

It was only when John stepped outside that he realized the person who had held a gun to his head and the person who had just spoken were two different people. A man and a woman. A rather attractive woman, brunette, dressed in a smart business skirt-suit, her face immaculately done up with Estee Lauder and Chanel. Next to her was a tall man, taller than even Sherlock, in a three piece expensive suit with a tie that probably cost over a hundred quid. He looked regal and polished, very cultured and a modern and urban version of the Victorian gentleman, who had been born and bred in a noble house.

“Okay,” John raised his hand, “I am here, I am unarmed, I am ready to talk. Please, whatever it is, I can try and help but no more violence. He’s already hurt pretty bad. If you want him off the case then I shall try my best.....”

“Dr. John Hamish Watson,” the man spoke in that same measured, polished voice, only this time it had a layer of snootiness hidden underneath, “Born and raised in east borough, to parents who were both in government jobs, the younger of two siblings, one elder sister Harriet, older than you by a year and half. Parents deceased. Sister divorced. Two properties, one in Berkshire where Harriet lives and one in Leyton, which is in your name but you refuse

to stay there because you want the Berkshire property. You draw a handsome pension, got a lump sum for the temporary disability you faced and currently with St Bartholomew as a general surgeon.....the childhood and schooling, where is that?"

"Boss, here is his portfolio for the years before he joined the army," the woman handed him a light blue folder.

"Oh yes, studied in a private school, not ivy league though, was a very good student, got a full scholarship to one of London's best and most famous medical colleges, joined the army, wanted to be a commissioned officer but there was a problem of height.....how tall are you?"

John's jaw was sweeping the floor.

"I asked you a question, *doctor*," the man said. He was leaning on his umbrella. John saw a pocketwatch in pure gold hidden beneath the waistcoat. His watch was as expensive as half of his year's salary. John was baffled. Who dressed with such meticulous care and followed such formality of manners or donned such ultra-formal and super-expensive clothing items? That too in the middle of the night, at a clinic.

"Who the fuck are you?" He snapped, not very amused.

The woman gasped. The man simply lowered his brows, "Language."

"That's how people speak when they are given such odd surprises," John snorted, "If you want better language or manners, then identify yourself first. I do not answer to anyone and everyone. As for my height, it is none of your business."

"My brother is quite tall, a beanpole," the even taller man said with a mere twitch of his eyebrows, "I just want to ensure his soon to be husband is not a dwarf.....whoever thinks an elf and dwarf make a good combination is pure nuts. But no, you're above that threshold, maybe around five feet six inches...."

“Short people usually get offended if asked about their height,” the woman tutted in, “Yes, by my estimates he would be five feet six inches, about 1.7 meters to Sherlock’s 1.82 meters. You’re like what.....1.89 meters, so he seems a bit too petite.”

That was all John could take and he could take no more. *Petite?* PETITE? Was he just called *that*? Oh the shame, the ignominy and mortification of it all! No, he *wasn't* staying quiet for a moment longer, the *clinic, patients, silence* be damned. “Hold it you two, you mean to say you’re Sherlock’s brother, the same one who heads the Mi6?” He sneered at the tall man before turning towards the woman, “So should I suppose you’re the wife? But then no, you just called him boss, so you’re an Mi6 operative as well. You work for him. From your high heels, long and polished nails and makeup it appears you too do a desk job and not slog around on the dangerous missions.”

At first both of them appeared to be struck by lightning. They stood there, stock-still, expressions frozen on their faces, eyes wide, their body language suggesting a complete unpreparedness for this situation. *Finally* the tall dude tilted his head and nodded. “Oh my God,” the woman looked amused and delighted, “They *are* together. See how he deduces, just like Sherlock.”

“Wait....” John tried to stop her and say something but she went on.

“I told you boss, they’re living together, solving cases together, have regular fights and makeups and, according to the DI, the poor doctor was in tears when he arrived here.”

“Then I would like to know why he wasn’t there when my baby brother got roughed up?”

“Wait, stop, I am.....”

“You are supposed to look after him. He went into a dangerous situation alone. Where exactly were you when this happened?”

“Boss, my GPS readings tell me he was somewhere near Piccadilly, at the pub.....”

“STOP IT NOW,” John yelled, “This is insane!!!” Almost immediately someone groaned, a nurse came around and asked him to keep it down and they also heard a curse from the next room. A quick peek into Sherlock’s room showed him asleep though.

“Okay, let’s take this step by step,” the tall suited fellow said in a whisper, “Yes, I am Mycroft Holmes. Thomas Mycroft Chad Holmes, elder brother of William Sherlock Scot Holmes.”

Getting Closer

Chapter Summary

An injured and grumpy Sherlock and a caring Dr. Watson

“Why put a gun to my temple, I could have been alerted simply by a touch on the shoulder,” John complained as he and Mycroft walked around the clinic driveway, with the attractive woman (whose name was supposedly Anthea) watching over Sherlock. John didn’t think Sherlock was in any form or shape of trouble, because the place was teeming with several other Mi6 people, all in plain clothes.

Well, not entirely so! “Men in dark suits, starched white shirts, those expressions on their faces, you guys are not exactly keeping it discreet either,” John added, taking a sip from his coffee which Mycroft had handed to him.

Mycroft ignored the second comment and focused on the first question John had asked. “Why point the gun to your temple? I am a man who likes proof of concept and character. I wanted to see if you are as hot-headed and whimsical as some irresponsible people I know or a smart, level-headed man who knows we *all have to negotiate* sometimes. Everything can’t be solved by blue murder, threats or firearms.” He took a sip of his coffee (which he had brought along with himself, in a fancy thermos) and nodded, pleased with the taste, “Indonesian beans. Always the best! So, I know how my brother can be, hence the man living with him has to be the calmer, more rational one and yet, brave and prepared for any eventuality.”

“Your brother tests me at home for preparedness, you test me here.....I have to confess you guys are all a bit we...wee..wei.....”

“Weird. The word is weird.”

“Yeah, sort of. Hard to predict or understand.”

*"I am pretty easy to understand, so are my parents. But their talents skipped a generation. Sherlock is the black sheep of the family John, he is adored and feared in equal measures. Okay, so we are not afraid of him but for him, we fear *for* his safety and we know how reckless he can be. So it's really good to know he is not alone anymore, that someone capable of being his protective shield is now with him."*

John had to stop him at that point. "Mycroft, I hate to burst your bubble but I am not a gay man," he admitted honestly, "I date *women*. I only happen to live under the same roof with Sherlock because we can't afford the high rent. Also, one of our common friends got us together, I mean introduced us, and we thought we can sort of tolerate each other....there's enough space in that flat and....that's how it happened."

"Sounds like the beginning of a live-in relationship to me," Mycroft's mouth spread into a grin.

John did a facepalm. Of course. He had indeed made it sound like a relationship. Common friend, tolerate each other, space, the rent....oh well, wrong reason given, the rent wasn't high.

"Okay," Mycroft noted the hesitation on his face, "I understand it's too soon to talk about these things. But I am glad you are here and you're with him, no one but a partner stays back all night to look after an injured man who's fast asleep throughout. Next time, don't let him go off alone on dangerous and complicated cases, will you?"

"I have a profession, I have a life, I love solving cases with him but I can't seriously be expected to tag along every time....." John started saying but by then Mycroft was already on a phone call. By the time the call ended, he had to rush somewhere and John was effectively asked to go back upstairs and let Anthea come downstairs quickly. The conversation came to a grinding halt and John, already suffering from exhaustion overload, curled up on his chair and promptly went back to sleep.

Sherlock being Sherlock, he started to get restless, listless and bored from the end of the very first week. He had been discharged from the hospital on the third day, morning time, and precisely three more days later he had a meltdown. John came home from work to find a

room trashed, Mrs. Hudson angrily telling Sherlock to surrender his firearm whilst holding an old and barely usable shotgun in her own hands, and neighbors complaining about all the noise. “What are those things,” John asked as he stepped into the room, “You actually shot those bullet holes in the wall???”

“Yeah, I am about to go mad and no one cares,” Sherlock stormed and raged, “Hudders has her life, you have your work, Lestrade refuses to give me cases, Mycroft has ensured no client can reach me and I am...just fucking stuck here all by myself. I am bored, *bored*, BORED.”

John took a deep breath and decided to take charge of things. “Mrs. Hudson, call your boy gang to clean this up,” he said gently pushing her out of the room, “And lower that gun, I doubt if it still works.” She complained about Sherlock being so rude and violent and destroying the wallpaper to which John said he would draw something with spray paint around those bullet holes and make it look like a smiley face. “I won’t let it stand out in an ugly manner, don’t you worry, let’s get creative,” he soothed her, “As for him, I think it’s hunger pangs plus anger due to being at home all the time. He is ‘hangry’.”

“Tea and spaghetti with tomato-garlic-basil sauce?”

“That’s like our dear old Hudders.”

“Oh John, what would he or I do without you?”

“Destroy the whole flat, I guess.”

The humor helped and she left soon, giving John the window of opportunity to have a heart to heart with Sherlock. He sat him down, though he could feel the tension just ooze off Sherlock’s back and his shoulders like honey off a spoon. “Deep breaths, focus on my voice, give me just a few minutes of patient listening, please,” John said, kneeling between Sherlock’s long legs as the detective sat spread eagled on his (formerly John’s) chair.

The knee knocking and jittery nerves had lessened; Sherlock looked ready to give John his attention for a while.

“I know you are bored but you might not be in that situation for a lot longer,” he began with an assuring smile, “I never told you, *did I*, that I have started a blog after your little incident a week ago? No? Okay, I am telling you now. It’s a blog called ‘Sherlock Holmes, and The Science of Deduction’. On that I have started summarizing and outlining the details of your cases, starting with the very first one we solved together. I have updated one of your past cases too, since Lestrade gave me the details from some Scotland Yard files. In just five days the website has got a million hits and the net and some tabloids are buzzing with the news of a *great detective* named Sherlock Holmes. It’s popularity is so sudden and spiked up so much that it even got hacked for a little while.”

“I know about the blog,” Sherlock said grumpily.

“Oh....how?” John asked with a surprised smile.

“I was the hacker.”

“Oh dear God Sherlock, you’re just....”

“How does this help me? I want a case.”

“Then I will help you get a case.”

“How so?”

“If you had concentrated less on hacking my blog and read the comments and the ‘submit-a-case’ section, you would have known,” John said jovially, “I knew one of the most important things in this world is communication and the net has the sort of reachability that no word of mouth communication can ever achieve. Hence this section on my blog and a request to submit comments so we know what clients and potential clients are thinking.”

For a few seconds it seemed as if Sherlock was about to throw a sarcastic, cynical comment. ‘You are too rusty Jawn, there’s a way to do this without begging for cases’ or ‘I doubt if it’s truly worth it sifting through 999 idiotic and useless cases to get your hands on one real one’. But Sherlock didn’t seem to say anything, he just sat there thoughtfully, head hanging low towards his chest.

John leaned forward to blow away a piece of lint which was clinging to the edge of the chair whilst still kneeling between Sherlock’s legs. His hands were on Sherlock’s knees, about to leverage that ‘push’ up motion to help him stand up. Sherlock at that precise point rolled his head back on his shoulders, exposing his long milky throat, eyes closed.

It was at that point that Mrs. Hudson and those cleaning boys arrived, walking straight into the flat and the first thing they noticed were the two men. “Oh Lord,” Mrs. Hudson blushed hard and quickly shooed the kids out, even as some of them giggled and chuckled. “John, Sherlock, please lock the door if it’s something private and intimate that you’re sharing, like this,” she said, “Now I gotta lie to those boys and say you were just soothing Sherlock’s ruffled feathers and Sherlock was sitting there, lost in thoughts.”

“Isn’t that what it *really is*,” John sprang to his feet when he realized what had led to the sudden turn of events. Oh God no, did it seem like he was fellingating Sherlock, oh yes it did, fuck-fuck, this was not good, now all those kids had seen them too and they’d spread the word, double fuck, triple fuck, this is a bit not good. He looked down at Sherlock who was staring back at him impassively, as if nothing out of the way had just transpired in the room. “How can you be so okay with everything?” He asked irritably, “If there was really something between us I might have still bought your silence, a bit. But people are just going off kilter and calling us a couple....and it’s okay with you?”

Sherlock shrugged, “So?”

“So....I mean, that’s not true.”

“We know that. That’s enough.”

“Is it?”

“To me it is. Other people’s opinions don’t hold much sway for me.”

John swallowed whatever other words came to his mind. He wanted to ask Sherlock if he was gay, if not for curiosity then for an understanding of his housemate’s orientation, but gauging the man’s suddenly improved mood, the better thing to talk about would be a new case.

Eventually Sherlock solved a case sitting at home. It took him three days and endless complaints about how his lack of mobility had slowed down his mind too, but John knew the whole complaining aspect had a tinge of ‘I still did it’ kind of euphoria in it.

John also felt delighted, not just because he was able to help Sherlock but also because his faith on the man’s abilities was justified. Even if bruised and battered, Sherlock remained Sherlock.

The case was about a woman who had a rare collector’s item stolen from right under her nose and didn’t know how to accuse any of the four people in the room with her, since they were all very close to her. One was a sister, the other a best friend, the third her stepmother and the fourth happened to be her son’s partner. Sherlock established it was the son’s partner, a girl of twenty, who had conspired with the stepmother, who was an aunt of hers and wanted that item. She had felt rather wronged by the fact that her much older husband had given it away to the daughter instead of her, his second wife.

That night they *had* to share a room. Sherlock’s room had to be re-painted and some furniture rearranged and polished, since that was the very room the frustrated detective had trashed. John offered to take the couch for one night to which Sherlock asked ‘Why, when we have a double bed’.

There were a thousand things on John’s mind that he wanted to quote as reasons for not doing this. But his feet took him to the bed and his hand went automatically towards the bedside lamp, to turn it out. *Don’t John, don’t sleep here, the last time you guys slept on the same bed he jerked off pressed against you and you jerked off to those memories only minutes later. It’s weird. You’re turning into a queer, the sort that your father loved to hate, so don’t do this*John sighed, silenced the voice in his head and slipped under the covers. Almost

immediately Sherlock rolled over and came closer, facing him. *His face is only inches from mine, I can feel his body heat. Oh no!*

“Don’t.”

John blinked, “What?”

“Leave the light on, till I sleep.”

John withdrew the hand he had stretched out towards the lamp. “Okay,” he said.

“Just keep it on for a bit, if that’s okay.”

“It is okay.”

“Then why are you smiling?” Sherlock seemed vexed and his brows had furrowed. He was curled into a tight ball under the covers, John could easily tell that from his body language and posture. “Was I smiling?” John asked, quickly sobering up, “Didn’t realize that. Somehow it’s funny to note that the fearless, sometimes reckless detective also has some small little fears after all, like sleeping in the dark.”

“Only on certain nights.”

John gave him a quizzical glance, “Explain that.”

“Would you explain something first?” Sherlock counter questioned him and to humor him, John nodded. “Go ahead then.”

“That day...that evening rather, when I got injured during the case, you were out on a date with that female, Cassie...yeah, what happened with her? You had to cut it short, I know, but you never mentioned her again nor did you go out on a date with her since.”

John lay on his back, one arm folded and under his head and the other one on top of the covers as he fidgeted with them. “She turned out to be someone who’s.....not exactly what she initially portrayed herself as. Not some sweet, demure and kindly creature who has a fine talent for sowing and cutting. The only cutting thing about her was her sharp tongue and she seemed to resent the fact that I live here, with you.” He turned and gave Sherlock a look. The younger man who seemed sleepy as hell a little while ago was trying hard to stay awake now. “It’s fine now,” he continued distractedly, “We are not in touch anymore. She did call a few times but I never answered those calls or responded to her texts.”

“It’s not fine.”

“Excuse me?!”

“You should speak with her. Or else she will show up here Jawn.”

“Oh no, she has no idea where I live.”

“C’mon, it’s not that difficult to find out, is it?”

John smiled a bit, “No, it’s not. But not everyone has the sleuthing skills of a certain Sherlock Holmes.”

“A woman who’s jealous and obsessed does better research than FBI and can be far more persuasive than any detective. See, I told you what she really was. Someone who’s trying to make her life better, an ambitious woman who doesn’t want to work her way up but marry her way up. I was right all along. So why don’t you trust me now and get in touch with her before she comes down to our doorstep.”

“I’ll do that.....but you’re not right on all counts, or on all matters,” John said with a serious expression.

Sherlock was yawning wide by then, clearly losing out in the battle between body and brain. His brain was refusing to shut down while his body started to go slack under the covers. He cut off the yawn stuffing his fist in his mouth and asked, “Where did I go wrong?”

“Her name’s not Cassie, but Carrie!”

The Loner by Choice

Chapter Summary

John and Mycroft talk about Sherlock

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

John was not too accustomed to sleeping with the lights on and woke up abruptly from a shallow and fitful slumber, having just dreamt that he was lying in an open field with the sunlight streaming down on his face. When his eyes opened he found himself in his bedroom all right, but the light on his face was definitely not the sun. It was the light from the lamp on the nightstand. His first instinct was to reach out and switch it off when he realized something else.

His free hand, which was on top of the covers still, was now....held by Sherlock. No, he was holding Sherlock's hand too. *They were both holding hands.*

"Oh no," he said, making a face. When did this happen? He couldn't remember! Heck, he couldn't even remember when and how he fell asleep. As he gently but firmly pulled his hand away from the other man's grasp, he also reached out and turned off the light at the same time. Sherlock muttered something in an irritable voice, pushed at John randomly and the next moment he snuggled closer to the doctor. Before John knew what was happening, a dark headful of curls rested on his chest and an arm was slung across his stomach. To complete the picture, Sherlock lifted his leg and threw it over John's knees. "That's great," John snorted, well and truly caged in from all sides by his housemate.

"Sherlock....Sherl.....please...."

"Mmmmm."

"You need to move."

He heard a soft but steady stream of snores. “Oh well,” John sighed, “At least one of us is going to sleep like a baby tonight.”

But he somehow proved himself wrong. Shortly afterwards he fell asleep again, once again without realizing when he had slipped off. This time he didn’t dream of anything, instead enjoying a deep and dreamless rest that left him refreshed and very cheerful when his eyes opened next. He felt reborn, he felt rejuvenated, he felt nice and warm and cozy.

Nice and warm and cozy? That was because he was literally buried under the weight of the lanky lad Sherlock.

John took a few moments to assess the situation. It was already confusing enough that he was sleeping on the same bed with Sherlock again, to top that he had this incredibly deep and refreshing eight-hour sleep even though his housemate was literally all over him. To add to this, he didn’t *even* find it *too* odd or too *revolting*. He had no immediate or burning desire to push Sherlock off like he would have done to any other man.

What was going on with him?

“Mycroft.”

Sherlock looked up from his usual pose, seated on his favorite chair with all ten fingers steepled under his chin, a posture he adopted whenever he was into deep and ruminating thoughts. “I see you have met him then. Hospital?”

“Yeah, at the same clinic where you were recovering after that.....incident,” John said as he got his tea from the kitchen, before plonking down on the chair opposite Sherlock’s; a chair that had been given the name ‘Johann’ and earmarked as John’s ‘throne’. Sherlock let out a small snort and looked at John, his blue-green eyes glittering with thrill and awe, “Did he offer you some money? Hard cash or cheque or bank transfer? Did he say he will pay you to

spy on me or to pass on information or...or....for....anything silly that satisfies his unrealistic and morbid curiosity about my life. Come on John, you *have* to tell me the rate he fixed for me and my cooperation into his schemes!”

One month into Sherlock’s brief hospitalization with injuries sustained during a case, the detective was back on his feet again and busy as a bee. John tagged along on most cases with him, unless it was pure profiling or decoding, which really didn’t involve any danger or going anywhere beyond a desk and a laptop. It was proving to be *difficult* because he had at least eight hours of work every day at the hospital, six of which were often spent on surgeries. Clauses on his contract said that a couple of days he could work six, which he often managed to do, and on other days he put on ten hours so he could drop to two hours on other days or just take a day off without affecting the overall hours he needed to clock.

“Should I even ask?” John snickered.

“No, you know how I deduce,” Sherlock waggled his brows.

“Yeah. It was him.”

“Yes, but what did he offer?”

“Sherlock, why? WHY? As I see it, you have enough and more money of your own. At first I thought you had no income but you seem to have a steady paycheck as a forensic investigator and expert with occasional handy payouts due to your inventions and cases. You even have an inheritance for Christ’s sake. Why would you even need Mycroft’s money?”

“Simple,” Sherlock said, making a holier-than-thou gesture, “It’s the same answer a climber gave when he was asked why he wants to climb the Everest. ‘Because it is there’. Yeah, same answer from me.”

“You want the money from Mycroft just because the money is there.....as if just because *he has the money?*”

“Yeah, so? Not everyone gives up on their share just because they didn’t get the exact thing they wanted.”

John made a disgusted face. “Come on, with your powers of deduction I had expected better from you. My parents made a weird set of decisions during their last few years. When my sister came out as a lesbian woman the two homophobes threw her out of the house and cut off all ties. When I joined the army and got my surgeon’s license at the same time, fulfilling their dreams for me, they put everything in my name by disowning my sister. I protested then, told them it should be split into two, but they turned a deaf ear on that. Even then I had said I wanted the suburbia property and not the flat in London. *I was very attached to it.* But things turned tail after I got commissioned outside the country. Suddenly they were both dead in a space of a month, Harry was back on the will, and she was the one who got that property I was so fond of.I was the one who spent the summers there with my grandmamma.”

“Talk to Harriet.”

“You know I don’t. Hey, why are we talking about my sister? What about the Mycroft topic we were discussing.”

Sherlock grinned sheepishly, “I was kinda hoping you’d forget and we’d digress towards another case.”

“Not happening,” John said sternly, “The upside of living with you and solving cases together is that I understand you too well to fall for your tricks.”

“Oh well....okay. You see, in my family Mike is the dominating factor. My mummy....our mummy, but she loves me more, I am sure....okay, yes, so mummy is a strong and reasonable woman while daddy happens to be fonder of Mycroft and very supportive of him. Alright, I think I just confused myself.”

“Job well done, you confused me too.”

“I mean, he takes all major decisions, he is the better son, he is more responsible, he is always at the helm of affairs, he is the bigger support to the parents, he’s more popular in the

family, he even happens to have a better excuse for being single. Hmmmff! He was a fat bastard as a teenager, when he used to *alternately bully me or ignore me*, but now he is even worse than that, he's a slimmed down bigger bastard in an expensive three-piece suit and signature tie."

"Every family has a favorite and a black sheep."

"Who said I am the black sheep? I am not."

"Okay, you are not. So about the money....."

Sherlock pouted, "See, he is a wizard with the stock market and makes huge profits from his investments and speculations, on top of that he gets paid incredibly well as a senior and extremely critical government official. He was the one my father named as a benefactor of our grandfather's will and along with daddy he has made real estate investments that have paid huge dividends. Mycroft is worth over thirty million quid."

John swallowed. That was a very handsome amount. One could live off that for a lifetime and still have enough left for two more generations. Well, Mycroft had a knack of making money and generating income, one couldn't fault him or envy him for that. Some people were just gifted that way. He looked at Sherlock, who was staring at him very keenly, and asked him a silent question. The detective understood and immediately answered him. "No, I am not after his money. The problem is, he convinced mummy I am unstable and unpredictable and not-dependable and she put my share of the inheritance from *her side* of the family, about five and half million, into a trust controlled by him. He is a joint-account holder in all my bank accounts, keeps a strict watch on my money."

"How peculiar," John said, feeling genuinely bad for Sherlock, "He doesn't want your money though."

"Nope. He's not a thief. Just a control freak."

"Oh well.....I suppose he feels better if he knows you have a nice cushion....."

“And leave me with a paltry sum every month, like some fifteen year old on a strict allowance. He will give me more if I ask, but that’s precisely what he wants me to do, make me ask.”

“Your parents,” John said, rubbing his chin, “One side names Mycroft as heir and cuts you out, the other side puts you as co-beneficiary but names Mycroft as overall controller. Isn’t that.....completely weird?”

“Don’t ask, I am as bad as them. I am aware we’re not easy to get along with, so the fact that you do and Mycroft is willing to bribe you, that’s *remarkable*.”

“Mycroft offered to pay me my monthly salary as a surgeon if I attach myself to all your cases. At the same time he doesn’t want me to give up my career, so he asked me if I would be willing to do a part time job as a forensic expert, as an autopsy expert etc with the Mi6 or the Yard. Flexible hours, no one to be answerable to, all I am expected to do is be with you and keep an eye on you all the time.”

“Thousands of pounds a month to babysit me?!? Really?!” Sherlock howled with laughter.

John started to smile as well, “Yeah, *well*, he *did* seem concerned when he called me today. Said he has a complex and interesting case for you but that might be a dangerous mission. He insisted that I be there with you when you travel. It requires us to travel to Amsterdam and stay there for almost a whole week and I said it would impact my job, so.....”

“Charge him for this service,” Sherlock suddenly grew serious and his deep robust voice dropped into a naughty, cheeky whisper of a conspirator, “Charge him by the case or the month. We shall split the money 50-50. You don’t have to compromise on your surgeries and patients. We can always work out a solution and you could sneak back half way through, while I stay back and solve the case completely.”

John was in awe by the time he was ushered into the formal reception room of Mycroft's Belgravia mansion. It was his official residence, not his own house, but still the doctor felt goosebumps on his flesh when he stood outside the imposing eight bedroom, seven bathroom property with an indoor pool and terraced gardens at two different levels. The area was posh, with political ties and influence, prestigious and eyeball grabbing. Inside it was all wood paneling, marble and glass, an eclectic mix of the quaint and contemporary, with art and décor that could actually make people gasp with admiration.

"Hello Dr. Watson....sorry, John, how are you?"

Mycroft sashayed into the room in his expensive embroidered robe, silk pajamas, embroidered house slippers and a smug expression on his face. That was the moment John noticed the similarity between two brothers, neither of those two attention seekers could enter any room normally, they always needed to make a grand entrance, walking in with a flourish or some elevated gesture! They shook hands and Mycroft explicitly but casually mentioned that he had four properties in London and two in the countryside, and one of those London-based properties was actually two blocks down, right there in Belgravia, a neat little five bedroom four bathroom rowhouse.

"I understand you have amassed, earned and inherited wealth," John said evenly, "But I am not here to discuss your proposal. I can't be sold out for any amount of money, nor will I tattle on Sherlock even if I am put under the scanner. It will spoil our equation. He has severe trust issues and if I break his trust once, he'll never let me close again....I mean, it will destroy our friendship and we will neither be working or living together thereafter."

"Look, if you need more money...." Mycroft sounded a bit....desperate? But John stopped him, "Please, don't even go there."

"Then why are you here John? You could have just dropped a text or called."

"I am here because I have some questions."

For a second Mycroft seemed pretty astonished upon hearing that. *He was the one* who asked questions, this was a very different moment when the proverbial boot had been placed on the other foot where the questions were to be thrown in his direction. But he recovered

remarkably quickly and made a mildly indifferent gesture with his hand, “Sure thing. Go ahead and ask me.”

John kept his tone very polite and courteous, not wishing to take advantage of the big man’s cooperation. “Why do you want to control Sherlock’s life and finances? He told me a few things, which sort of baffled me at first. But every family has a certain dynamic and that’s what propels their actions. I just want to know....why. Believe me, it will be a healthier equation between me and Sherlock if I am aware of everything and understand some of these dynamics.”

“I appreciate the honest question and an effort to gain an insight into Sherlock’s life,” Mycroft said after a few moments’ of afterthought and deliberation, “As his partner you deserve that knowledge, that story which made us what we are today.....as brothers.” For once, John didn’t protest this statement ‘his partner’, because he knew that gave him the biggest leverage to learn about the brilliant man’s background, childhood and perhaps some of the grey areas of his life. He sat looking interested but not curious, eager but not too eager. Mycroft took a seat on his vintage armchair and picked up the expensive Oolong tea they had been served by his live-in housekeeper.

“Sherlock was a very precocious child, brilliant at one hand but easily bruised at the other. If he had an enormous advantage over other kids, he had a big disadvantage as well, as you can understand. He got bullied often because he was simply so much cleverer than the rest, but he couldn’t take it with a pinch of salt. Either he got violent and hurt someone bad or he got so upset he wouldn’t go to school for days.”

“As he grew into a teen he became more and more closed and guarded. Earlier he’d come to me with his troubles, if not to mummy or daddy. But as we grew up, the difference in our ages screwed up our equation. I got busy with studies, friends, ambitions, and I admit I ignored him.”

John shrugged, “Sounds like normal childhood problems to me. We all have them.”

“Yes, but not every child is Sherlock. He needs that one friend, confidante, whom he can trust.”

“Mycroft, he is a block of ice. He shows no interest in.....”

“Making friends and going out, dating and doing normal things people in their late twenties do,” Mycroft completed the sentence for him, “I know. That is his shield, his weapon against betrayal. He really fears abandonment, he is wary of being taken advantage of. Aside from you, there was just one other friend from his college days, Victor Trevor, who he trusted and was fond of. But he left for US after they finished Uni and....let’s just say Sherlock became a loner afterwards.....until he found you John.”

Chapter End Notes

Updates have been slower because there's a lot to close before the holiday season starts. Please bear with me. Hope you're still reading and enjoying the story!

Protective John

Chapter Summary

“I’m here,” came the reply from a foot behind him, “J-awn....I knew you’ll save me.”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

John could see through some of Sherlock’s standoffish, indifferent and sometimes downright rude behavior, now that he knew a bit about his childhood. Loneliness of a genius, a family that didn’t adequately support his emotional growth because both parents were busy virtuosos of their own kind. His mummy was a renowned mathematician, professor and scholar who had been a Nobel nominee. His daddy was a space scientist and headed Britain’s space research program for over a decade.

“But it still doesn’t explain why you need to control his finances,” he argued on Sherlock’s behalf, “He’s a grown man now, settled into his work, earning enough to live a comfortably luxurious life. He can surely manage his money.”

“Nope, not if he has his way with the money,” Mycroft gave him a crooked smile and shook his head, “He once gave away half a million bucks to a homeless man who had offered him some help during a case, a very minor insignificant help that could be rewarded with just a few notes. Another time he forgot he had opened an account in a certain bank and had mummy not intervened and closed the account on time, it was about to get hacked and the funds laundered by an international crook who wanted to take revenge on him. Another time he set up a lab in a family friend’s residence and wanted to create some funny product related to bees. It didn’t work and the entire thing just blew up one fine morning.”

“The lab?”

“No, the house.”

“He blew up the house?”

“Yes and daddy had to pay the damages. Of course those people are no longer ‘family friends’.”

“My brother could have become a scientist or a scholar, like our parents,” Mycroft continued, “Or a government official like me, maybe our best agent here. He could have become an astronaut or a concert violinist or a startup wizard with a brilliant product idea. But he chose to be a jack of three trades. Cacophonous violinist/criminal profiler/sleuth. Working on his own, his aversion towards authority and discipline so huge that he is mostly disliked despite his work speaking volumes for itself. His eccentricity extends towards the way he spends his money and the way he spends his money also alerts me to what he’s up to. A big transfer to a certain someone.....oh I have to figure out whatever the hell is up with this mystery receiver, because he might be an African warlord masquerading as a pirate.”

“You’re being slightly dramatic, Mycroft,” John said, though he was slowly able to see the other man’s point of view.

“Strange, people say I am too stoic, that I often come across as a cold fish,” Mycroft gave his measured smile, “Just like Sherlock. Only difference, my persona is not a façade or a shield to create some space and walls around myself. This is who I am, no apologies. I do what I think is right and contrary to what you’ve been given to think, I am not controlling Sherlock. I am merely keeping an eye on him. So, are you going to help me or not?”

“Help you with what?”

Mycroft cracked his knuckles and sat up straighter, pouring himself a second cup of tea. “I want you on his cases all the time, every single one aside from the regular stuff he handles with us, at the Yard or independently. Whenever he needs to lock horns with a criminal or find out who that sneaky and devious criminal is, when he needs to run across London looking for clues or travel out of town or country for cases, he needs his faithful and ever vigilant and protective John around him. If you won’t let me keep an eye on him, with or without payment, then you do my job. You be the eye, the shield, the guard. I know you’re a brave, capable, intelligent man who thirsts for adrenalin and the occasional dangerous mission. Go ahead, knock yourself out completely.”

“I also work.....” John began.

“I shall take care of that.”

“But how?”

“Leave that on to me, John.”

“Yes, but...see, he’s a grown man, I am not even sure if we should be watching him 24/7/365. It just doesn’t make any sense at all.”

Mycroft was silent for a long moment and John mistook that for a sign of acceptance. He was about to thank Mycroft for his time and tea and take his leave when the elder Holmes sibling spoke.

“Sherlock has already attempted suicide, twice. Unsuccessfully. I don’t want him to be third time successful.”

Cold fear rose within John and he gave Mycroft a startled glance. No, not this, not Sherlock, he couldn’t have done something as silly as that, or something that desperate. No, no, never. But then, people who were suicidal didn’t think it was silly.....or wrong, they felt it was a way out, a way out of a life far more difficult than death. It was a complicated thing in their heads really, John knew because he had lost a military comrade to suicide before.

“If you don’t believe me, here is his personal file. Medical and activity records, academic records and the closest friendships and relationships he has had. I keep them all as a handy reference. Go through them. He attempt once, when he was thirteen. Then a second time when he was twenty. Tried to drown himself as a teen and then slashed his wrist the second time around. I don’t want to be woken one midnight to be told he has overdosed on pills.”

John took the file with shaking hands and gave Mycroft a small nod of acknowledgment. He also noted that the usually stoic and always in control man looked a bit nervous at that moment. Memories had clearly surfaced and the Mi6 boss managed to look paler than usual, the expression on his face haunted by the past.

“Oh Dr. John Hamish Watson, please do come in,” the Head of General Surgery and Trauma Department, Robert Royce, waved him into his large and somewhat cluttered office, pushing aside his half-consumed lunch and focusing fully on the junior surgeon, “I am sorry to have called for this meeting out of the blue, without any formal or prior intimation. I wanted to talk to you before you leave and you’re done with your duties for the day already, so I asked my assistant to arrange ten minutes between us.”

He put his elbows on the desk and leaned forward, adjusting his glasses. “I hope it’s *okay* for you to spend about ten-fifteen minutes with me?”

John was quite startled at this unusual and extra-friendly interaction. This senior surgeon and HOD could call anyone for a sudden meeting and no one would bat an eyelid. People were usually honored to be in the presence of this man, who was always busy and had little time to chitchat. “It’s perfectly okay doctor,” John replied with extra respect and politeness, “Also, I am not done for the day yet. I finished one surgery, appendix removal. I have at least four or five more hours to go. It’s only 2 PM now so yeah, attending this meeting is no problem at all.”

“Oh no, you’re done for the day because from now on you don’t have to do anything but the surgeries assigned to you. Maybe post-operative checkups can also be done but no more than that. Consultation and any trauma/emergency work can be taken over by Dr. Xu and Dr. Patel.”

“But-But...I-I didn’t ask for any changes.”

“I did. On your behalf.”

“You did? But why sir, if I may ask! Do you have any feedback on my work? I know I have missed a few minutes here and there but I always ensured my backup was there and made it up by working some extra hours later.....”

The older man stopped him. “John, did I even say once I am unhappy with your work? It’s been about two and half months and all I have heard are good things really. The only thing is....I do have a bone to pick with you. Why didn’t you ask me? Why did you have to go to the man who acts as the Queen’s ears and eyes into the nation’s affairs, domestic and international, and is literally one of the biggest advisors for the government of England?”

A lightbulb flashed through his head and John automatically ended up muttering one name. “Mycroft Holmes.”

“Oh yes, Mycroft Holmes, who happens to be the most powerful man in this continent, not just England,” the pepper and salt haired senior surgeon said, his eyes and voice showing the due respect for Mycroft’s chair, “I know you are his intended brother in law but at least ask me first, go through the proper channels once, then take matters to him. He called me to say you are working on some matters of national security, affairs that are endorsed and supported by Her Majesty the Queen! From today onwards you are not an ordinary employee of the hospital but an honorary member of our staff. You will be on our rolls but the rules that apply to regular surgeons won’t apply to you at all. Without any loss of pay or any changes whatsoever, I shall redraft your employment contract to give you more flexibility and a higher number of days off work and duties.”

John’s first instinct was to refuse. He as a wee bit vexed that Mycroft had taken matters into his hands without even consulting him or asking him once, but the end probably justified the means. This was all for Sherlock and John didn’t want a repeat of the incident that took place five weeks earlier. He didn’t want to make one more trip like that day, worried out of his mind if he was going to meet Sherlock or his cold, unresponsive body in the morgue.

“Will this impact my license, my future, my employment with this hospital?” He asked clearly.

“Not at all. But don’t believe me yet. Go through the employment contract with a fine tooth comb and only then you can believe me. I am sure you would.”

More cases with Sherlock is always fun, always more interesting, always a better way to spend the hours. Unless I am being retired or my license revoked, unless I am stopped from doing what I am trained to do, what I am skilled to do, I am always game for more work with Sherlock.

“I am sure everything is in order doctor and thank you for understanding,” he said, shaking Robert’s hand.

Robert shook his hand warmly, “Next time if you need any help with hours, work, anything, who will you reach out to?”

“You, of course, sir.”

“Sherlock,” John hissed as they hid behind two cars while the psychopathic, out of control assassin prowled around looking for them, “Let’s leave. We can get out that way. We will have to do this another day. He is armed.” He saw Sherlock point with his eyes at John’s pistol and sighed, “I know I have a gun too but we aren’t murderers. We have all the evidence, now the French police will have to do their job. Sherlock, he’s getting closer, before he shuts off the exit we need to make a move.”

“No,” Sherlock said, “I have a plan. He will try to seal the exit. When he does that, I will spring the trap on him.”

John was not sure that was a good idea. He had immense faith on Sherlock, he believed in Sherlock more than he believed in himself, but that was strictly limited to Sherlock’s expertise in laboratories and experiments or his ability to solve mysteries and saving lives. When it came to his own life or safety, Sherlock could be quite the maverick, sometimes even an outright kamikaze. He often rode on luck, sometimes he escaped through sheer coincidence, a few times he pulled a rabbit out of his hat through one of his genius moves. But John was aware that even genius had its limitations and one small little miscalculation could easily get the reckless detective into big trouble.

This seemed like one of those times. Sherlock was not content to have exposed the killer, he wanted to save two people in his custody and also take him down personally.

He opened his mouth to warn Sherlock but the psycho killer brushed past the car and he had to crouch lower, to avoid being spotted (and thereafter shot). By the time he raised his head to look again, Sherlock was not there at the spot next to him. “Oh God nooo,” he did a facepalm, “Please don’t do something stupid again Sherlock, not like the last time with the deranged cabbie in the Case in Pink.”

He heard sirens in the distance. The cops were coming. Oh the cops, *always ten minutes too late*. He wondered if that was in their DNA or it was some kind of trick to let them face the worst. He saw Sherlock tailing the killer who shouted dire threats at them while approaching the exit to press the button to seal it. Once that happened, they’d be trapped and the assassin was about to blow up the entire abandoned hangar, blow it all up sky high. There were two innocent hostages trapped in there.

Just as the killer tried to press the big round red button, Sherlock suddenly yelled at him from somewhere above. The killer growled and threw a knife at him. John yelled and ran out of his hiding place, gun raised.

Sherlock jumped down and the knife slashed part of his hairs and, missing him by a whisker, landed straight on the main lines. The electricity crackled, sparks flew and suddenly the place was plunged into darkness.

John wanted to cheer. Sherlock had turned the enemy’s weapon back on him. Now the automatic door wouldn’t close. But there was one little problem. The bastard had a glow stick with him, which he bent and set alight, holding it up to locate Sherlock.

Over the next thirty seconds one of John’s nightmares came true. He had always had this bad feeling that someday Sherlock would stick his neck out too far and put his head on the chopping board due to his foolhardiness and that was precisely what played out in reality, right under his nose. Sherlock took evasive action as the first dagger was thrown at him but the second one caught his coat (*seriously, why did he even wear that bulky coat in sticky situations where one had to remain inconspicuous and squeeze through small spaces*, John often thought this) and pinned him to the wall.

“Rat,” the assassin hissed, “You’ll pay for ratting me out. Never mess with the ‘Angel of Death’. I will *give* you a special end now. It’s called slit-throat, just enough to bleed you out in half hour.”

John heard those words, his blood freezing over with anxiety, as Sherlock struggled to free his arm and the formidable assassin swept closer to him, a few more daggers emerging from his pockets, shirt, shoes and even his belt. The bastard was far stronger than Sherlock and trained at doing this, even if Sherlock managed to escape John was sure this man had a gun hidden that could bring the detective down. His first instinct was to show himself and rush over for a heroic rescue or just shoot at the man from a distance, but something held him back. An assassin like this, who had formerly been in the army just like John, could only be overcome by a surprise factor. If he shot at him and missed the man would kill Sherlock sooner. If he showed himself, it would be a defeatist move since that cold-blooded psychopathic killer was in a better position than John to take fatal shots at both men.

So he crept around the broken parts of decommissioned planes that were lying on one big scrapheap and waited on the other side. The moment he saw the assassin at the right spot, John screamed ‘Sherlock duck’ and pushed at the heap of metal with all his might. The assassin turned but by then big chunks of metal and rubber, like broken wings and charred tyres began to descend upon him. John used that distraction and noise to advance on his enemy, when he stumbled on something.

An *axe*.

John had no idea what got into him but over the next minute he not only killed the psycho but chopped him into pieces in a mad frenzy, the blade of the axe colored crimson by blood. “You wanna kill my friend eh?” He shouted, his voice hoarse from screaming, “Well no, not in my watch. You will never kill another innocent soul again you motherfucking amoeba, this will be the end of you useless bag of bones and marrow.”

When senses returned to him, he gasped. *Did he really do this?* The killer’s body was now a shapeless mass lying in a pool of blood. He had become *quite the animal* for a few moments!

“Sherlock,” he called out, the area now plunged into darkness once more, “Sherlock!”

“I’m here,” came the reply from a foot behind him, “J-awn....I knew you’ll save me.”

This John is strong and caring and clever. But he is also a man, which means on the emotional front he will soon do something stupid.

Sharing a bed

Chapter Summary

John is worried about certain changes in himself and speaks to a shrink

After being all over John like a rash, Sherlock 'has' a rash

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Sit still you dumbass.”

Sherlock wanted to say something filled with vitriol and sarcasm but, seeing the thundercloud over John, he played it safe for a change and didn't say a word. By and by the chief of police came to them, congratulating Sherlock and John for ridding society of a notorious killer but also asked the obvious question. “Whoever killed him has a serial killer trapped in them, it's brutal. Who was it?”

“I have no idea,” Sherlock said, feigning the same kind of ignorance he did when he was asked about the person who had shot down the cabbie towards the end of the case of the ‘All Pink Lady’. When the police chief gave him a suspicious look he said, “It's dark here, you saw that, and it's impossible to do any deductions when you're seconds away from being shot or stabbed to death. I have a blanket around me, I am getting nursed for wounds I sustained, and my colleague was some distance away and had no way of seeing the deed. So you're not going to get any help from us on this. The bottom-line is, the Angel of Death is finally gone and young couples across Paris, the romantic capital of the world, are safe to stroll arm in arm again.”

John finished giving Sherlock first-aid and turned towards the police chief, “The paper work can be done tomorrow. He is in shock, I am not in much of a better shape either, so with your permission we would like to go back to the hotel.”

The chief didn't object. One of his men drove the duo to their downtown Parisian hotel. During the journey John sat with a livid expression on his face while Sherlock kept looking at him again and again through the corner of his eyes.

When they were at the hotel foyer, Sherlock hesitantly said, "I am hungry."

"No, you are not. You're never hungry after a case is solved, especially this dramatically."

"I haven't eaten anything since....."

"Since breakfast. It's not that uncommon for you to skip a meal. I haven't eaten anything since then either."

Sherlock gave one of those fake grins, "Then we should eat at the restaurant first.....no? Okay, we won't have dinner then."

John rolled his eyes, "We will eat dinner but in our room. I will order room-service. But if you think for even a moment that you're going to put off discussing your foolhardy actions of this evening, then you're much mistaken. Now march, keep it going soldier."

Sherlock gulped.

"I said MOVE."

There was a lesbian couple in the elevator when they walked in and, after following the last bits of the conversation, one told the other in French 'I am so glad we don't have men in our lives, right Clementine?' To that the response was an equally emphatic 'You bet'. John understood it, as did Sherlock, and the doctor was enraged to see Sherlock grinning impishly to that.

Once in the room John gave him an earful and Sherlock stayed silent and listened. No matter whichever accusation or threat was thrown at him, he didn't object or respond. He acknowledged his mistake of provoking a madman, staying back to nab the criminal without a backup plan in case the first one failed, and apologized for putting John's life in danger as

well. But towards the end of that near-monologue John delivered, Sherlock said something that diluted the situation completely. “There is something really sexy and powerful about watching a man get this violent just to save someone else. It puts my theory to test, my theory that suggests one needs to have a criminal bent of mind to be violent or brutal.”

John was stumped. Did Sherlock call him *sexy*?

“No, I mean, you cut quite a dashing figure that time....despite your height.”

Well look who's back with sarcasm. Only Sherlock could manage to disguise a compliment in an overall insult. “Go ahead and change. I will order something for us to eat.”

“I am not hungry anymore.....”

“Don’t act like a sulking kid now.”

“I have had a bellyful of your rants and ravings.”

The next moment Sherlock was pinned to the mattress (on which he was sitting) by a fuming John whose face was near purple with rage. “My rants and ravings are nothing compared to your monumental stupidities and stubborn mule attitude. And don’t mistake for even a moment that I can’t slap the shit out of you if needed, my lesser height doesn’t mean I possess lesser strength. I am a true-blue soldier, no matter how often you try to pull that down by calling me ‘just a military surgeon’, the fact doesn’t change.”

A blush rose up Sherlock’s cheeks and suddenly he squirmed underneath John. “Jawn, please, I need to use the bathroom.”

There was something about the voice, the sudden hoarseness, the strained tone etc. John was perplexed for a moment before he sprang up from Sherlock’s body and scooted away some distance. Gosh, how come he missed that?

They were both hard.

“Yeah, um, go on ahead....I will just, uh, order the room service then.”

It was not as if John didn't find that situation weird, or even *downright disturbing*; it wasn't as if he was okay about getting hard while holding down his bratty housemate who had just annoyed the hell out of him. But he put it down to adrenalin rush, extreme exhaustion, disorientation due to anger and an overall sense of despondency that had driven both to the edge. *We were just not ourselves*, John counseled and consoled himself as he labored through the rest of the evening, trying not to even look at Sherlock. The few times Sherlock tried to start a conversation, John snubbed him with icy politeness or a total lack of response. Finally, when it was time for bed, John kept his back turned towards his roommate and ignored him.

That night Sherlock was a total pest. If he had been upset with the way John had scolded him, he sure found a great way to get back at the doctor. Though the executive room they were staying in had two very comfy queen beds, Sherlock insisted they sleep on one of them since he had spilled water all over the one he was supposed to be lying in. Once they had retired for the night, the normally heavy sleeper Sherlock kept mumbling and flinching and throwing his arms and legs about randomly, catching John's shin, shoulder, hip bone and once even his face. Finally he hogged so much space that John landed on the floor with a thump, shaken out of a slumber that had been hard to come by in the first place.

“That's it,” the beleaguered doctor grumbled, “I am never sharing a room with him again.”

1 month later

“Okay fine Sherlock, you can sleep here tonight.”

John lifted the covers and Sherlock, who had lately started sleepwalking, slid into the spot next to him and curled up against him. In two seconds he began to snore softly, totally

relaxed and at ease. John lay awake for about an hour, pondering over the situation and Sherlock's forays into his room and his bed. *I must be crazy letting him do this five out of seven nights a week, but then he's not had an easy life and people with such disturbed childhoods grow into anxious, disturbed adults whose nervous side manifests itself in several ways, including sleepwalking.*

The next day he asked one of the most competent and experienced shrinks from the Barts psychiatry division to dine with him at the nearby 'Olive' restaurant. The shrink, whose name was Carol Fletcher, was a die-hard foodie and readily agreed.

"I have a feeling about this meal," she said midway through their main course.

"Whenever a shrink says they have a feeling about something," John grinned, "They're right."

"So this isn't just a lunch with a friend then," she grinned good-naturedly, sipping from her glass of pink lemonade, "Not that I had expected the suave, much-in-demand young man in his thirties to take a much married woman in her fifties out for any romantic reasons."

Then she looked at him attentively and seriously, "Jokes aside John, what is it? I hope nothing serious. Mental and emotional wellbeing is often neglected in favor of physical wellbeing. People hit the gym every day, go vegan, do yoga, focus on meditation and small meals, all to stay healthy and in shape. But what do they do for their mental health? Nothing!"

"It's about me....actually not me, but about my housemate....no, not him either, it's actually just a question I wanted to put across," John said after stammering and hesitating. "Sure, go ahead," Carol said and waited patiently, putting her fork down. John deliberated and hesitated, formed the words and then pushed them away, until she reached out over the table and put her hand over his. "Listen to me John, all of us have issues, including me and my kind," her tone was understanding and yet, objective, "On certain days *anyone* and *everyone* can be an emotional wreck. It just depends on which day gets *you down*. Whatever we discuss will remain between us, so be rest assured you can discuss *anything* with me."

"I am worried about Sherlock," John blurted out.

“Worried because he comes across as odd or worried because he’s given you some other reason to worry?”

“I am also worried about me.”

“Is his behavior influencing you? Are these two things, your situation and his situation, related?”

“Forget it, it’s probably a bad idea.”

“Okay. As a doctor I won’t push you speak about something you’re not ready to discuss.”

“No, actually I want to discuss.”

“Okay, how about we do this,” she said after a moment’s afterthought, “Once we are done with lunch let’s go for a walk around the park which is about two blocks uptown. Sometimes it’s easier to get things out of the system when you’re relaxed, casual and on the move. Sitting here, with all the tables full and waiters hovering about, I understand it can be quite difficult to let go of inhibitions and reveal certain things.”

“Good idea,” John perked up.

An hour later they sat on a bench by the fountain-side. At that hour the park was relatively empty and quiet and it had been an excellent suggestion from Carol to talk while they took a stroll around the leafy and serene spot. John had blabbed a lot. He had started slow and reluctant and then turned into this talking machine which just couldn’t stop the flow of words tumbling out of him.

“So,” he said, shame filling him now that he realized he had spoken too much, “You must be thinking I am quite the confused weirdo, right?”

She smiled without any contempt or judgement and shook her head, “No, you are not John. And even if you’re confused or feel a bit weirded out by yourself right now rest assured many of us have been in your place. What I hear from you is an irresistible attraction between two men, one of who claims to be married to his career and asexual, the other likes to scream from rooftops that he is NOT gay. Well, let me tell you sometimes we are all gay for certain people. It’s a natural instinct, to be attracted to someone who is good looking and charming with a larger than life persona and the sort of brilliance Sherlock carries on each leg is hard not to get impressed by.”

“What are you trying to tell me? I am now gay?”

“Straight and gay aren’t mutually exclusive or black and white with no grey areas in between.”

“I don’t understand.”

“We are all on a spectrum John. Sometimes we are strictly straight, sometimes we are slightly gay. Most of us.”

“So, bisexual? I read that word as either ‘greedy’ or ‘confused’. Me and bi, impossible.”

“Ouch,” she giggled, “Why are we so quick to label and judge? You don’t need to do either, my friend. Let the feelings flow over you, guide you in the right direction, and don’t call anything ‘impossible’ unless you have explored it fully. Mind you, I am not asking you to jump into bed with a man just to see if it works, but I am also not asking you to consistently brand that attraction is just rubbish.”

“Carol,” John shook his head, “This isn’t helping.”

“You do know how therapy and counseling work, don’t you? We don’t suggest plans and formula to any of our patients. Our job is to help them discover themselves, to find their own solutions, to figure out workarounds. I will be the last person to tell you to do or not do

things. All I am asking is that you keep an open mind and try not to thinking homosexuality is a bad thing and being attracted to a man is something to be ashamed of.”

“No, no, I am not a homophobic man, no.”

“You try not to be, but from what you’ve been saying it seems you do have some internalized homophobia. To figure out that source we will need to do proper sessions. I am not sure you really want that, do you?”

John shook his head. No, he wasn’t ready for that. He hadn’t even thought about it. But that scene from a Christmas Eve when his sister had come out had been sewed on to his soul. The moment he closed his eyes he saw his father railing at Harriet. *Harry had looked at me, for support, and I had stayed quiet as a stone. Was I being a coward or did I actually think she was someone odd, just because of her choice of sex-partner?*

Carol gave him an empathic glance. “I think you’re digging out some things from the past,” she said gently, “It’s a good thing because we are all products of our past. Things we have seen, heard and experienced remain with us for a long time and become a part of us eventually. Anyways, we need to get back now so I will leave you with one thought. See, we love people despite all their flaws and we like people because we appreciate some of their strengths. What’s happening between you and Sherlock could be love or like or mere attraction. You could start a self-exploration journey by asking yourself some questions. ‘Do I remember him during the day for no reason’. ‘Do I see them in some random stranger who passes by on the street’. ‘Would life become a burden for me if they left or would they become a burden for me if I stayed’. Pertinent questions. Answers could startle you but remain honest with yourself.”

John nodded slowly.

“If you need me, you know where to find me, alright?”

“Sure, thanks a million Carol.”

“No problem at all. Thanks for lunch!”

That night John dozed off on the couch while reading a book. It was 'Maurice' by E.M. Forster. Not the great writer's best work but it was intriguing, given the background that the author himself was a closeted gay man when he wrote it, based on a real-life couple he knew. Though terror struck by the prospect of being arrested for the 'Oscar Wilde Disease', he had still gone ahead and written his heart out. What was more, he had written a gay fiction during the 'stone-age' of sexual acceptance in society, and given it a happy ending.

He woke up to find the entire couch shaking. "Wha.....Sherlock, why are you trying to overturn the couch and why....are you naked?"

Sherlock stood there, shameless and stark naked, looking dazed. "What's there which you haven't seen before Jawn?" His tone was totally indifferent to John's visible blush and clear discomfort, "I have a rash down my back. Instead of going Victorian prude on me, please put some salve on my back. I shouldn't have eaten those mussels."

Chapter End Notes

Yeah, yeah, John's views on being 'bi' is ludicrous, as are his interpretations of what he feels about Sherlock, but John is a normal person here, not a politically correct wise old man!

Getting drunk and chatty

Chapter Summary

There was something about the way Sherlock called out to him that gave him a warm and fuzzy feeling in his chest.

“JAWNNNN!”

There was something about the way Sherlock called out to him that gave him a warm and fuzzy feeling in his chest. Six months into their unique professional and private arrangement, John was no closer to solving the mysterious attraction between them than he was on the first few days. He had tried self-exploration, asking himself questions that Dr. Carol Fletcher had advised him on, but the answers had frightened him so much he had stopped, completely.

It was quite unusual for Sherlock to be up before him in the mornings, especially on a Monday when John had a weekly off. There were no cases either, unless Sherlock suddenly got a call from a client or the Yard. “Coming, coming,” John grumbled, rushing into the bathroom to relieve himself. His bladder was about to burst. When he hopped out of the bedroom, tripping over his own feet and still tying the drawstrings of his sweatpants, his T shirt slung around his shoulder still, he was greeted with the sight of a elegantly dressed, magnificent looking woman in her sixties sitting on their couch. What was more startling was that Sherlock was serving her tea. *Sherlock was serving her tea!!!!!!*

John’s first instinct was to turn and bolt. Wear that T shirt silly, don’t stand there bare-torso in front of a lady who seems so cultured and refined. He tried to slip on the T shirt, got tangled in it comically and was sure the lady stifled a chuckle by the time he finally managed to get his head out of the right hole. He cleared his throat, straightened his back and managed a bland smile at her.

She smiled back broadly.

Sherlock just stood there, nibbling cookies from a jar which John had not seen before. Mrs. Hudson had given that, or was it this lady?!

“Lockie,” she sounded a bit reproachful, “Do the honors.”

“Oh yes, I thought since you both can speak you could easily do the....okay, fine, I’ll do it. John, this is my mum. Mum, this is John, my colleague and housemate. He is also my friend.”

John resisted doing a facepalm. Sherlock’s bedroom door was wide open and it didn’t need any genius to figure out the bed wasn’t slept in. Great, now mamma Holmes will also assume we are a couple and we sleep together, share a bed for reasons other than sleeping....

“Hello John.”

“Oh, yeah, sorry, hello Mrs. Holmes.”

“Call me Eugenia please.”

John sat down on a chair, then stood up, then shuffled his feet and sat down again. For some reason he felt rather ‘exposed’ before the lady, her self-assurance, graceful manners and composure was so immaculate that he felt like a fly buzzing before a swan. Sherlock was of no help in these situations, as usual, he was on his third cookie by then.

“You are far younger than I thought you’d be,” Eugenia commented, picking up her cup of tea, “Sherlock, haven’t you brewed any tea for John.” The simple answer to that could have been a ‘no’ but Sherlock answered ambiguously, “He is the one who brews tea, for both of us. Or Hudders does that.” Great, now he made them sound not only like a couple but an old married couple. Simply great! *Keep fanning the misconceptions.*

As the day progressed, *however*, John grew decidedly relaxed and comfortable in her presence and company. She was an interesting person, knew a lot about various topics and was also a good listener. After a bit of formal talk and knowing each other, she said she would be staying overnight and hence she’d need a room. John, seeing no other option, said she could take Sherlock’s bedroom while Sherlock could take his room while he slept on the couch that night. Again Sherlock poked his long nose into the conversation and made a

tactless comment. “We will stay in your room, like we usually do,” he said, on his tenth cookie now, “Mummy likes to watch movies late into the night and I think she will need the couch.”

Ouch. The lamest excuse ever.

John had offered to take Eugenia and Sherlock out for lunch but the lady said she’d rather go out for dinner instead and cook lunch at home. “I suppose the refrigerator is quite bare,” she said jovially as she opened it “Or Lockie still stashes body parts in it still?”

“God, he used to do that before too?”

“Oh yes he did. Eyes, fingers, elbows, joints.”

“You were lucky. I once saw a pair of eyes looking at me. It was a head.”

They both broke into peals of laughter. Sherlock didn’t say a word nor did he seemed the least bit bothered by the discussion. But after a few minutes he mumbled some excuse, pulled on his coat and boots and scarf and walked out of the flat, saying he would be back in two hours or so.

“John,” Eugenia said as she scanned the contents of the fridge, “I must say I am impressed. Vegetables, fruits, milk, cheese, bread, eggs, sausages, bacon, chicken, shrimps, chocolates, even Iced tea and juices and Coca Cola Zero cans, this really is a big change. This isn’t a bachelor’s thing, though I do see the beer cans, the wine and the gin and tonic cans.....quite a spread really!”

Everything just screams we have coupled up. Why am I even trying to pretend otherwise!

“I have a gift for you John.”

Since he had been distracted by his thoughts, he hadn't noticed that she had left the kitchen to get to her suitcase which was now lying in Sherlock's bedroom. She was holding a package in her hands, neatly wrapped in a pretty green wrapping paper. John startled a bit, "A gift ma'am? For me?"

On her insistence he accepted the package and started opening it carefully, trying not to look too eager or too disinterested. The situation was becoming unreal now. He was accepting a gift from the mother of his housemate, who was *supposedly* his partner, just like any *prospective* son in law would. The funny thing was, none of those presumptions about their relationship was true! But *truth be damned*, the item he held in his hands was so awesome that John found himself smiling as he looked at it. His eyes met Eugenia's, and he noticed that she had the same greenish blue eyes Sherlock had, and found the old woman smiling fondly at him. "You like the gifts Dr. Watson?"

John caressed the Gucci trio-leather-combo of wallet, belt and loafers. Perfect color, style and feel. He was *smitten*. But then they were expensive, *way too expensive*, the three items must have set Eugenia back by about two and half thousand pounds. John knew the Holmes family was wealthy, but even then it felt wrong to accept such a pricey gift. "They are just ...amazing. But really, Mrs. Holmes, I mean Eugenia, you didn't have to gift me anything. Three items are a bit much."

"There is a reason," she said, "One is for being a good friend to my son, a friend he's found after a long time. The second one is for not giving up on him, because I know he can be unbearable at times. The third is from a mum who's just very grateful to you for saving her son's life."

"They are beautiful, they're perfect."

"Um....John...?"

"Yes Eugenia?"

"If you are not that into him.....tell him, okay?"

John was trying to drink water and he almost choked on it and spluttered it out. Somehow he managed to swallow it and give Eugenia a look that was both surprise and relief. So someone saw through the whole thing and knew they were not really a couple. "I have been trying to tell him that for a while....." he began, but the balloon popped before it could even take off from the ground level.

"The last thing I want is for my romantically naïve son to think you two are in an exclusive relationship or this is moving towards a commitment," she added, bringing him down to earth.

Sherlock and John stumbled out of the car together, drunk. Twinkling street lights, Christmas carols playing in stores, the sight of people walking about with huge shopping bags told them the festive season was right there on the doorstep, but right now all they could think of was the case they had recently solved.

"Imagine, the diamonds were hidden in the turkey, the roast turkey," John giggled, unsteady on his feet but trying to keep Sherlock off the road as the lanky coat-clad man kept veering towards that side, "Diamonds worth like what.....*sixty million euros*????!!!"

"Sixty three," Sherlock corrected him gleefully, suddenly dancing a jig on the kerb and startling a couple who were walking past them. They were in their forties, well-dressed and good looking, and while the lemon-haired woman turned to give Sherlock a second glance with a smile, the man put an arm around her and rushed her along, as if she would run away with the much younger Sherlock any moment. John started to laugh at that sight.

"Jealoushhh, he ish jealousss," Sherlock said loudly, drool on his chin and euro signs in his eyes as he lurched back into John's arms, "They gave us a million euros, one whole mill, hahahaha, yeah-yeah-yeah baby, I am a millennial...millisecond...millimeter...."

"Millionaire," John corrected Sherlock this time and pulled his hand, getting him into the building where their flat was.

"Why is it called elementary, Jawn, tell meeee," Sherlock sang.

“It’s just the name of the building we live in, all buildings have a name and address....err, most of them do.”

“Elementary my dear Watson!”

“Careful my dear Holmes, that’s our neighbor you almost slapped.”

“Neighborrrrr? Okay, I must kiss her, we must always love thy neeeeighbour!”

John suppressed a chuckle, “Not her, but him. It is a him. Damon Wright, Australian, a much married man whose husband Javier, a Spaniard, might not appreciate your advances. Being drunk will not be accepted as a valid excuse either. Now-Now-Now, steady does it, oh God damn, the elevator isn’t working. Okay, we gotta take the stairs Sherl, you have to put your arm around me, okay?”

“Tum-ti-dum-di-dummm, I am a millionaire hummmm!”

John was having his own difficulties negotiating the stairs. He snorted, “You are one already.”

“Nope, no-no-no-no,” Sherlock shook his finger in the air, “Macaroon keeps all my money, I will not give him this money, I earned ittttt! Look a bald kid.”

“It’s another neighbor,” John apologized to the annoyed man with his eyes, “Mr. Whittaker. He is just short, he’s not a kid.” Sherlock immediately added, “But *he is* bald. I was right about that part hehehe!”

A mild and muted curse flew from somewhere down the hallway. Clearly the other man had heard them. Sherlock hooted, then stamped his feet a few times on the ground as if he was marching. John was busy trying to open the door, which he finally managed after three unsuccessful attempts. He dragged Sherlock inside and shut the door with his foot, shaking his head with a grin on his face. “I am not letting you drink so much again. Never again.

You're spewing very troublesome stuff at the people who are already a bit irritated with your violin playing at night. You might actually get us kicked out of here my friend, but then to give you the benefit of doubt, you're *worse* when you're not punch drunk."

"Buuutttt you still loooove me Johnnn!"

"Yeah, of course, I do love you.....but don't count on that if a mob chases you for being too rude and sarcastic."

"Those are noooottt crimes."

"Hmmm, point. But that's precisely why Lestrade and his team won't be chasing you. Mobs follow no legal clauses, yeah?!"

John was drunk too, if not as piss-drunk as his housemate, and he tipped backwards, losing balance, then landed on the chair Sherlock normally occupied. "That's MY chair," Sherlock screeched and tried to shake John out of the seat. Playfulness surging through him, John resisted and soon found Sherlock trying all kinds of things to get him up. He met each move with his own deft move until he found the green-eyed brunette sitting on his lap and refusing to get up. That was when John realized he'd taken things too far, he was hard *yet again* and Sherlock was grinding his pert arse over his clothed erection.

"Sherl, get up, please."

"No....."

"I'll give you back your throne." *Damn, I want him to keep doing this....no-no-no, I have a girlfriend now, a steady one, been seeing her for almost five months, I must be nuts to even think like this, it must be the bloody alcohol.*

Sherlock stopped grinding and, *to his horror*, John felt his hips jerk upwards as if seeking more friction. They were both breathing heavy and John no longer felt a drunk, mischievous

and out of control housemate on his lap but a really handsome young man, with a sexy gravelly voice, who smelled great and impressed him daily with his brain-power, sitting so tantalizingly close and in such a provocative manner, that he wanted to.....

Screw this man's brains out!!!!

Without a further word John used all his willpower and muscle-power, all his military training and discipline learned as a surgeon, and hoisted Sherlock off of his lap. He stood up, ignoring the vertigo he felt due to the alcohol in his bloodstream and said 'Bedtime for you little dickens'. As the detective gave him a confused look, John demonstrated his superior strength and stamina once again as he picked Sherlock up in a bridal carry. Sherlock yelped at first but then grinned, enjoying the moment. John said jovially. "This is your captain speaking. Your ride is about to begin now. Keep your lanky legs and monkey arms on the deck or you'll cause a mini tornado on the way to your destination."

"Your room," Sherlock whined. But fortunately his eyes were closing already.

"No, we can't keep doing that," John said firmly, "Now use the toilet. I am right here."

When Sherlock came back out, John offered him a tall glass of water. "Drink this or you will dehydrate yourself as you sleep."

"I don't want to give this money to Mycroft....."

"Don't have to. I'll open an account in Citibank, where you and I will be join-account-holders. This cheque goes right there. That's why I asked them to name us both. Let's build your fortune elsewhere, not through those Mycroft-curated accounts. Only thing, you trust me right?"

As John spoke, Sherlock was maneuvered on to the bed after he had been helped out of his socks and shoes, coat and gloves, scarf and belt, and finally his shirt and trousers. He was clad only in his green and white checkered boxers and a soft white tee which was often used as a sleep shirt. Lying on his back, cross-eyed from sleep and alcohol, Sherlock mumbled, "I trust you and love you Jawn!"

John froze. No, he is drunk. He is emotional. He won't even remember this tomorrow morning. "I do....." Sherlock began to repeat.

"I know, I know," John said, tucking him in with the thick comforter, "Good night now."

Thankfully Sherlock slept in less than ten seconds and John tiptoed out of the room without waking him. But as he lay down in bed, *alone* that night, John couldn't get those words out of his head. Was his housemate a *confirmed homosexual* then? And *in love* with *him*?

Poor Oblivious John

Chapter Summary

“He’s a darling, he really is, but sometimes he says stuff that....sort of bruises people,” John said, feeling rather uncomfortable that he was badmouthing Sherlock.

“Try me,” she said confidently.

John had, on purpose, kept Mary away from Sherlock and hadn’t even mentioned her during any of his conversations with his housemate

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Don’t you think you should introduce me to him now?”

John sighed, “Mary I.....I really want to, but then.....he is.....I am not sure how....”

Mary Morstan was a blond, slender, clever woman about the same age as John, thirty three. She was an office manager at a renowned dental and dermatology clinic located close to Barts. They had been introduced by one of the residents while both were lunching at a nearby café. Known for its celebrity clientele and high charges, its trained specialists who did Invisalign braces, Botox and facelifts like magicians, the clinic was a busy and popular one and Mary’s job was a well-paid and demanding one which Mary excelled at. She had just been promoted and John and she had decided to celebrate the occasion with a dinner, just before Christmas holidays started.

“He is a bit of a weirdo, but a brilliant one?” Mary smiled.

“He’s a darling, he really is, but sometimes he says stuff that....sort of bruises people,” John said, feeling rather uncomfortable that he was badmouthing Sherlock.

“Try me,” she said confidently.

John had, on purpose, kept Mary away from Sherlock and hadn't even mentioned her during any of his conversations with his housemate. In fact, he hadn't even told Mary about Sherlock for the first two months but she found out when one of the more famous cases made it to national news and Sherlock's celebrity status soared. "So you are a sleuth moonlighting as a doctor," she had laughed, expressing keenness to meet the great detective. John had resisted, for several months.

"It's been five months now," she said, not giving up on the topic that evening, "Isn't it time your girlfriend and best friend met each other? I know, I know you mean well, but this isn't going to help in the long run, John. He will be hurt if he knows you kept that big a secret from him and I won't be able to justify this 'secrecy' either. The last thing I want is to be the reason for a wonderful friendship to break up needlessly."

"Why should we break up?" John reacted instantly, "I am not going to stop being his friend even if we do move in together in the future."

She smiled again, her grey-blue eyes sparkling, "So we will move in at some point?"

"I suppose so," John replied.

Mary was a good woman, someone he shared common interests with, someone who was devoid of all drama and carried no baggage from her past life or relationships. She was clean as a whistle when it came to her image and reputation and her maturity belied the years she had walked on this earth. She was what someone would call 'an old soul', somebody who was calm and composed and yet perky and energetic when she needed to be. She was also incredibly okay with John spending time outside of work hours with Sherlock and gave him the space he needed. "I'd love to be the partner of a detective," was what she said.

"I am not the detective, I am only his assistant or co-investigator," he would correct her each time while deferring the introductions between her and Sherlock.

"John, I *never* really demand for things, you know," she said gently and evenly, taking his hand in her own, "I have been fine with only a single date a week and some texts and the occasional phone call. We've slept together but I have never demanded sex. You bought me

gifts but I have never asked you for one. I haven't asked for time or attention, nor have I ever asked you to introduce me to any of your friends or relatives. Whoever you chose to introduce me to, I have accepted that and never probed for any more. But *this*, it's important for me. Because he is very important to you. Even when we are together, just the two of us, you keep mentioning him so often that it seems he is right here, *with* us. This is the *only* thing I am asking for, to meet Sherlock Holmes."

John felt annoyed at himself. I need to stop talking about him constantly. "Because you always ask me to describe the cases, his name pops up," he said in a disgruntled manner, "It's not like I deliberately mention his name while we are on a date."

"Don't get me wrong," she said quickly, "I don't mind you talking about him and your cases. I am just saying that....he should know about us and I should meet him."

If you do, you will also run away like Pauline or Zeba. Or you'll get all jealous like Carrie or upset like Janet. Whatever happens, I will be single again and I don't want that, years of no sex was doing funny stuff to my body and head and I was getting attracted to Sherlock, my housemate. Gosh, I 'still' feel attracted to my housemate, at least two nights ago I was.....

"John," she shook him by his hand, "John, where did you get lost?"

"Huh," he blinked, "I was thinking we could have a drink at your flat after work....this evening."

She blushed, "Yes, that can be arranged."

Fortunately for him, that sudden comment and broad hint brought this topic to its natural end.

"Oh God, you're going to make me cum again!"

Mary moaned as John took a nipple in his mouth and sucked hard on it, all the while as he kept thrusting into her. He had cut out the foreplay and started sex the moment they had entered her small flat and Mary was so excited by the time they had taken their clothes off, she was wet and ready for the next thing.

In less than a minute she had cum, turned on by John's utter need to connect. But John, even though he was just as excited and aroused as her, couldn't bring himself to a climax. Five minutes passed, then ten, and he kept up at it in the vain hope that he would empty his balls inside her any moment. They always used a condom so he wasn't worried. But the orgasm came up, then receded, leaving him frustrated. Only thing was, Mary was enjoying herself and had started experiencing new tingles of arousal, pushing her towards a second climax.

As he fucked into her and saw her shut her eyes tight and open her mouth wide in ecstasy, something just seemed to snap inside him. She no longer looked attractive, she looked weirdly funny like that. But no, it was not her fault, it was his. He was getting these really odd things crammed into his head. Instead of her smooth skin and curves, he wanted more flatness and tight muscles, longer limbs and a hint of hair, he found himself hankering for hardness and tautness instead of the feminine softness and delicacy she offered. She was too wet there, he wasn't able to feel much at all, her moans made him irritable because he couldn't concentrate, oh dear, he was beginning to lose his erection.

He brought his hand down and rubbed at her clit, hard and fast, pressing down on it just the way she preferred.

Her eyes flew open!

“J-Johnnn!!!”

She came hard, wetness spreading over her thighs now. Her legs curled up, her nails sank into his back, she moaned out loud.

He quickly pulled out whilst she was still moaning and shuddering, floating in an orgasm that seemed to have shut off her brain completely. Even as he got up and off the bed, she kept wailing softly as she touched her own nipples, riding out the aftershocks.

Against his genuine concerns about the environment, he flushed the condom this time instead of tying it off and disposing it safely in the garbage. He lingered around in the bathroom for a long time, hoping to calm himself down as he grappled with this sudden change in his sex-life. Mary and he were not a highly sexed couple. Their attraction was mainly intellectual and emotional. But that didn't stop them from enjoying two rounds of sex once a week, at her place.

This time he couldn't cum, not even once.

When he stepped back into the room, ten minutes later, she was already in her embroidered silk robe and nursing a cup of coffee. "Yours," she said, handing him a mug, vapors still rising from it. He took it awkwardly and put it on the nightstand, choosing to wear his clothes first. For some reason he felt very naked and exposed. He had expected she would fall asleep and he would quietly sneak out.....

"So, am I invited over for Christmas?" She asked and this time he had no more excuses or off-topic discussions left to digress from this insistent demand. With a resigned shrug, he nodded and replied, "Christmas Eve dinner, Mrs. Hudson's place."

As usual getting Sherlock to agree on Christmas celebrations was a mammoth task. Fortunately for them, they had been invited to Sherlock's parents' home in Kent for Christmas lunch so nothing special really needed to be done on that day. Mycroft would also be there so it would be a nice family reunion. Mrs. Hudson was hosting Christmas Eve dinner, so that day was also taken care of. All John had asked for was a tree and some lights and decorations for it, but even there Sherlock grumbled and harrumphed about how this made him feel so ordinary, as did the whole process of giving gifts.

Eventually they did put up a reasonably good tree and Sherlock teased John about sticking to the lower branches while he added the ornaments and the star on the top. All surgeons at Barts had been given a Christmas gift hamper by the management and John utilized those items for an early festive celebration.

The expensive, fine bottle of red wine was opened and they did a toast for lunch, along with takeaway Thai food. A big jar of eggnog was also half polished off, the rest stashed away for later use. A large stuffed Santa was placed near the tree with a tiny chariot, elves and some reindeer harnessed to it. A large box of chocolates was grabbed by Sherlock (John had always suspected his friend had a sweet tooth even though no other item of food particularly interested him) while a very pretty cake stand (three layered) and a huge rich plum cake was gifted to Mrs. Hudson as her 'present'.

"Um....Sherl, I have some presents for you too," John said, "Since we'll start early tomorrow for your mummy and daddy's house, I thought maybe we could open those gifts a day early."

Sherlock raised his brow, "I don't have a....."

"Sherl if you talk about a case today then I swear I....."

"No, I mean, I don't have wrapping paper for your gift."

"My gift? You got me a gift?"

"Gifts!"

Despite everything, including the lingering anxiety about breaking the news of his girlfriend to Sherlock, John smiled fondly. Sherlock had always been so dismissive of traditions, calling them ordinary and boring and useless, and yet he had gone out and got gifts for John. The good doctor doubted he had purchased anything for his own family members, parents included.

"That's no problem at all," he said happily, sending Sherlock off to fetch them from his bedroom, "You don't need to wrap them in sparkling paper or pretty bows. None of us are ten-year-olds." He quickly took out his own gifts and placed them underneath the tree, feeling a bit nervous. This was their first Christmas together, eleven months into this unique arrangement of living and solving cases together, and never before had he bought any gifts for his housemate. He thought he knew Sherlock well and all the gifts were things he would

most definitely use....still, he felt a bit nervous about the whole thing. What if Sherlock didn't like any of them or laughed at them openly.

Sherlock came back, holding the gifts awkwardly and clumsily in his arms. They nearly spilled out from his grasp and John had to get up and lunge forward, grabbing one item before it fell on the ground.

He looked at them, stunned. Sherlock did put a thought into his gifts, multiple small gift items that were totally compatible with John's tastes. There was a fancy personalized cover for John's new iPhone. There was a grey silk tie which John had once mentioned he lacked in his closet. There was also a bottle of Jameson's, John's favorite, aged over twenty years. There were six glasses too, for the bar. John always loved a well-stocked bar with fancy items.

But there was one more gift, that nearly took John's breath away.

"Is this your grandfather's omega?"

"Yes. I want you to have it."

"But this is vintage, classic, very rare, you told me you'll never ever part from it. You can't buy this in the stores or online, it is a precious collector's item, nearly a hundred years old."

"I know the description Jawn. It's the disclaimer that's more important."

John stared in awe at the watch in his hands, it was such an amazing piece of craftsmanship. They didn't make watches like that anymore. "What kind of disclaimer are you talking about?" He asked, wonder and curiosity evident in his voice.

"That if it stays with you, it's as good as being with me....I mean, then it stays with me too, right?" Sherlock said hesitantly.

John *froze*.

That simple sentence conveyed so much that he actually had to take a step backwards to absorb it, mentally, physically and psychologically. In just a few words Sherlock had conveyed a lot, from his trust and fondness towards John to making him literally a part of the family. A little more digging into his soul and John realized why he was the only non-family member invited to the Holmes household the next day, for Christmas lunch.

Various thoughts swirled in his mind right then and his brain went into hyperactive overdrive. Sherlock was someone important to him, someone he wanted to protect and not just from enemies, but also from all forms of hurt and disappointments. He was someone whose friendship and presence he cherished and had gotten rather used to, and the absence of it would turn his world upside down. He was not ready for that! Inviting Mary for the Christmas Eve dinner had been a big mistake! He had to put that off for a later time, a better time. Not today, no way. He had to call her and cancel, make up some excuse, probably spend New Years Eve with her to make it up to her, but *Christmas belonged to him and Sherlock*.

“You don’t like them, do you?”

John blinked. He had got a bit lost in his thoughts and his lack of response had been misinterpreted by Sherlock. But that was odd. Why and how could a genius like Sherlock Holmes deduce incorrectly?! He could tell a person’s blood group by just glancing at their plate of food and here he was, unable to read into his best friend’s expression. Oh well, my happiness and acceptance means just as much to him as his joys and comforts mean a lot to me. We are on the same boat.....

Of *friendship*?

John decided not to linger around his maze of thoughts and focus on the task at hand. He proudly presented the gifts to Sherlock and said, “I hope you love them just as dearly and wholeheartedly as I adore the ones you gave me.”

“Don’t get so shit-sentimental now, gifts are just objects,” Sherlock pretended to be dismissive and John snickered. *Look who’s back again!* “Are they?” He asked, to which he

only received a grunt in response.

By and by Sherlock discovered a new Belstaff coat in medium ash-grey, a big jar of the product he used on his hairs to settle and style his curls, a Hugo Boss cologne, a book on the lives of famous violinists and finally.....the Black Pearl ship from the Pirates of the Caribbean series.

“You...you...you...made this?” Sherlock asked, stunned and stammering, eyes wide for a *change*.

“Yes,” John put on a noble expression, winked and added, “Six months of hard labor. I had planned well ahead for your Christmas surprise gift!!!”

Chapter End Notes

John will definitely end up with Sherlock and down the line he will also suffer for his procrastination over their relationship. Please be patient and read on, it's a slow-burn, unlike most of my other series!

Not Vacating this House

Chapter Summary

"Thanks for the gifts, including Mary"

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The ship looked exactly like the one Sherlock had seen in Mauritius, on a trip they'd taken to solve a case for an Indian born diplomat stationed there. There had been no payments for that case but their airfare and accommodation at a private beach facing bungalow had been taken care of and they had the use of the diplomat's car, which John had leveraged to visit a few places. One was a famous shop that sold model boats, from dinghies to ocean liner replicas. But Sherlock had been mesmerized by the Black Pearl.

They would have bought it had they not received a call from the diplomat's wife and Sherlock hadn't revealed that *she* was in fact the one issuing death threats to her husband with her lover's cooperation. They had to leave in a hurry and the purchase never happened.

So he had taken an hour each day despite his busy schedule to build the boat for Sherlock, *right from scratch*. What was just a block of rough wood was now the full ship, her hull polished, her masts a pretty and shiny black, her deck so intricately carved that one could even see the steps and hatches. Then there was the wheel, the captain's deck, the cabins and rooms located at various levels below with their portholes and cannons sticking out from the sides. Polished immaculately and not a scratch or dent on it, smooth and beautifully detailed, complete with its pirate flag and starboard, it was truly a *work of art*. It had been one mammoth task, sometimes painstakingly difficult, but John didn't regret a moment of it.

Now, as Sherlock stared at it and touched it with awe and admiration, all those hours of burning the midnight oil or working the skin of his thumbs off paid off handsomely for the good doctor. He knew Sherlock wanted to be a pirate when he was a kid, so maybe this brought back some *happy* childhood memories for the detective. *For a change!* He thought of buying some figures and putting them on the deck, the captain, the man at the wheel, a few sailors, a first mate.

“You truly outdid yourself Jawn.”

John knew that was the best and most gushing compliment he could coax out of the normally staid, cold and hard-to-please detective. “I am glad you liked it,” he said, “I wish I could have built a slightly bigger one than this one foot by one and half feet model, but I didn’t have tools or a workbench to do that and we don’t have a place for a bigger piece.”

“This-This is just the right size.”

Sherlock kept touching it all over, as if trying to believe it was *real*, then looking at John as if trying to believe *he* was real. *Did someone really build this for him?* “You made this yourself, not ordered it from that shop....?”

“No, of course not.”

“Carve your initials on the side, for me, please.”

“I knew you’d like that. So I already did. Your name and my name. See!”

“Oh!”

John checked his watch. Two hours to go before guests started to arrive for Mrs. Hudson’s dinner party. If he called Mary now and cancelled, she would probably still be able to set up something with her best friend Alice or her cousin Duke. Or maybe she would join the party in the apartment block she lived in, where several single people lived and had no one to celebrate Christmas with. Hence they pooled in money and organized a pot-luck dinner with each person bringing in a dish. He felt terrible about this but he also had a foreboding feeling in his head that this was a very bad idea of getting Sherlock and Mary to meet in the presence of Greg Lestrade, Molly, Mrs. Hudson and two of Mrs. Hudson’s sisters and Mr. Chatterjee, her ‘friend’.

Why did I do this? What was I thinking?

“You be here....um, I need to....erm....go to Mrs. Hudson’s for a bit.....see if she needs anything for tonight’s dinner.”

Sherlock merely grunted, concentrating on his ship and sitting on the rug on the floor now. He looked delighted as a child and busy as a toddler who had just received its first set of building blocks. He took out a detachable mask and put it back again, then took out the wheel and put it back again. His back was turned to the door and he didn’t even notice John pick up his phone and slip out into the hallway.

John had just started to dial Mary’s number when a pair of hands grabbed him and he spun around in a flash, almost losing his balance. “You must be Sherlock, so grownup now but still cute, lovely dirty blond hair, no wait, he was supposed to have curly brown hairs, isn’t it? That could only mean one thing.....” the old woman paused and pushed the glasses down her nose, staring at a hapless John from over it.

“That I am *not* Sherlock,” John finished for her.

“No, silly. You colored your hair.”

“No, I am really NOT Sherlock. Excuse me, I got a phone call to make....”

“Oh then you are John. The doctor who is also Sherlock’s sidekick....”

“Sidekick???” John was dismayed.

“Assistant, co-investigator, Martha did tell me not to use that word but I am older than her, and forgetful, so please forgive me son,” she said, sounding genuinely apologetic for her faux pas, “I am Mabel, Martha’s elder sister.”

“Oh, Mabel....Mrs. Mabel Willis, Mrs. Hudson’s elder sister,” John remembered their landlady talking about her, “You are the one who married a sailor who worked on a merchant

ship, and you have traveled all the way to Vladivostok and Tokyo on that ship, long, long ago!”

He had clearly made a huge mistake telling her that because she saw it as a way to start an endless monologue.

“Oh yes, oh yes, how kind of you to remember all that, yes I did travel all the way to the Far East and beyond. I even went to African coasts and Jamaica, where my then-young hubby and I took three full days off to frolic on the beaches and the ocean. Oh those were the days! But that was such a long, long time ago it seems like another life now, you see. For the past ten years, ever since the hubby retired, I haven’t traveled anywhere outside of London, not even to Cardiff or Warwick. We could afford it, you know, a bit of travel, even up to Belfast and Dublin. But he’s been around so much and for so long that all he wants is a staycation. He wants to be at home all the time, watch TV, drink some ale, catch up with buddies and play cards and chess and monopoly.”

She went on and on about her boring days nowadays and how she’d love to be single and footloose as her youngest sister Martha. *So she had the same tendencies as old Hudders, once she starts she cannot stop talking and she overshares. That’s fine, I don’t mind a friendly old lady chatting me up for five or ten minutes but right now I need to make that phone call to Mary.* John offered Mabel a placating smile and tried to walk away from her, towards the elevators, so he could make the phone call. But again the moment he pulled up her number, the elevator doors opened and out stepped Mrs. Hudson. She was holding a rather large package which she gladly dropped in John’s hand the moment she laid her eyes on the doctor.

“Oh thanks John. Where’s Sherlock?”

“I need to make a phone call. He’s inside.”

“Did he really love the gifts? He did, right? I told you he’s sweet and soft and needy inside. He just pretends he’s okay without any.....”

“Mrs. Hudson, I have to cancel the invite to Mary, for tonight’s dinner,” John blurted out, seeing no other way to stop digressing from the task at hand.

She was surprised, “Your lady pal from the hospital?”

“No, she is my girlfriend.....”

“How can that be? *You and Sherlock are together.*”

“I have been trying to tell you.....”

“Oh God, don’t tell me you guys have broken up. Even if so, please don’t leave us, don’t move somewhere else. I have become quite attached to you and Sherlock needs you around, you both are *so good* at solving cases *together*.....” John stopped her half way through and shook his head in frustration, “All that we can talk about later....I need to cancel before it’s too late and she’s already on her way.”

“But it’s too late already,” Mrs. Hudson said, appearing a bit uncomfortable.

When John lowered his brows and gave her a questioning look, she shrugged her shoulders and pointed at her flat. “She told me she wants it to be a surprise so I didn’t tell you,” her voice was low, she was stealing frequent glances at the open door of her flat where her eldest sister stood, watching them curiously from a distance, “But she is here already. She came in about an hour ago because she wanted to roast the bird, actually the turducken. You know, a turkey and in it a duck and inside it a chicken. I think she stuffed the chicken with a few eggs as well. She is a nice, friendly young woman and a good cook too.....so well, yeah, she is already here and that means.....”

“I can’t cancel.”

“Nope.”

John did a facepalm and hung his head, crestfallen at the way things had turned out. He felt bad for Mary, for himself, but most of all for Sherlock. Mrs. Hudson saw the look and asked, “John, what is going on here? If you’re trying to make Sherlock jealous.....”

“I-I need some air, I am.....Mrs. Hudson, this dinner, if I am....not myself....please forgive....me.”

With that John hotfooted down the staircase leaving a very shocked landlady behind.

“She is *definitely* not a virgin, she had had several relationships before, but I suppose she has already told you so, she’s an honest person who doesn’t fake it,” Sherlock muttered.

In the distance Mary smiled at them, mixing the drinks at Mrs. Hudson’s small but well-stocked bar, serving the guests. “Please,” John muttered under his breath, “I don’t need you to tell me things about her. I know her. No woman in her early thirties is a virgin Sherlock, that’s a fact.”

Sherlock nodded, his face paler than usual, a sadness in his eyes that only John could notice. To everyone else he was the same sarcasm spewing, aloof man of icy demeanor and utter disdain for company. Fortunately for him, everyone at the small gathering knew him, from Lestrade to Mrs. Hudson’s sisters, so they were determinedly friendly towards him despite his jibes and sulkiness. Only Mr. Chatterjee avoided him, because he had deduced a few embarrassing things about the man right after they were introduced to each other. Now John was worried that he would do the same with Mary. He didn’t want either Mary or Sherlock to get hurt, least of all by each other.

Gosh, I feel like the proverbial son caught between the mother and wife, trying to soothe ruffled feathers on either side.

Soon Mary inched her way towards John and they stepped to a corner, to get some privacy and talk. As he had half-expected, both her first question and statement were about Sherlock. “I like him, you know,” she said with a genuine smile, handing him a vodka based cocktail she had just concocted, “But it seems he is less than ready to accept someone else in his life. From what I heard from Mrs. Hudson, he was a lonely child who grew up to be a loner, I guess. Such people usually grow possessive quickly of their only friend. You are his only

friend, are you not? He doesn't seem to even like that poor girl, Molly, who keeps staring at him through heart eyes. Keeps insulting her and pushing her away."

"I told you," John said a bit irritably, "He is a different kind of person, not easy to understand."

"Yes, I know...."

"So then don't jump the gun and start deducing as well....."

She gave him a meaningful look. "So he's been doing the same thing for me, isn't he?" When he answered her with silence she leaned closer and whispered, "He probably needs you more than you need him. I can be easily seen as a threat, which is not a great way to start a friendship. You need to assure him that nothing will change even though we are dating. Even if you move out, your friendship will remain intact, things will stay the same way between you and him."

"I don't believe in fairy tales Mary and neither should you," John said wistfully, "If I were to start a family, move out, have a partner or a wife, things between us will definitely change. In fact that will be the first thing impacted. Our lifestyle right now is unconventional, very work-focused and quite unpredictable. Not the sort of life you, or any woman, would like to share with her husband."

She understood and thankfully stopped the conversation right there with 'We shall cross the bridge when we come to it. I am just glad we finally met.'

You are but I am not. I have no idea how he's taken it.

"Who is she?" Lestrade asked John as they stood in the balcony for a few minutes, the cold air cutting through them. But Lestrade wanted to smoke and Mrs. Hudson had only two rules, no smoking indoors and no stains on her freshly painted walls.

“Mary,” John replied briefly.

“And Sherlock?” The DI raised his brows. He didn’t elaborate further but his questions dripped with connotations.

“How are the two of them even related?” John asked. Lestrade blew out a blob of smoke and gave him a crooked smile, “*Through you.*”

There was no reply he could give Lestrade at that point and thankfully the man didn’t insist on any answers either. But the truth hit home, hard. John later suffered through an agonizing thirty minutes as Sherlock and Mary stepped out of the flat and went downstairs ‘for a walk’. Apparently Sherlock wanted to smoke and Mary wanted to spend time with him. John didn’t get invited to join them so he stayed back, but part of his soul floated after them, straining hard to hear the conversation they were engaged in. Oh to be a fly on the wall and hear whatever was going on, in the lives of the two people he really liked and loved. Yes, he did love Sherlock too, or maybe he loved Mary too, whatever it was he found himself in a strange conundrum, trying to assign feelings and labels and failing miserably.

“Sherlock?”

John peered into the other man’s bedroom, whispering out the name. He called out a second time, eyes trying to adjust to the darkness. There was no response, not even a grunt. The dark lump under the covers shifted slightly and he could hear the man breathing. Sherlock was awake but not responding to him.

This is new and I wonder why. “Do you want to sleep in my room?” John blurted out. *Why did I say that? Why am I even offering this? I should be happy he’s not raiding my personal space. Go back to your room John, don’t do this.* John still found himself walking into the room and stopping only when his knees hit the edge of the bed. “You didn’t come back to the party,” he said, “After the walk with Mary.....” He sat down, berating himself for doing this but unable to stop himself either. “So how did it go?” He tried one last time to strike up a conversation.

“Thanks for the gifts,” Sherlock spoke and it was in a businesslike tone that he used only with clients, “Including Mary.”

John shot up from the bed, stung. Oh God, this was a very wrong move, no, I have been making a series of very wrong moves. “She likes you,” he tried to placate Sherlock somewhat, “She is a fan of your work.”

“I am not vacating this house,” Sherlock said, “Just wanted you to know. Goodnight.”

John didn’t know how to answer that. He slowly walked back to his bedroom, head bursting with thoughts and spent a near sleepless night on his lonely bed.

Chapter End Notes

Yeah this is different, slower pace, the boys will take their time to finally unite and Mary has to go....all duly noted :))

Lunch with the Holmes family

Chapter Summary

Sherlock is avoiding John

“You are a careless, slow, distracted, uncouth, stubborn, blind-to-reality man with no ambitions and drive, and a very poor sense of house hygiene. I remember you enjoyed playing in the sand pit as a kid, now it appears you keep your flat covered up to an inch in dust to get that sand-pit feeling. Grow up, be responsible and stop being reckless.”

“You are a crooked, affected, snobbish, greedy, gluttonous, sloth of a man who spends more time than a woman does in front of a mirror. You have OCD, I have seen you wiping imaginary dirt from your hands after shaking mine. As if this isn’t shameful enough, you’re also a miser.”

John looked at Reginald Holmes, the family patriarch, who was coolly working on stuffing the turkey and then at Eugenia, who was happily putting the finishing touches on the dessert, a delicious looking sticky toffee pudding. None of them were bothered by the acerbic exchange between their sons and kept organizing lunch, even continuing a conversation on the side with each other. But Reginald spotted John’s expression and tense body language and whispered to him, “Don’t worry. This has been going on for years, ever since they were teenagers. One of the lessons Eug and I learned long ago is *never* to interfere or take sides. It only makes things worse than they already are.”

“I agree,” Eugenia set a glass of mulled wine in front of John, “Here you go!”

In the background the exchange had heated up. Sherlock mocked Mycroft, “You make issues out of small things, like how I park the car.”

“You deliberately parked the car so close to mine that I couldn’t even open my door properly, I had to get out the other side. Just a few more inches and people could get by a lot easier.”

“Oh you wouldn’t need to worry about inches if you ate less pancakes for breakfast and broke up your love affair with cakes and pastries you hog.”

“You called me a hog? A HOG? You are a *hedgehog*, all prickly because you’re still a clueless idiot going cluelessly through life.”

“And you have a clue? Do you?”

“How is that any business of yours? I am a successful man who knows how to navigate relationships, finances, how to network and bond with the right people and get my work done. I am someone even dad trusts with his investments and real estate.”

“Wait and see what an intergalactic-level fuck I give to *your success*. *I define* my own success brother, *you* don’t define it for me. May I remind your pea-sized brain that I’m the go-to man when a case is so complex that none of your suit-clad martini-drinking agents can handle it.”

Mycroft was wringing the neck of a bottle. Sherlock was practically eye-stabbing an apple. Then suddenly Sherlock made a comment that drew everybody’s attention and practically turned the situation into a matter of real concern. “Speaking of navigating so well through life and relationships, eh?” He asked, sarcasm oozing out of every word, “Says the one who is dating a criminal mastermind?”

There was pin-drop silence in the kitchen. Mr. and Mrs. Holmes exchanged glances. John sat there, shocked. Even Sherlock held his tongue thereafter, realizing he had spoken too much this time. Mycroft looked a bit pale and stricken, but recovered admirably well and quickly to excuse himself from the room. He took the backdoor and exited the house, walking away towards the kitchen garden.

Even Sherlock realized he had spoken too much and tried to beat a quick retreat by slinking away towards the sitting room but his mummy intervened. “Lockie, sit down.” Sherlock took a look over his shoulder and tried to take another step towards the sitting room when Eugenia said sharply, “I said sit down. Don’t you try to act smart with me young man!” Even John flinched at that and Sherlock sat down like a peeved little boy, trying to look upset so he wasn’t asked too many questions. But his parents were in no mood to relent that day and they pulled up their chairs on either side of him. Had it been any other topic John would have left

them alone but this was something rather disturbing for him as well. *Mycroft was dating Moriarty? The same one who had put an explosives filled vest around him three months ago???*

So he stayed there.

“The turkey looks good,” Sherlock grinned a bit too broadly.

“Was that true?” Reginald asked solemnly.

“The fish, I think cod is a better idea than salmon.”

“Did you really mean it or was it something you said just to annoy your brother?”

“I...um....”

“William Sherlock, answer your father now.”

“.....”

Reginald was about to open his mouth again when Sherlock cleared his throat and said, “I discovered this quite by chance. I had broken into Mycroft’s house to retrieve a gadget he had confiscated from me earlier and found them....in the bedroom. It was late night and he was feeding him strawberries and cream.....ehm, in bed.”

John cringed. This man had no tact. Why did he have to get so graphic? But the worse was yet to come. When his parents said nothing, Sherlock perhaps felt he needed to prove a point to them and said, “I know they went for a vacation to Marbella, Spain, just the two of them. They have private Instagram, accounts, under fake names, and I hacked into them. They’ve shared pics of themselves sunbathing in the nude, placing sunhats over their.....”

John was about to stop Sherlock from blabbing any more nonsense when a strange thing happened. “Show me a pic of this boy,” Eugenia said unexpectedly.

For a few seconds there was deafening silence in the kitchen once again. Where a ton of anger, fear and bewilderment was expected, what they saw was mere curiosity tinged with a little gladness. “WHAT?” Sherlock and John asked together, startled by her tone and expression. She didn’t seem angry, in fact she sounded quite happy and accepting of this harsh truth. Even Reginald seemed quite at peace with this, having already gone back to the turkey which he was now putting into the large oven. “How does he look?” Eugenia asked, craning her neck to see if Sherlock had something on his phone, “Where is he from? Where does he live right now, is it London or somewhere else?”

“He is a criminal,” Sherlock huffed, “People like *me* get people like *him* behind *bars*.”

“What is his name?”

“Moriarty.....James Isaac Moriarty.”

“Oh, Irish. Your father’s side does have Irish ancestry, I think from his grandmother’s side. Does he speak Gaelic as well?”

“Eugenia,” John had to intervene, “Are you really okay with Mycroft dating Moriarty?”

“Mike might act all high and mighty and sometimes come across as downright arrogant and aggressive,” Eugenia answered evenly, “But he does have an excellent insight into people. He is a good judge of characters. He will never start something he cannot give a good conclusion to. I think we should have faith on him. As for our James being a criminal, you do know that everyone has been a criminal at some point of their lives. We have all broken or bent rules.”

“He-He almost killed me.”

“The Mike has to ensure he never does something so horrid again.”

John looked at Sherlock. For the first time since the night before, Sherlock actually looked into his eyes. He had been subtly avoiding John all the while, even during the two hour ride to the Holmes family’s stately countryside home. “It’s ‘our James’ now?” The detective muttered.

Reginald saw that exchange, heard his younger son and decided to support his wife more vocally. “We are new-age parents. I think you have *also* benefitted from our liberal views and flexible principles. When children grow up, one must respect their opinions, choices and decisions. If Mycroft is right, he will be the one to enjoy a long and happy relationship with James. If he’s made an error of judgment he is the one who’d suffer. Love is a strange emotion Lockie, people have fought battles over this. If we object, all we would do is *alienate* Mycroft.”

Mycroft came back in later and soon some relatives arrived. The ‘Moriarty’ topic effectively took a hiatus. But the knowledge that Mycroft was dating a man as dangerous as that and who was Sherlock’s arch-nemesis, struck at the very core of John’s heart. Indeed this family was odd.

Lunch was elaborate, lavish and very tasty. The Holmes couple had outdone themselves. From the juice and delicious herb roasted turkey with wild rice and spice stuffing to the garlic and tomato shrimps, the fresh fragrant loaves of cinnamon bread to the excellent Penne Alfredo, the baked cod with cheesy mashed potatoes and the excellent Minestrone soup, everything tasted just amazing. There was excellent white wine, mulled red wine, jars of lemonade and a fresh garden salad on the side. For dessert there was a big sticky toffee pudding, some homemade chocolate fudge and a big dollop of irony as the last items was tabled before the guests.....strawberries with cream!!!

John was so lost and distracted by the events from the previous evening, the dramatic revelation of Mycroft’s lover and Sherlock’s overall ‘silence’ towards him, that he couldn’t eat as well as he would have liked to. He had only half an appetite and concentrated mostly on the cod and some salad and a few pieces of the excellent fudge. He avoided the wine during lunch but noticed, much to his consternation, that Sherlock was downing it as if wine was about to go out of fashion soon. A stolen glance or two at Mycroft showed he was also

affected by the situation and concentrated more on his phone than the food on his plate. For a man who pigged out on the food that came from his beloved mummy's kitchen, he ate very modestly that day.

Reginald's younger brother Chadwick and his wife Kathy and Eugenia's sister Charlize and her husband Oliver were the other invited guests. After lunch the three couples got busy playing cards, the men wisecracking the women and the women hitting back with anecdotes, leaving John and Sherlock with not much to do but sit around the wait. Mycroft was outside again, talking away on the phone. John wondered if it was Moriarty or Mi6 which was keeping him away from family time.

At some point he felt a weight on his shoulder and found Sherlock had dozed off.

"Hey," he nudged the taller man, feeling delighted at the sudden physical contact and the chance of a conversation, "It's been an early start to the day for both of us. Take a nap maybe?"

"The wine," Sherlock yawned, rubbing his eyes like a tired child, "Makes me sleepy."

"It is a sort of a sedative, works more for some than others," John said, "C'mon, to your room."

John made an eye gesture at Eugenia on their way out, indicating they were excusing themselves for a while. She nodded and smiled and went back to the card game. The last things John heard from the older lot was something about the 'Thatcher era' and the place they had sourced the 'cod' from. He half carried, half supported Sherlock to his bedroom, which was on the first floor of the ten-bedroom house. They met the housekeeper half way up the stairs and she mentioned Sherlock's room was maintained exactly the way it used to be whilst he lived there. "They are predicting real bad weather doc," she also warned him as they reached the top of the stairwell.

"Seems okay to me for now," John said, "We had a bit of snow last night....anyways. Sherlock, which one is your room?"

It turned out to be a spacious airy room which was aptly furnished for a teen, including the giant helicopter model hanging from the ceiling in one corner, the knight-in-armor lamp, posters of astronauts, scientists and philosophers, next to their immortal quotes. The bed was large and comfortable and John dropped Sherlock on it and went to close the windows. The heating was on but with the windows being open, the room was not too comfortable.

When he came back to the bed he found Sherlock lying across it in such a manner that there was no space for John to even squeeze in. He had also hogged all the blankets.

“Well.....” John sighed, “The avoid John at all costs continues.”

He turned and walked back out of the room, feeling rather terrible. He was hurt by the rejection and quite shattered by the subtle sidelining. He wanted to nap too and there was space on that bed. Sherlock literally kicked him out.

He was walking back downstairs when he spotted Mycroft through one of the windows on the landing between two flights of steps. The big man was standing behind two cherry blossom trees in the backyard, now bare-branched due to the weather. Curious and in desperate need for a distraction, John decided to join Mycroft for a few minutes. Maybe he would tell John how he managed to fall for the Napoleon of crime.

“James, c’mon muffin, you know how it is....yes, he’s here and I want him to accept you, not tolerate you. No, you cannot blow him up. He’s my brother. No, you can’t kidnap John either, no one can arm twist Sherlock Holmes, this much I know. Please, honey, next Christmas you will be part of the family get-together, I promise. By then we will be done with that thing, right? I will see you tomorrow morning, I’ll be there before you wake up.”

John resisted the temptation of hiding behind the poplar tree, listening in and having a quiet laugh. Mycroft sounded like a college boy on his first blush of romance, trying to please his mate at any cost. It was so unusual for the staid, stern and dour Mycroft to behave like that, it made John wonder if falling in love made people do silly stuff.

“John!!!” Mycroft near squeaked when he saw John the moment he had turned around, half a second after completing the call.

John smiled and waited, knowing fully well Mycroft would speak if he wished and not if he was pushed. His ploy worked, as did his silence, and Mycroft slipped into a comfort zone where he lit a cigarette and cocked an eyebrow at the doctor. “I suppose you’re dying to know how it started and how did it even happen,” he took a deep drag and leaned against the tree-trunk, “Custody John, it started when he literally turned himself in and I kept him in custody for six weeks. First week we tried to break his spirit and I saw his magnificent side, a side which was so indestructible that I wondered what he was made of. The second week I acted as the pacifier, soothing and fluffing him, trying to coax information out of him. He tricked me, the sneaky sexy little bastard.”

“Mycroft!!!”

“Did I say the ‘B’ word? Yes, I did. Get over it.”

“Ooops, sorry.”

“Yeah, so over the next four weeks he got a lot of information on Sherlock and I was just.....”

“Jealous?”

Mycroft snorted, “I was unable to understand why he was so obsessed.” He neither confirmed nor denied the whole thing and went on, “Then we bonded, spoke, even after he left we stayed in touch, he started visiting me, there were gifts exchanged, late night phone calls, jokes texted and pictures shared. John, he makes me feel younger, better, happier, it’s a feeling I cannot describe.”

“It’s called love?” John asked, crossing his arms over his chest.

“Yes, perhaps so,” Mycroft finished one cigarette and took out another, but hesitated to light it, “But that doesn’t mean I am not aware of who he is and what he does. It is a tradeoff. He needs to end Moriarty to become the James I want. In return, I need to give him the immunity and new identity he needs to start a life with me. Phew, I think I just spoke more than I have spoken for a whole month.”

He put the cigarette back into the silver case. “Nah, he doesn’t like me smoking too much.”

Tensions and Secrets

Chapter Summary

"How can I be honest when I don't even know"

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

As the housekeeper had predicted, the weather turned suddenly towards mid-afternoon. The skies poured down with rain and flashed angry streaks of lightning, loud thunderclaps cracked down on the landscape and the wind was so strong it could almost blow a grown man off his feet. It was impossible for Sherlock, John or Mycroft to head back to London amidst such downpour, so they stayed back for the night, much to Eugenia's delight.

"Feels like a full house after a long time," she said, declaring a movie night for all.

Sherlock woke up after sleeping for three and half hours, disoriented and strangely depressed. "Wine makes me very sleepy," was what he said on repeat mode every single time John asked him what was wrong. Sensing that he wasn't going to get any other word out of the man, John decided to cheer everyone up by getting them to open their gifts. "Good idea," Reginald said as he got mugs of hot cocoa made for all with whipped cream as a topping, "Then we watch a family favorite, 'The Guns of Navarone'. My wife still has a crush on Gregory Peck while I always loved David Niven and his style of acting and dialogue delivery. The boys loved the movie too, mostly because of the action they saw in it."

"Sounds good to me," John said.

"Okay, we'll watch it. What's for dinner mummy?" Mycroft was stuck to his phone, nose three inches from it.

"Yeah," was all Sherlock said.

Sherlock sat quietly, lost in some thought, while his parents opened their gifts. “Oh my God,” Eugenia gasped, clasping her mouth in pleasant shock, “This clutch purse is so gorgeous. Kate Spade purses are really amazing, and this one compliments my formal outfits, most of them. Very good choice Sherlock.”

“Political chess set, really good,” Reginald was quite excited, “Even the box is so elegant, hand-carved and shaped like a chest! Very innovative and interesting! I wanted a chess-set like this for a while. Perfect gift Sherlock.”

Sherlock didn’t say a word. He kept staring out of the window.

“He didn’t buy any of these, did he?” Eugenia asked, looking pointedly at John. Reginald immediately stopped her, “It doesn’t matter who bought it. They are one unit and the gift is from both of them.”

John was a bit annoyed by now. Sherlock had not even thought about a gift. The least he could do was to appreciate the fact that John had gone out and bought these and his parents loved his choices. But the moment he got angry, he also felt guilty. He was the one who put Sherlock in that blue mood so there was no point in blaming him for it. He had to wait for this day, this stormy weather and Sherlock’s mood, to pass.

Mycroft had a top of the line electric fireplace for his parents, a huge one for their living room and parlor. Powerful enough to heat both rooms and yet compact enough to fit into an alcove connecting the two roomy units. It was eco friendly and expensive, keeping in line with Mycroft’s higher purchasing power and wealth.

“I have two sets of gifts for everyone,” Eugenia declared, “One will be a fun gift, or you may call it a weird and cute gift, while the other one will be something useful for you boys, I hope.” She handed them two packages each and all three opened them together. The first one held a Christmas jumper for each man, the typically ridiculous splash of colors and designs and reindeer antler patterns that such items were known for. The second packages revealed things that showed just how perceptive and clever Eugenia was. Mycroft got a year’s supply of skin and scalp friendly products that were purely herbal and 100% natural. John got a really cool camel leather jacket with matching cap and gloves. Sherlock got a super-lightweight drone with three mounted cameras.

“Thanks,” John said, “You’re.....I don’t know how you knew, but I had been eyeing this jacket and gloves and cap combo for quite some time.”

“You’re family now,” she said, a bit emotional, “It’s important we know you well.”

John felt Sherlock’s eyes burn into his side and hung his head, keeping a lame silence.

Night time brought a new problem. They had been assigned only one bedroom but Sherlock didn’t seem to keen to share the bed that night. By then John was so upset with himself, so tense and nervous about his future with his housemate, that he took his ire out on Sherlock.

“What the fuck is your problem?” He snapped.

“I don’t know,” Sherlock deadpanned, “Problem?”

“You’re acting like something is up your arse.”

“Oh, is it? I thought you were up someone’s.....no, forget it, she doesn’t deserve hate.”

“So it is about her, isn’t it? I knew it, I just knew it! What....what is your problem really? Sherlock, please tell me, have I ever told you I won’t date women, won’t marry, that my entire life is devoted to you and the cases we get? Did I ever promise anything even close to that?”

Sherlock got up and tried to walk out of the room but John blocked his way. “No, you’re not walking away from this. You will sit down and listen to me.”

“Why?” Sherlock said coldly, “Have I ever told you I’ll do exactly what you say? Have I asked for a conversation? Did I even ask why you chose to throw her on my face one fine evening, at a point in time when you had almost proposed to her? It seems she insisted that

we meet, otherwise you were probably planning to tell me only when a John Junior was on the way.”

“Sherlock....Sherl, stop talking too fucking much,” John gripped his head, “You’re getting it all wrong man.....”

“Oh you have a problem if I stay quiet, you have an issue if I talk, then suddenly I am talking too fucking much,” Sherlock gave it back with equal annoyance and irritation in his tone, “Did I ever ask you for anything other than....being there for me, being the only friend I have. Remember Dartmoor, where I told you I don’t have many friends, I have only one.....and-and I am aware I am not an easy man to live with but I try....I do try, I have changed and I can change....but what sort of friendship do we share if you keep things from me. She is someone you’re serious about and I am just.....clueless about it. I hate being in the dark.”

“Says the man who keeps me in the dark on so many things. You’re a sociopath, a high-functioning one but a sociopath nonetheless, in your very own words. Then how do you even care about these things? You take them with a pinch of salt when it’s your turn to be honest.”

“HOW CAN I BE HONEST WHEN I DON’T EVEN KNOW?”

John *flinched*. Sherlock closed his eyes and fell on the bed, staring at the ceiling, “You made me a bit like yourself. You made me do normal things, stupid ordinary things like Christmas trees and gifts, grocery shopping and replying to fan mail. Then you go ahead and behave like I used to.....you think it’s okay to criticize me for lying to you, then you lie to me when you return home late, smelling of sex....you think I had never picked up on that?”

Anger drained out of his system. John’s shoulders slumped. “What do you mean ‘I don’t know’.”

“You asked me if I have a boyfriend or girlfriend....”

“Yeah and you said you were married to your work.”

“The truth is, I don’t know what to do with this....my feelings, I don’t even know how to deal with my feelings. One moment I value my independence, I enjoy the fact that I am not tied-down to anyone or anything....and then I want to be tied down, to be anchored. It’s all your fault, you did this to me, now undo this....make it all go away, make it just like it used to be before.....I met you.”

John turned out the light and climbed into bed with his ‘friend’. “Let’s sleep,” he replied, “I don’t think we will find any answers tonight, not with our brains half-fried already. But to your point, making it just like it used to be, that won’t happen. We are not phones Sherlock, we are humans, we cannot be restored to our factory settings.”

“This is beautiful, thank you,” Mary said with a smile as she wore the single strand pearl necklace, “Splendid, see how it matches my earrings.”

“Yeah, it does, and you look really elegant,” John replied, kissing her cheek, “Pearls are always a great look on women.”

It was New Year’s Eve and John had decided to spend it with Mary, to make it up to her for not spending Christmas with her. She had no close family or relatives to celebrate with and had expected John to be with her, however she had not complained when he had told her he had to be with Sherlock and his parents. He was grateful for that. She was not a nagging, quarrelsome woman who insisted he spent all his spare time with her. Over the past few days Sherlock and he had become more or less normal in their interactions. The incident involving Mary had not been mentioned again after that night at the Holmes family home and like true men they had decided to put a rug over the pink elephant rather than address its presence in their lives. *If you can’t see it, maybe it will go away.*

“You sure know how to do things in style,” Mary went on, sensing he didn’t have much to talk about, “This restaurant, you need to book a table days in advance, especially for a New Year’s Eve. This dish, the lobster, this is the finest cuisine I have had in quite a while. I mean it.”

“I wanted you to remember this evening,” John said, raising his glass.

“Champagne too,” her eyes twinkled.

“Yup,” he said, winking.

“Followed by a night at my place?” She asked hopefully.

John felt a pang of nerves. What if he was not able to get it up in bed? Somehow his sexual attraction towards Mary had started to wane. He was happy to talk to her, spend time with her, but the idea of spending the night with her filled him with doubt and a sense of anxiety. He was trying to think of some excuse when two familiar figures entered the restaurant and were almost immediately ushered into a VVIP room by the manager himself.

“Jim Moriarty,” John gnashed his teeth together.

“The....infamous genius mastermind?” Mary turned to look.

“Yes, the same. He’s as brilliant as Sherlock but far more cruel, brutal and psychopathic. Speak about using a gift given by God for all the purposes He would disapprove of.”

“You seem extra disturbed though. Anything has changed since the last time you guys had a confrontation?”

“He is with someone I used to deeply respect once, Colonel Sebastian Moran. Made it to colonel in record time and was a jewel in the army’s crown. Until he went berserk and gunned down his superior officer and half of his peers and platoon members. Dishonorably discharged, became a very violent alcoholic. Then he disappears for two whole years and resurfaces suddenly, *sober but ruthless*, as Moriarty’s right hand man. But this isn’t the only thing that’s changed, it seems Moriarty is now dating Sherlock’s elder brother, Mycroft.”

“What?” She began to giggle, turning to look at the two men again. They made quite a pair, one was short and slender and very attractive, but in an odd and unconventional way. With dark hair and shining onyx eyes, Jim was suave and debonair in his Westwood and Rolex, his hair immaculately coifed and his skin glowing with vitality. Sebastian Moran was a tall hunk of a man with alpha poster-boy looks. Blond, blue-eyed and muscular, he towered over Jim in build just as Jim towered over him in persona and presence. “They are giving up crime or is Mycroft giving up his work and position?” Mary asked, inquisitive, “What does Sherlock think about it? It must be quite a lot to take in, no?”

“Quite a lot to take in, how?” John asked, brows knotting together.

“Us, you and me in a relationship. Then his brother choosing someone who’s an adversary.”

“Yeah, now that you mention it, it seems so.....”

“John, Sherlock is calling you.”

John looked at his phone and shook his head, “No, I don’t see a call or text.”

“No,” she pointed at the fancy restaurant’s foyer area, “He is right there, behind you, and trying to get your attention.”

John turned and saw Sherlock’s tall imposing figure standing there, ignoring the adoring looks of the seating hostess who was trying to talk to him, waving his arms at his table. The moment their eyes met, John knew there was a case. Excitement flared up and he stood up immediately, almost knocking over a champagne flute. He saw the look of relief and happiness in Sherlock’s eyes as he watched John get up and one thought struck him like a hammer.

He may never admit it, but he needs me. Despite all his sour words and sometimes ungracious manners, he does treat me as an equal. He doesn’t have many friends, *he has one*, and that honor goes to me, *only me*. “I need to go with him,” he mumbled.

Then he realized what that meant. His eyes turned to Mary who was smirking. “I...um.... Mary ...I have to....you know, go with him.” She nodded, “I knew it. I knew it the moment I saw him.”

“I’m sorry,” John felt guilty but also eager to go and join Sherlock, “You really okay with this?”

She shrugged, “Do I really have a choice John?”

As it turned out, Sherlock had got to know that his brother and Moriarty were meeting at a place close by and that would be a gamechanger in many different things, be it Mycroft’s future, the crime scene in the country, Mi6’s role in rehabilitating a notorious criminal and of course the future of a rather unreal relationship, between the chief of intelligence and a genius mastermind who had gone rogue years ago and wanted to return to mainstream. Though he didn’t admit it, it was pretty clear to John that Sherlock’s real reason for being there was Mycroft. He was worried about his brother, though he would never admit that openly.

The restaurant was a façade. Through a backdoor, the men had snuck out and met Mycroft at a private property in the next lane. It was a marathon meeting but Sherlock found a way in and John found himself in a room in that same property, listening in to the tail end of the discourse.

Jim was going to become Richard Brook. Moriarty would be ‘dead’ soon. He would surrender most of his enormous wealth and give Mycroft and Mi6 a dossier of some clients. In exchange he would be granted pardon, immunity, a new identity and the freedom to start his legit businesses. Sebastian and some other members of his web would get the same benefits. From time to time Jim would also engage with Mi6 and Mi5 work, under Mycroft’s supervision of course, and Mycroft was free to pursue his relationship with the mastermind as long as he didn’t work for him in an official capacity, thereby removing all conflicts of interest.

On their way back, both men were very quiet. “They seemed to be in love, for real,” Sherlock murmured after a prolonged silence. “Yes,” John replied, “So that’s what *love* does to

people.”

“What does it do? Turn them legit?”

“Love is all about putting in an effort.”

Sherlock was lost in thoughts and treading a place far away. John was wondering why he didn't feel so bad for abandoning his date with Mary. Suddenly Sherlock cleared his throat, “Jawn?”

“Yeah?”

“Happy new Year.”

John smiled at his companion, feeling a strange sense of contentment and fulfilment as their cab inched its way towards Baker Street, surrounded by revelers ushering the new year in. “Happy New Year Sherl,” he replied, putting his hand on Sherlock's knee.

Chapter End Notes

We are inching towards JohnLock sex. Mary is getting friendzoned, as you can see!

The Inevitable Happens

Chapter Summary

He made the mistake of peering into Sherlock's bedroom and his world just spun into a tizzy.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

A few days passed and Sherlock suddenly disappeared one day, less than a week after the New Year incident. John initially didn't give it too much of a thought. Sherlock was not a man to be captured in space or time, he was way too kindred a spirit to be caged or coddled. During their year together the young detective had sometimes disappeared for two or three days at a time, returning all sunburned or starving, saying he wanted to experience the weather, or a certain landscape, or just be by himself for a while.

But as morning gave to afternoon and afternoon to evening, he grew restless. What if Sherlock didn't return that night? What if he didn't return the next day either? God damn it, it was the man's twenty eighth birthday the next day.

John was a Virgo to Sherlock's Capricorn. His September birthday had come and gone and Sherlock hadn't even batted an eyelid at him. He didn't mind that since he hadn't informed his housemate about it and didn't expect him to remember such 'ordinary and boring' things. But John had been brought up to big but homely birthday celebrations and, after missing it the previous year by a whisker, he wanted to celebrate first Sherlock's birthday since they had formed this alliance. He had a gift for him, Mrs. Hudson had a cake, and even Mycroft had decided to bury the hatchet and show up. But none of this would make any sense if the birthday boy was not around.

"Phone's switched off," he sighed as he sat drinking tea with Mrs. Hudson after returning home from work, "I wanted it to be a surprise. Maybe I should have told him."

"Men don't appreciate surprises much, do they?" Mrs. Hudson asked.

There were no prizes for guessing she referred to the Mary incident but John gave that a pass. He had other things to think about, for example how to contact Sherlock. "Is there any alternate number you know? The problem is he has no friends as such. Molly, Lestrade, Mike Stamford, even a couple of hackers who work for him, none of them know of any other number than the one he uses."

"No dear. He has always been a bit private...."

"This is not privacy. This is secrecy."

She smiled, "Um....." "I know," John was irritated, "I kept things from him. He keeps things from me. I am as bad as him and he is as bad as me, we are both rotten, and now I have a feeling he will miss his own birthday party and I will cut a sorry figure before Mycroft and.....shit."

"Mycroft!" Mrs. Hudson said with a look of sudden realization on her face, "We can ask Mycroft. He has that boyfriend now, what was his name the one who tried to kill all of us?"

"What a way to identify someone....yes, the one who employs snipers and slits throats and puts semtex vests around people. James, Jim Moriarty, or muffin....as Mycroft calls him."

"He is also a big genius, like Sherlock, yeah? Maybe he can help locate our boy and within the time frame of say.....six hours? We need him here at twelve, right? Come on, call Mycroft and ask him to speak to that....Semtex....sorry James, James Moriarty. By the way, does he still like... kill people and all that?"

John felt like tearing his hairs out and stamping upon something. Take help from Jim? *Moriarty*? Now that was the pits for him, really! He avoided answering Mrs. Hudson's question but the perceptive woman noticed it all, from his mild anxiety to major discomfort, the slight hesitation on his countenance to the huge apathy working up his gut. "Hey John, try to look at this objectively," she said, "He is family now. You can't choose family. Mycroft exists and that means James also exists. The best thing to do is to make peace with the situation and utilize the contacts and connects he has. You don't have to talk to him, ask Mycroft to do that. That doesn't seem so difficult, does it?"

“Fine.”

Much to John’s surprise, Mycroft showed up a little earlier than the appointed midnight hour.

It was only eleven-thirty when the Mi6 chief stood outside the door, minus his fabled umbrella.

To John’s near shock, he was dressed in jeans and a thick cream shirt, a sleeveless pullover on it, and a leather jacket on top of that. He also wore matching belts and boots in the same color as his jacket. He looked relaxed, casual, clearly the relationship had worked well for him.

“You look very different Mike,” John greeted him, a bit awed by the change in the tall man, and ushered him into the flat, “It’s like meeting someone else. I don’t remember you wearing anything aside from three piece suits, that too the very formal and super-expensive ones. Formal trench coats and parkas replaced by a leather jacket! Wait, have you done something to you hair.....”

“Don’t say it,” Mycroft showed a rare moment of angst.

John remember how touchy the man was about his prematurely receding hairline. “Okay, sure,” he said, focusing on more important matters, “Um....did you hear anything about Sherlock yet?”

“Muf.....I mean James called me. They are on their way.”

“He found him!! Where was he?”

“John I.....I know you should have been told earlier....I should have told you, in fact.”

John felt rather queasy. “My-Mycroft, is Sherlock all right?”

Mycroft seemed surprised by the question but he read into John’s nervous expression well. “What? Oh! Yeah, yeah he’s okay, yes he is fine....he should be fine.” He paused, saw John begin to panic and added, “Okay, I probably ruffled your feathers without a reason. Sherlock is fine, there is nothing wrong with him at the moment but I am not sure what state he will be in when he arrives with James. You see John, Sherlock was *found* in one of those known ehm, places....I’d say one of the infamous places, one of those dens where you normally find all the-the....the.....addicts and substance abusers.”

“Addicts?! Substance abusers!!”

“Sherlock has used in the past. We sent him to rehab, twice.”

“Uh.....”

“He is not a real addict. There were low phases in his life. He used to say he needed that.....heroin, I mean heroin, and sometimes cocaine, to think clearly and solve cases or finish a composition, complete a task at the lab. But-But don’t let that bother you, he has not lapsed in the past four years and I am sure this must be just a small.....”

“*Lapse?*” John said bitterly, “So he has lapsed.”

Mycroft sighed, “I have no idea what made him do this though. Is there any case which is bothering him? Is my relationship bothering him? He was telling me he is bored, since James doesn’t give him cases anymore. But he must understand, that man has turned a new leaf, he will no longer be working on that confounded web of his. In fact, I need Sherlock’s help to take that web down, so.....”

“Oh God,” John sank into a chair, “This is just....I don’t know what to say, really.”

“Don’t be too harsh on him, that’s all I ask. It’s not something to be shared, proudly or otherwise, and I truly believed that your company and presence has moved him quantum leaps away from that habit of his. He was clean for years and I’d expected things to remain that way.”

John looked at the cake, the food, the wine and the gifts on the coffee table, then at the candles, balloons and party hats that Mrs. Hudson had organized. “So the birthday celebration is off then? Do stoned people even remember what happened, if they cut a cake or not?”

“They’re here,” Mycroft peered out of the window.

John’s heartbeat increased rapidly. He felt cramping pains in his gut. Sherlock, *stoned*, without his wits around him, it was not a sight he was prepared to see. He wished he could close his eyes, open them a bit later and all this would change and go back to normal. *Restore to factory settings*....he now wished that was applicable to humans as well.

They heard the front door open. John nearly closed his eyes.

The next moment Sherlock came flying through the door and landed on the ground just before John, on his hands and knees. John’s wits flew out at the same time and he must have let out a groaning sound of distress, because Mycroft and Sherlock both looked at him with concern, one down his six feet two inches frame and the other upwards from his position on the floor. *So you’re that inebriated that you can’t even stay steady on your feet, way to go Sherlock, just awesome this way, destroying your beautiful brain with substances!* John was about to open his mouth and just yell at his housemate, frustrations getting the better of him, when Jim sang out the following words.

“He was refuuuuusing to apologize. So I puuuuushed him in, he landed exaaaaactly where I wanted him to.”

John blinked, “You mean, he didn’t stumble?”

“Nope,” Jim stood at the doorway, clad in exactly the same combination of clothes as Mycroft, “He is fine. He was snooping around there, pretending to be a druggie. But get him out of those borrowed clothes of some homeless bastard. They stink so bad, he stank up the whole car.”

“Not my official limo, I hope,” Mycroft muttered.

“No, I got him here in my Aston Martin, I sent it for deep cleansing already,” came the reply.

John felt like slamming their heads together. Was this the right time to bother about cars? He grabbed Sherlock a bit too hard and dragged him up and to the couch, pushing him down on it. “Owww,” Sherlock was a bit dramatic, clutching at his armpit, “That hurt Jawn.”

“Tell me the truth, why were you there?” John asked. A weird thought nagged at the back of his mind. You’re acting like a spouse John, you’re behaving like a typical partner who is the older and more stable one in the relationship. Friends don’t really go overboard when one of them indulges in a bit of a ‘hobby’. But he couldn’t stop himself from worrying about Sherlock, despite noticing that he looked perfectly normal.

“Case.”

“What case?”

“College friend, Emily McGivern. Her husband was missing. Found him there, under influence. Figured out who was doing this, a cousin of his who knew of the will of their grandparent, which gave everything to Emily’s husband but it would pass on to that cousin if he were to do drugs or go insane. Insanity was not easy to induce so that sneaky bastard tried to get him addicted. I solved the case, it was for a friend and I knew you wouldn’t like to go there, so....”

“Who are you to decide whether I’d like to go there or not?” John growled.

Sherlock looked at John through wide, awed eyes, and for a moment it felt there were only the two of them in that room and perhaps the whole world. Mrs. Hudson had come in, Jim and Mycroft were there but neither of the Baker Street duo even noticed their presence. “Now here is the deal,” John continued, sitting next to a dazed Sherlock, “I would like to be there for you when you need me, to protect you and guide you like all friends and colleagues should, even if that means protecting you from *yourself* and your whimsical ways. Mike told me about your history with drugs and for a former addict to just go in there, unaccompanied, it’s dangerous. Would I have enjoyed being there? No. Would I have still accompanied you? Of course *yes!*”

“Hear, hear,” he heard Mrs. Hudson say.

“Johnny boy has some brains,” Jim said, sounding doubtful still, “He has his uses.”

“James, no, you *promised*,” Mycroft said softly but firmly.

“Jawn,” Sherlock had never looked so emotional, “I am.....mistakes happen, I misjudged the situation but then, it was for a friend and more of a favor and help than a case. So I didn’t want to bother you. Besides that, I knew you were planning to throw a surprise birthday party for me, so I decided to leave you to that.”

“You knew???” John was astonished.

“Um....a bit difficult to hide things from me, I guess,” Sherlock said sheepishly.

“Yeah,” John smiled eventually, “Now, just say sorry.”

“S-S-S-So....Sor....”

“Okay, leave it, I get that. Now go and change quickly, take a lightning shower of thirty seconds and come back here. Jim was right, that stench is really not pleasant. It’s going to be your birthday in just about five minutes.”

John sat there, tired but pleased. The hour was late, nearly 3 am, but this had been worth every moment of sleep lost. Sherlock and Mycroft sat playing some board game, Mycroft leading 3-2.

Jim was asleep on Mycroft's shoulder. Mrs. Hudson was chattering away and drinking wine.

An enormous amount of satisfaction surrounded John like a warm, fluffy blanket in the cold weather. Sherlock had been quite hungry after going without food the entire day so the cake, the sandwiches, the pizza and the chips had been polished off almost down to crumbs. Jim had pecked at the food but Mycroft had dug in gleefully. John hadn't eaten dinner so he too had done justice to the fare, his appetite stoked by the sight of Sherlock actually enjoying his meal.

Aside from a small sarcasm-filled argument between Sherlock and Jim, that too over none other than Sebastian Moran, the exchanges had been pretty pleasant, humorous and interesting.

John had got Sherlock a new violin case and a few sets of pajamas, since the detective usually 'lived' in them during his downtime. Jim had got Sherlock a microscope, top of the line, one of the latest ones to hit the market. Mrs. Hudson had got him a tea-hamper, with six different types of tea bags in it. Mycroft had got him a comprehensive book on Egypt, the kings and queens of the Nile, the Gods and myths, the symbols, hieroglyphics and papyrus. It had excerpts from the famous notebook of Howard Carter, who had excavated Tutankhamun's tomb. A very rare and expensive book, the elder Holmes had used his influences to procure one from a Canadian collector. Sherlock's awkward and icy relationship had thawed somewhat, much to John's happiness.

"You've been good for him," Mycroft whispered as they finally left at 3-30 am, Jim half asleep and trotting alongside as Mycroft kept holding his hand firmly, "All I can say is....thank you!"

"Thanks for organizing this," Mrs. Hudson said, "Oops, I have drunk a bit too much."

“Let me help you back to your flat,” John offered, “I’ll be right back Sherlock.”

Sherlock was engrossed with the microscope and didn’t answer. John helped the landlady to her flat and shut the door, waiting till he heard her put the security lock on, then walked back to his flat. He had to be at work a little later than the usual hour, but even then it was only eight and half hours away from now. Grabbing six hours of sleep was very crucial for him, as it surely affected his concentration. There was a surgery he had to perform in the afternoon, not too complex but still he couldn’t slack on such things.

When he re-entered the flat, the spot occupied by Sherlock was empty. Exhaustion must have finally made him hit the sack. “Hey,” he called out, “I’ll clean the room in the morning, okay?”

He made the mistake of peering into Sherlock’s bedroom and his world just spun into a tizzy.

Sherlock stood there, totally naked and aroused, yes aroused, and looking like a million bucks wrapped around a bottle of the finest whiskey in turn enveloped by a dazzling sports car. He was everything a man would want and John’s blood drained from his brain and went straight to his cock. Before he knew what he was doing, he found himself rushing into the room and grabbing Sherlock. A few minutes later, they both fell noisily on to the bed.

Chapter End Notes

Don't hate me for the teaser/cliffhanger ending *evil grin*

The Reluctant Homosexual

Chapter Summary

John realizes he is Holmessexual

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“I am sorry for the late notice. But I really am not in a position to do the surgery, after this horrid stomach upset and nausea.”

“It is quite all right John. You have filled in for me numerous times and this is the first time ever that you asked me to return the favor. I owe you several, not one. I can do this for you, don’t you worry about it. I’ll inform Robert.”

“Thanks a million Megan,” John said and hung up, putting the phone on silent and setting it on the nightstand. He looked down at himself, the bed, his lover....yeah, Sherlock was his lover now, and the state of the room. Sherlock’s clothes and shoes and socks were strewn all over the floor, right next to his own clothes, some of which had been viciously ripped off. Half the bedclothes were on the floor, only part of them covered Sherlock as he stretched out majestically across the bed, naked and sated and sleeping soundly. The sounds of his breathing, the occasional snort and snore, mingled with the thumping heartbeats in his own chest. Only one thought kept crossing John’s sleepless mind over and over again.

Did this really happen?

The smell of sex, male arousal, fruity lube and light sweat hung about in the air. The feeling of sated contentment was real. The scratches on his back and shoulders were real. Ecstasy over, they stung a bit now. Getting into the shower later on would be a bit of a challenge. Sherlock’s long neck was filled with abuse, hickeys and bruises, all given by his very own teeth and lips. Of course this was real.

Yes, it did happen.

For two hours they had been at it. Then Sherlock had literally passed out after four gigantic orgasms. But even though he had three rather huge ones himself, sleep was as far from John's eyes as the desert was from rain. Once the mad lust had been taken care of, his brain had begun to function again.

John rubbed his face down with his hands, eyes burning, body tired beyond tired. Nothing will change this. I just had sex with my housemate. I had sex with a man. *A man!*

"No son or daughter of mine is a bloody queer, with sickening tendencies. You should be sent to a correction facility."

The angry words of his deceased father grew louder and louder in his ears as the seconds ticked by. John covered his ears at one point and muttered, "This can't be so wrong. How can this be so wrong when it feels so good, so right?"

And yet his mind kept chanting 'I am not gay'.

3 hours earlier

"Mmmmfvgggg!"

At first John had no idea what to do with the strong currents of lust streaming through his body. He was painfully hard, he wanted Sherlock, he just wanted to scratch that itch under his skin that had existed for so long that now it was threatening to consume him whole. So his body took over and pushed his mind aside with resounding force, grabbed the naked man's bubble butt and squeezing the twin globe hard. Sherlock had winced, then stuck out his tongue a bit, which eventually led to the next step. John let go of one of Sherlock's butt cheeks and grabbed the back of his lover's head, mashing their mouths together in a possessive, fierce and passionate kiss.

That had surprised even Sherlock and he made a muffled sound, before his eyes fluttered shut and he gave in to the feelings that were, *no doubt*, coursing like wildfire through his veins. His already hard and hot cock jerked between their bodies as John's belly pressed against it, a trickle of precum sliding down the shaft and getting right on to John's sensitive skin. His large hands awkwardly grabbed at various parts of John and tugged at his clothes impatiently, making irritable noises because he couldn't just pull them off in their current position and the passionate clinch they were in.

John froze for a moment. He was not unfamiliar with male nudity, having lived in a boarding facility during his medical school years and later at the military base where bathrooms were often shared between officers. But this was the first time he was about to strip in a situation like this, where there was crackling sexual chemistry between him and his so-called asexual housemate.

Still, he aided Sherlock's grabby and eager hands as his clothes went flying all over the place. Suddenly cold air kissed his skin and he knew he was stark naked, Sherlock rubbing and moaning against him, eager for *more*.

God damn it, even I want more. I want him.

They kissed again, this time he tasted blood and realized it was not his own. His teeth had clashed against Sherlock's soft lips. Yet, the copper taste on their tongues served to arouse them even more and John pulled Sherlock closer, throwing caution to the winds, to his inhibitions, to all those homophobic comments he had heard and internalized before, to the very distraught voice in his head that told him to stop, *just stop*.

He could not, *would not*, stop.

Sherlock wrapped a long leg around his hip, as if trying to climb him despite the difference in their heights. Aware of that, John backed him up towards the bed till they fell on it noisily, Sherlock on his back and John right on top of him.

"Ohhhh," Sherlock moaned loudly as he felt John dry hump him, rubbing their erections insistently together. "Fuck," John closed his eyes and sped up, "I really need to.....we need

to, just hold on to me.”

The urgency to get their rocks off was so great that everything thereafter became a blur for the two men. In the throes of passion they kissed, bit and scratched at each other, John moving on top of Sherlock, Sherlock emphatically thrusting upwards while his lover forcefully bore down on him, delicious friction between their cocks making them moan, screech and squeal in rather unmanly ways. John went faster and faster, brain shutting off almost entirely as his entire blood traveled south and frighteningly beautiful sensations started to build in his groin. He was vaguely aware of warmth splashing between them and Sherlock’s cries reaching a crescendo before his own deluge took over.

He came and came, shaking violently, sucking a neat little bruise behind Sherlock’s ear which incidentally was also one of the man’s super-sensitive spots. As he sucked on that place, he felt Sherlock’s cock jump once again between their bodies. *Fires banked for a long time, just waiting for the dams to burst, everything pent up and held back for so long that he was now super-charged with his bodily needs.* John understood.

What he didn’t understand was his own needs and how easily Sherlock fulfilled them. This had been one of the most intense orgasms he had had in a while. He threw all thoughts and afterthoughts, all inhibitions and fears out of his head for a while. He wanted this, more of this.

He wanted more of *Sherlock*.

Those beautiful almond shaped eyes were closed and Sherlock’s lips were slightly parted, he was breathing through his mouth. His lips were dry. He was probably thirsty. John made up his mind to give him water as well as a Chapstick.

“Uhhnn.....noooo!”

That was Sherlock’s whiny response to John’s attempt at getting up. Small movements of his hips indicated he was still hard and needed more, just like John did. *Well, at least I am not alone in this, I won’t come across as too needy or too seedy.*

He grabbed one of Sherlock's knees and spread his left leg, sliding into the hot and coveted space between the two long pins. "I do have to get up, you know," the good doctor whispered, nuzzling at a spot on the collarbone where a ruby red bruise showed against his marble like skin, "I need to grab the lube." In return the comment he got made him positively amazed. "Got lube, second drawer," Sherlock said unexpectedly, blushing bright red.

"Hello there, look what we got," John grinned as he saw the strawberry flavored lube. He uncapped it and the sweet scent of strawberries filled the room. "I had no idea you are this prepared for...." he stopped, remembering a simple fact. People did use lube for masturbation. *So Sherlock was not so asexual after all.*

John wondered what this man fantasized about when he pleased himself. Sherlock in the meantime was as red as a ripe strawberry and had covered his face with his arm, squirming under John's amused yet fiery gaze.

He looks so bloody fuckable all spread out like that, like a delicious buffet lunch all at my disposal! That was all John thought as he drew on all his knowledge about gay sex and, without even a second thought, went straight for the anal penetration. Someone had told him many gay men didn't like that and preferred not to, but that source was not a gay man himself so his advice didn't really count. He would try this with Sherlock, mainly because he wanted to fuck him. He was a quintessential top, so if they didn't do it this way the only other option was to use mouth or hands. No, one was too experimental and bold for him and the other didn't seem to be as exciting or arousing.

"I will," John hesitated despite all his needs and urges, "Have to....you know."

"Will it hurt?"

The question was innocent, spoken in an unsure voice. Suddenly Sherlock seemed ten years younger, a little boy on the cusp of manhood and as afraid of experiences as he was eager for them. John kissed up those long legs, kneaded the muscular but lean thighs, and placed a chaste kiss on the side of his hip. "You're asking the wrong person Sherl. I have never done this before and if we stop now, I am afraid I...."

Most likely I will never muster enough courage to try this again. But he couldn't say those words out aloud.

“I know you won’t....um, hurt me.”

The words were spoken in a shaky voice but the look in Sherlock’s eyes was synonymous with trust and love, a complete surrender!

John had just squeezed a dollop of lube on his fingers. His hand paused, just inches from the cleft of his lover’s ass. *Why do you trust me so much? Why have so much faith on me, when you barely tolerate most other people? What have I even done to deserve it? You’re buying me off and I am selling myself out, because so much kindness isn’t something I am used to! God, Sherlock, what are you doing to me?*

“Jawnnnn....”

There was something about the way his name was pronounced by Sherlock, a slight drawl, the vowel elongated, he somehow made it sound like a chant, a mantra, an offering. John found himself drowning in that voice, those eyes and the moment they were passing through. No longer did he care about what he was, gay or straight, or who he was with, a man or a woman. All he saw, heard and felt was someone he adored and wanted who adored him back four times as much!

He brought his fingers to the furred opened and started to massage it, since it was so tense and tight. But at the same time his cock began to leak again. If this was *so tight* around his fingers, how awesome it would feel when he was buried balls deep in that heated vault!

John pounded into Sherlock like a man possessed. He had already cum inside the man once, he was now playing in his own juices, and somehow that turned them both on way too much. Sherlock’s moans and the squeaky sounds of his hard length moving in and out of the slippery passage filled the warm air of the bedroom and John kicked off the covers from their entwined bodies, enjoying the cooler air once it touched his butt and back. Sherlock wrapped his long legs over John’s lower back, body undulating as he clearly approached a third orgasm. He had cum from John’s three fingers inside him, nicking his prostate, and now he was ready to *erupt* all over again.

“Cum for me baby,” John said, head dropping into the hollow of Sherlock’s neck.

The younger man was just waiting for the command, because his hips jerks hard and he went completely tense underneath the doctor. “UhhnnnnnnJawwwnnnn!” Sherlock’s shriek was followed by loud wails as more cum splashed out of him, wetting John’s hand which was working up and down his cock. John held still, enjoying the way Sherlock rocked on his erection, rotating his hips to get his sweet spot rubbed now and then, riding out the aftershocks noisily. “Shhhh,” John whispered, “They may think I am choking you or something.” He kissed those bruised, swollen lips and silenced him in the gentlest manner possible.

John was wondering if he should pull out or just stay in there till Sherlock had settled down a bit, then move towards completion. This was the first time in his life that he was ready for a third climax in *less* than an hour and half.

To his surprise, in about five minutes Sherlock began to moan softly again.

“I don’t believe this,” John found himself smiling.

“I want...want to....be on top?”

“You want to ride me. Go on!”

It took about twenty minutes but Sherlock brought them both off again. They produced trickles this time instead of a deluge of juices but the intensity and effects of it were just as much as the earlier times. As Sherlock fell on top of John, already asleep, the doctor admitted silently that this was by far the best sex he had ever enjoyed in this life.

Then it occurred to him, the stark and bare truth, the harsh truth. It’s a man’s arse you fucked John and *enjoyed* it.

Sometime around seven John finally fell asleep. Worries and confusion had kept him awake but the truth was that he was so exhausted he was ready to collapse. So when he did sleep, it was heavy, dreamless and very sound. One moment he was sliding back to a sleeping position next to Sherlock and the clock outside in the hallway was chiming to seven, the next thing he remembered was waking up feeling refreshed and splendidly awake, the same clock now striking two in the afternoon, and Sherlock lying next to him with his head on John's stomach.

Blue eyes were open, clear. He was awake. "Hey," John raised his head, "Been awake long?"

"Fifteen minutes," Sherlock said, rolling over to face John. He looked well-rested too. John's head fell back on the pillow and he threaded his fingers through those dark curls, playing with them as he absentmindedly thought about the situation. Did this change anything? Of course it did. Once you slept with your best friend it was ruined....or indelibly different from whatever equation you shared with them before. John hoped it was different from now on but manageable. He didn't want things ruined. They shared too good a thing to stop.....living together or working on cases together.

Again a thought came back to him. Does this make me gay? His brain answered with a thundering 'NO'. He had just slipped for a night, that made him what.....experimental? But he was NOT gay.

What would happen to Mary? Should he confess to her? No, she was a kind and clever woman, but even for her this would be a bit much to absorb. She would walk away without a backward glance. No, he couldn't talk to her about this.

"Your thoughts are pretty loud."

"You have a beautiful morning voice."

"Heard of morning looks, out of bed looks, never of morning voice."

“Thicker, a bit hoarse, but still deep and sexy.”

John bit his tongue. *Fuck*, now he had started calling another man sexy. He was done for!

Chapter End Notes

Yeah, finally, yay!

Guilt Offerings

Chapter Summary

Sherlock wears leather and makeup

Chapter Notes

John will take a while to be easy with this relationship but he won't have any issues continuing the conjugal life with his housemate. Go figure!

“What is this for? They are amazing, very chic, but look at the price tags!”

Mary was quite taken aback by the beautiful black cocktail dress John had chosen for her, along with matching stilettos and a bright red Dior lipstick. They were shopping at Harrods and she hesitantly glanced at the prices of the items.

John pulled them away from her and marched towards the cash/payment counter, giving her a smirking glance over his shoulder. “Just buying you something nice, maybe you can wear it when we go to watch the concert and then to the after party,” John said in a mock-haughty voice, “Now you will ask me which concert and after-party!” Mary nodded, following him with a suspicious look on her face. “I know you’re a big fan of the Imagine Dragons. They have an exclusive concert for only a hundred people, at the Waldorf Astoria hotel. That’s followed by an after-party, hosted by their manager, and I got us passes for that. You can meet your favorite singer, Dan Reynolds.”

Mary was very quiet as John used his credit card to pay for the items, put them in a fancy bag and handed it to her with a flourish. She smiled and kissed his cheek, then fell in step with him as they exited the high-end store. Even as they proceeded towards the exit, she didn’t say a word, which made John a bit uncomfortable. “Um...let’s sit at the café, have a coffee and maybe an éclair or something. I am a bit hungry.”

“Sure,” Mary said pleasantly, “My treat.”

John sat, flipping through a couple of brochures, one for Ford and the other for Volkswagen. He wanted to buy a car. A year’s service at the Barts and a low-rent accommodation meant he had managed to save up quite a tidy sum. Time to splurge a wee bit. He needed a car, the commute to and from Barts was not too much, hence there was no need to use the forever-crowded tube or face the hassle of a cab.

“Here,” Mary was back with coffee, an éclair, croissant and fruit platter, “I got you a selection.”

“Thanks....” John rubbed his hands together, “So, do you like the dress, the shoes....?”

“I do. I told you they’re beautiful, far better than anything in my closet.”

“Yes, I mean no, I mean....I wasn’t sure if they were your kind of style, so I....”

“John,” she looked into his eyes, “Why does it seem to me like these are all guilt offerings?”

John was glad he had dropped one of the brochures and was about to bend to pick it up, because that gave him an opportunity to hide his look from her, an expression of horror mixed with apprehension.

He casually picked up the brochure and made a mammoth mistake by randomly changing the topic. “I think Ford and Volkswagen aren’t enough, I should be looking at some Renault and Lexus models too, don’t you think?”

“What is it that you’re not telling me?” She asked, not looking worried but definitely not giving up on her inquisitiveness, “If we are a couple, if we’re dating exclusively, then I deserve to know if something has gone wrong.”

Something has gone wrong you say Mary? The problem is it didn't feel wrong, didn't seem wrong, it seemed to right. I fucked my housemate and enjoyed it so much I am getting half-hard just thinking about getting him naked and spread out on the bed again. Either I am sick, gross or confused, or maybe all three. I am hurting him, or at least I am surely going to. And it's called cheating, I cheated on you. John was so lost in his thoughts that he startled when he felt her hand on top of his. "Yeah," he made a second monumental mistake as he asked indifferently, "You mean to say if we're dating exclusively. Yes for sure we are but if there's nothing to say then there's nothing to say. Us being a couple or not doesn't change a thing."

"You're scaring me now John."

"You're scaring yourself Mary."

She sighed, finally backing off a bit, "I guess."

He felt bad for treating her this way. But there was no way he could tell her the truth. It was too embarrassing. What was he going to say? *I suddenly have bisexual tendencies. Sorry, your boyfriend couldn't get it off with you but had three rounds with his housemate, his male housemate.* "Listen," he said in a very positive manner, "I have not been spending enough time with you, that's all."

Damn, I don't mind spending time with you but whenever I do I think about him and wonder if he is lonely.

"I knew what I was signing up for when I asked you out," Mary said with a grin, "Or the day you asked me out, whatever, I don't remember exactly who asked but I do remember the spiel you gave me. Busy surgeon, crime investigator on the side, odd hours, packed days, unconventional lifestyle and no time for fluff. Yes, I knew I could be the low-maintenance girlfriend you needed, that's why I started dating you."

"Yeah, but...."

"All I am saying is I have no complaints."

But you should. I have fucked my housemate. He is a man.

“Look, if it makes you feel any better, I am happy to go for this concert and after-party, but I’d suggest take Sherlock with us too. We haven’t gone out as a trio and I feel we must do that sometimes. You know, he shouldn’t feel I am hogging all your free time. Me and you together doesn’t mean there won’t be any more Holmes-Watson.”

If only you knew how well it fits with the reality that you aren’t even aware of. I am worried there might not be an opportunity of a Watson-Morstan someday. John took a deep breath and said, “Yes, sure. I think I can organize one more pass for him. But if he doesn’t agree to come along don’t blame me. He’s not really that into people, gatherings and noisy places.....unless it is for a case.”

Mary was about to say something when John’s phone started to buzz. The moment John saw Sherlock’s call coming in, he grabbed the phone like one would grab a lifeboat the moment they felt their ship was about to sink. A smile spreading on his lips at the possibility of some juice case, he answered the other man eagerly. “Hey Sherl, yes, no of course not, yes, yes, oh is it? Hmmm, well, I suppose I can pick it up. No, I am in fact close to where he lives, no, not the car showroom. Yes, she is here. do you want to speak with her.....” Suddenly John stopped, realizing how their situation had flipped on its head, “Um....she is busy, I think it’s best if I just go and pick that file up. Yes, of course, sure.”

No way am I going to let them talk. At least not today.

He knew it was only his guilty mind conjuring up scenarios of a Sherlock-Mary confrontation or Mary getting to know what had transpired the night before. Still, he knew his fears were very real and it was better to be safe than sorry. *Later, they can talk later.....*he thought, without thinking about how later would be better. His mind was an enormous cauldron of conflicting thoughts right now.

“Was that Sherlock?” Mary asked, “Are we going somewhere?”

“I need to pick up a file from Mycroft’s house. Yes, that was him.”

“He wanted to talk to me?”

“No.”

Mary didn't say anything, though it was pretty clear from her startled look that she had seen through his lie. John booked a cab for her and escorted her to it, saying he would call her shortly. He didn't notice her eyes on him as he hurried towards the Harrods parking, to take his rented Range Rover out. She hoped he would turn and give her a look and wave as she passed by but he never did.

“Mycroft....OhMyGod....give people a warning, will you? Put a Do Not Disturb board or something outside.” John had flung an arm over his eyes and was backheeling out of Mycroft's study, a beautifully appointed and huge room with a home office on one side, a library on the other and a cozy little space in the corner with two armchairs facing a charming and old-fashioned stone fireplace.

On one of those chairs Mycroft was sitting and Jim was curled up on his lap, clearly doing something that would put an NC-17 rated scene to shame. Thankfully John didn't see much but the bliss on Mycroft's face and the moaning noises from Jim put enough images in his head.

He waited outside the room for a good five to seven minutes since neither man had bothered to stop him from leaving nor had they responded. The housekeeper passed him by and gave him a *crooked glance*. ‘It's like this every day, any time of the day, I never walk into a room without knocking and calling out nowadays’ was what she muttered before quickly scuttling away. Despite having squirmed and blushed earlier, John felt warmth spread in his chest as he imagined this unlikely couple together. If there was one criminal less in this world and one more genius rescued because of his unconventional choice, then Mycroft deserved the kudos and credit for his bold decision.

The door opened. Out came Jim, looking more Richard and less Moriarty with his bed hair, stubbled cheeks and baggy clothes. For a second John thought that hoax was real, Jim indeed

didn't exist and Richard was the actor who had pretended to be the mastermind. John noticed his lips were swollen, moist and he was adjusting his clothes and running his fingers through his soft raven hairs. Okay, so there *was* something X-rated going on in there.

"Johnny boi!"

"James."

"Call me Jim, or Richie."

"Jim is fine, you can call me whatever you wish to though."

"Then I can call you confused?"

"Huh? What?"

"You don't even know how to hold on to a good thing, of course you are confused and feckless. By the way, here is Sebby's mobile number. He wants to meet you someday, over some beer and fish and chips. For old time's sake. Call him." Jim took the phone from John's hand and punched a number. John stared at him, noticing the pinkish-purplish mark on his neck, on the left side. His wrists also had marks, rope marks. So Mycroft did have kinks.

"Thanks, I really wanted to meet him by the way," John replied, staring at Jim. The former criminal handed his phone back and said, "What are you staring at?"

"Dunno, feels a bit odd seeing you like this.....just!"

Jim giggled quite loudly and for a second John noted the element of mania in the sounds of delight. So Moriarty was not entirely gone yet, traces of him remained in the carefree, cheeky and casual 'Richard'. Rumors were that he was receiving treatment for his ADHD and Bipolar. Other rumors said he was on meds and therapy but already working for Mi6.

Mycroft was tight-lipped about his lover and love-life and Sherlock, for some reason, didn't want to note, deduce or ask about Jim anymore. John secretly suspected he was upset, not just because Jim had chosen Mycroft but also because the number of cases, really complex murders and very large scale heists and scams, had dropped significantly.

"It seems odder that you are dating Mary."

"What? What do you mean?"

"Don't be daft. You know very well what I mean."

"No, I am not the level of genius as you and Sherlock, nor as well-informed and connected as Mycroft. So if you'd please enlighten me."

To his surprise (and disappointment) Jim abruptly changed the topic. "Go in, he is waiting for you. And tell Sherlylocks to stop sulking. Both you and he are the most confused nutcases that I have ever met in my life.....hey hi, yes, of course I have seen the product. No, I am not free today. My partner is home, he's taken a day off to be with me....yeah, yeah, shush, let me finish first or I will....."

John stared after Jim as he walked off, talking away on his cell phone, hips swaying, a swagger in his steps. He sounded a bit sing-song still, but overall his speech and tone sounded far more stable and normal compared to the high-pitched shrillness of the earlier times.

'Yeah, of course, we are the nutcases and you are the stable, dependable one, now that you're with Mycroft the Great," John huffed and entered the study. For a second he was afraid to look, remembering the scene he had walked in on about ten minutes prior.

"Why are you staring at your own shoes John?"

Mycroft was at his desk, reading something on his laptop. He looked like the suave and debonair official that he normally came across as. The color of his shirt was a bit bright though, a chocolate brown instead of a lighter biscuit color, again a Jim influence perhaps. Now that he looked closely at the man John noticed some really curious changes. Mycroft looked happier, more relaxed and less stiff, he even managed to smile a bit more. *The iceman thaws?* Maybe!

“I came for the file,” John said, not answering the question. Some questions didn’t merit an answer. Mycroft should know why he was so wary of looking at him. “What is in the file by the way?” He couldn’t help but ask as he got a physical file and a USB key.

“Cases from muff....James,” Mycroft said, “At least this will stop Sherlock from texting him and calling me dozens of times a day asking for something interesting. You need to calm him down John, he suddenly seems to have gone on hyper-active mode.”

Sherlock agreed to accompany John and Mary to the concert that evening. Mary was to show up at Baker Street, which she did right on time, but there were no signs of Sherlock. All the while John kept texting Sherlock, asking him to hurry up. Sherlock didn’t answer him and after a while Mary asked him to stop texting. “Don’t bite his head off, he’ll come downstairs when he’s ready,” she said kindly, “He doesn’t really attend such events so he must be wondering what to wear.....oh!” She stopped and, following her gaze, John turned around to look at the door.

OMG, was the first reaction of John Watson! Had someone forced Sherlock into these clothes?!

This was so not the detective’s style! Leather bottoms, shiny and skin tight, an almost see-through white shirt, curls tamed and pulled backwards with a band, trendy pair of Oxfords, and was that a dash of kohl in his eyes and some gloss on his lips. Even his cheeks looked a bit....colored. “Have you applied makeup Sherl?” John asked, taken aback by the change. But he had to admit Sherlock looked delicious like that, anyone who saw him like that would have an incredible urge to throw him down and just take him.

Or was it *his* secret wish? *Gosh, I am messed up in my head.* John stayed tight-lipped about makeover while Mary made a gesture of ‘awesome’ and said, “Way to go, sexy Shezza!”

The concert was really good, engaging, fun, but John kept a worried eye on Sherlock who seemed to be busy on his phone most of the time and acted distant, as if he was there on his own. Once the concert was over and Mary was in the queue to meet the artist, Sherlock suddenly came over and stood really close to John. John knew he should feel a bit miffed by that but it felt more like a relief instead. He didn’t like Sherlock acting distant, or at least he liked it *less* than Sherlock pressed against him like a seductive vixen.

“Help.”

“What....are you injured? Sherl....”

“No, down there!”

That was when John noticed the wardrobe malfunction.

The Foxy Sexy 'Lady'

Chapter Summary

When a certain sexy, pretty detective turns a wardrobe malfunction into a victory parade!

“I...what do I do?” Sherlock said, looking left and right, “As the crowd things they will notice what’s happened down there.” He looked decidedly more prudish and less brash than he had at the Buckingham Palace, where he had arrived in just a white sheet, *bedsheet*. Thank God for that too, because John was in no mood to escort a half-naked Sherlock out of this hotel and finding their picture on the front page of a juicy tabloid the next day. Thanks to their cases they were now mini-celebs and there was paparazzi outside.

“Bathrooms,” John said, “I know the ones used by the staff. They’d be emptier than the ones used by the patrons.”

Feeling an overwhelming tightness in his pants and sweat breaking out over his forehead and temples, John followed Sherlock as the detective made his way towards the staff toilets. His leather pants had split at the seams and seat, showing ample flesh. Every curve and stretch of his lower torso was already massively pronounced in the skin tight leggings, now the splits and gaps and holes gave it the ultimate look of a ‘porn-star’s barely-there’ outfit. John stuck by Sherlock, moving in sync with him, staying right behind him, so he could bodily block the sight of his ‘distressed’ pants from prying eyes.

Finally they were in the bathroom. Thankfully it was large, spacious, with multiple sinks, booths and compartments, and very clean. “How did this happen?” John asked the moment they were inside, then shook his head, “Okay, don’t bother answering me. Now what do we do?”

“I wanna go home Jawn.”

“Wait....I will get you out but....hey, unless you wanna climb out that window.”

“I could do that.”

“We are on the third floor Sherl.”

“Oh....then.....”

“Wait. I will get something for you, something you can wear and walk out, take the elevator or the stairs and across the foyer, like a normal person. Just stay put here and if anyone comes in, ignore them and keep looking at your phone. I’ll be back as quickly as I can.”

John looked here and there, thought of all possible solutions and ways out of this embarrassing situation, then decided to take the help of the lobby manager. He sort of knew the man because Larry, as the man was called, was also a resident of Baker Street. They sometimes met at the Launderette or the confectionary shop. “Listen, I need a pair of trousers....for a six foot man, slender build, waist about size 32.”

Larry’s jaw dropped. “No,” John knew how it sounded, “It’s not what you think. You see, a friend of mine....” He hesitated, not wanting to shame Sherlock, “Someone I know from Barts, he happened to spoil the seat of his trousers by planting himself on a wet chair.....I mean a chair where someone had spilled some beer. You know how these things are at concerts, so this friend of mine, I mean more of a colleague I barely know, needs this small favor.”

“You mean Sherlock Holmes needs a new pair of pants,” Larry said, squashing John’s hopes of keeping this under wraps, “No explanations needed Dr. Watson, I will get you something. It will be part of the hotel’s staff uniform though.”

It could be Tarzan’s animal skin loincloth or a tramp’s pajamas, John was in no position to choose. “Just hurry and get me a pair of whatever you have, in that size, please,” he said in a rush, “In the meantime will go and find Mary, tell her she can stay while I drop him home and come back.” John saw Larry give him the thumbs-up sign and went searching for Mary, finally finding her in a ladies’ washroom, just emerging from it. “Mary,” he panted as he nearly skidded while reaching her in a hurry, “I was looking for you, you need to know something.....” He stopped as a tall woman pushed past Mary and nearly knocked off John

as she walked past, smelling of Gucci Envy parfum and high heels clattering on the smooth marble below their feet.

“Bitch,” John mumbled.

“John,” Mary’s eyes twinkled, “Did you say that, really?”

“It seems I did, listen I am sorry I am acting a bit out of it right now, but-but Sherlock is in trouble and I.....I am afraid I need to help him, then I will come back here for you. I promise to be here before the dinner buffet wraps up.”

“It seems he always needs you, whether he is in trouble or asking for it, or dragging it towards himself. But whatever it is, he’s cute when he does that.”

“It’s not his fault what happened today.”

“I know.”

“How exactly? I didn’t even tell you what really happened.”

“John, you mean to say you didn’t really recognize him as he walked past you just now?” Mary was smirking and her eyes glittered with mischief, “Damn, he told me he would go unnoticed and slip past me while I had placed a bet saying you’ll find him in a crowd, or in the deepest trench, or atop the highest mountain. There was no way you’d ‘not’ notice him despite the disguise....a very sexy, foxy, tricky disguise.”

John looked over his shoulder, down the long corridor leading to the doors to the banquet halls, but Sherlock was gone already. It left John with a burning urge to see him in that ‘disguise’. And that Goddamned erection of his hadn’t dwindled. Instead it had intensified with time.

“Good, now he will be able to reach home on time and on his own,” Mary said, taking John’s arm, “You don’t have to be his Knight in Shining Armor. C’mon Dr. Watson, we have an after-party to attend and as far as I can remember, you paid a nice neat sum for these passes.”

John’s heterosexuality was at stake as he felt this unbelievable pull to go towards the man he knew rather than follow the woman who was tugging at his arm. Did it make him gay, bi-curious, straight, crooked, confused, he didn’t care. An urge was an urge, a deadly urge in this case which almost made him shrug off Mary’s arm and rush to the hotel foyer after Sherlock. Fortunately for him, Mary interpreted his skittish and fretful ways to concern over his housemate’s safety and wellbeing. “I knew something was wrong and knocked on the doors of the restrooms where you’d left him,” she explained, “Then I borrowed someone’s outfit, makeup, wig, purse and heels, fishnet stockings and garter belt, then talked him into ‘desperate times require desperate measures’. Snuck him into the ladies’ room and helped him out.”

“How did he get the boobs and butt?”

“He has a nice curvy tushy. The boobs, um, well, toilet paper.”

John laughed, happy at the distraction and humor, “You are far more resourceful and quick-witted over these things than I am. Thanks, guess we can attend the party now.”

His cock jerked in his pants as he thought about Sherlock in the stockings and garter belt.

“You sure you can’t come in?”

“Sorry,” John apologized, “I have a very early start tomorrow.”

She kissed him on the lips, thanked him for the wonderful evenings, they shared a heart laugh over the ‘Sherlock’ situation before they parted. As he drove back towards 221B Baker

Street, John admitted Mary could easily fit into the category of BFF. She was just so good to talk to, she was a reliable friend in need, she had that infectious sense of humor that could pull anyone out of a blue mood. Then it occurred to John that something in his head had gone into a complete reverse gear.

Earlier Mary was the girlfriend he desired and occasionally slept with and Sherlock was the dear friend. Now he felt Mary was the dear friend and.....

.....he couldn't wait to get back home and see Sherlock in that outfit, or at least part of it.

He parked the car at the usual spot, dropped the keys with the concierge since the renting company would send someone over to pick up the vehicle early next morning. John didn't really need to make an early start the next day of course, it was merely an excuse he'd made up to 'not stay' at Mary's house overnight.

When the elevator took too long to arrive, he loped up the stairs in double quick time and rushed to the door of their flat, fumbling with the keys as he did so. He managed to open it after three attempts. He was hot and hard, his fingers shook, his vision was getting blurry around the edges. God, he felt so hot under the collar right now he felt he could spontaneously *self-combust*.

He entered the flat at the same time Sherlock came out of his bedroom, looking like a delicious yet obscenely sexy and *hot porn clip come alive!* John hiccupped, then hyperventilated. He felt that if there was something called the Armageddon of your self-control and propriety then this had to be it. Every bit of memory of pussies, nipples and boobs were erased from his head as he watched the nearly naked man, sporting an Androgynous look in the makeup and wig, sashay before him in lacy panties, fishnet stockings and the slim garter belt. John's cell phone dropped from his hands, as did the house keys, and John's hands flew to their respective destinations. One started undoing his belt and the other palmed his erection over his jeans.

"Mary helped me," Sherlock spoke in his smooth baritone, which somehow contrasted sharply with his softer look and made it sound even better than usual.

John was sure he wanted to reply in words but in reality only a growling sound came out of him and in a flash he was on to Sherlock, attacking his neck and jawline with his teeth before

kissing the hell out of him. Hands grabbing his lover's sides, hips, buttocks and the small of his back, John backed him off into one of the bedrooms, not even noticing which one it was. Everything blurred for John, everything apart from Sherlock's pleasure-contorted face, his sinfully delicious body and his throaty moans.

Then John found himself doing something he'd seen some men do and knew as an old tradition, a crazy one but a tradition nonetheless. Salivating, drooling and aching to ravish Sherlock like one would do to a coveted virgin bride on a wedding night, John slid down his body.

He took the garter belt off with his teeth.

Sherlock shuddered, grabbing at John's hairs and pulling at them almost painfully hard. John, his senses swimming with an unbearable need, could wait no longer. He found Sherlock still wearing his heels and once again a scene of a hot porn film, watched many moons ago, came back to him. He gripped Sherlock's panties and tore them off in two pieces before viciously pulling down the stockings right down to his ankles.

"Pleeeeeease!" Sherlock pushed his head down between his legs.

John hesitated but that was for just a few moments. Sucking a man, tasting him directly from the source, doing something so shockingly intimate, it did intimidate him a bit. But it didn't deter him, nor for more than ten seconds anyways. He put his hands under Sherlock's thighs, lifted up his legs, folded them at the knees and placed them over his back. Then, throwing every inhibition aside, he buried himself throat deep between Sherlock's open legs.

John couldn't hold back *any longer*. Sherlock had cum in his mouth only a few minutes ago but was already on the edge again, sitting astride John's lap and facing away from him, bouncing up and down on the doctor's impressive erection. The best thing about that position was the mirror they were facing, a mirror right at the foot of the bed, which gave them a very tantalizing view of the moment between them.

Naked, white, smooth and flowing limbs, a thatch of dark brown downy mane peeking between his legs, his mouth and chin smeared with red lipstick, his wavy wig hiding part of his flushed face, Sherlock looked like a sight to heal sore eyes. Sexy as a minx, a spicy saucepot one would die a thousand times to take a sip out of, his increasingly louder moans seductive as hell, John found it real hard to consider this helplessly aroused man bouncing on his cock was the same stern-faced detective who managed to silence ministers, officers and criminals alike, with his logic, sarcasm and threats.

Soon John found the perfect rhythm and harmony between them, thrusting up the same moment Sherlock brought his pelvis down. He also kept his thrusts angled to strike the exact same spot inside the depths of his lover. With every brush to his sweet spot, Sherlock moaned and screamed, his hands flailed and flapped in the air and John had to take over the tasks the younger man had just given up on, stroking the brunette's straining cock and playing with the rosy nipples. He saw a clear stream of slick pour out of Sherlock's piss-slit, trickle down his shaft and over John's fingers, before five streaks of creamy cum were coaxed out of his cock.

John came helplessly, so overcome with lust that he actually pushed Sherlock face down on the bed and fucked him like a jackhammer, riding through that enormous orgasm. He held him down, his hand on the back of Sherlock's neck, emptying himself deep in there.

Normalcy came to him after almost five minutes, when he could move and think again.

"Sherl...." He called out to the man who was absolutely still below, "Sherlock....baby?"

I am calling him baby again. This is the end of the road for my insanity. Good Lord, I did it again, I just took him again.....

A snore answered him. Sherlock had fallen asleep sometime during John's roughshod treatment of him. Clearly he was a tough nut and far more resilient than *any woman* could be.

A twitch to his groin and a growing heaviness in his balls made him realize to his dismay that he was not quite ready to call it a night yet. He needed more, he wanted more, he had to have more. Sherlock's wig had fallen off, his hairs were a mess underneath it, and he was spread eagled on the mattress, totally slack and limp. Occasional snorts and a constant stream of gentle snores left him, indicating a deep and peaceful sleep.

Sleep be damned. I need to have him. “Sherlock,” John nudged his side, then slapped his rump, “Sherlock!”

He got *no response*, not even an out of sync groan or huff. Deciding to be a brute as long as he did Sherlock no actual harm, John lubed up, parted Sherlock’s butt cheeks till the wet and pink hole was revealed in all its tempting glory. John bent down and kissed the hole, spreading the sticky inner labia apart until the dark red moistness beyond stared back at him. Amidst that reddish-pink there was a bead of pearly white, his own cum. Intending to fill his lover with more of that, John closed his eyes and pushed inside, sitting on his knees to put minimum pressure on the sleeping beauty’s butt and hips. Sherlock’s body moved an inch up on the mattress but he still didn’t wake up, making John wonder if he had drunk quite a bit whilst waiting for John.

Oh yes, he had *definitely* been waiting for John.

John stretched out on top of the younger man and fucked him deep, slow and sensuous enjoying the moment and somehow unaffected by the act of penetrating a sleeping man and drawing pleasure without his permission. Instead of guilt, he felt quite chuffed by the experience. It was sexy as hell and gave him a sense of power that was near intoxicating. John mashed his drooling mouth on the nape of Sherlock’s neck, hips moving steadily, as he roared towards the orgasm he so needed.

At some point Sherlock whimpered and shifted and John stopped moving. But the detective showed no real urge or signs to wake up so a few seconds later the horny older man was able to safely resume his deep thrusts.

“Going to cum,” he growled as he felt the tingle build somewhere in his loins, “Fuck you’re driving me crazy....!!”

At one point John felt his semen rush up and buried his nose in Sherlock’s hair, breathing him in deep as he experienced a mind-shattering orgasm of epic proportions. ‘Yeah Sherlock...Sherl....’ were the only words that came out when he came so hard his soul nearly parted from his body. John shuddered hard enough to almost smother Sherlock into the pillows as he came and came, filling his lover to the brim with his essence.

As the last stream of cum left John's body and flowed into the curly haired man, Sherlock made a soft sound and relaxed into a deeper sleep, not having woken even for a second while John was at it.

The colonel and the captain

Chapter Summary

John seeks some counsel

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

A sudden feeling of protectiveness washed over John, replacing the blind lust that had driven him for most of the evening. He carefully pulled out and went to the bathroom for a washcloth. He cleaned Sherlock up, wiping down his front and back, gently turning him over and settling him into a comfortable position. Then, in a moment of overwhelming tenderness, he kissed Sherlock's brow before tucking him in with the blanket.

Then he went to the next room, which was Sherlock's room, to sleep. He wanted some space. Sherlock's presence was filling his head with strange thoughts and he wanted to breathe, think, analyze without cuddling up to the taller man for the night.

When he awoke with the first rays of the next morning, the first thing he was aware of was someone's presence in his bed. The scent he caught in the air was undeniably Sherlock's and even without glancing to his side he knew whose company he had. He imagined that the detective must have woken up at some point in the night, found himself alone in that room, stepped into this bedroom and crawled into bed with John. What was more, it didn't feel annoying, repulsive or even intrusive. John rolled over, flung an arm around Sherlock's waist and went right back to sleep. Sherlock also slept on, lying face first into the pillow, spread out on his back.

They woke up together two or three hours later, staring sleepily into each other's eyes. Almost immediately they knew how their time at 221B Baker Street would go for the rest of the days they stayed here. None spoke a word, not a word of the previous night was mentioned, and they went about their day's routine in complete silence. John wondered why men never shared thoughts. If they were women they would have talked up a storm already and laid the whole situation threadbare.

There onwards another month passed and things remained just the way they were, no discussions, no words, just actions and pure and unadulterated sex. They didn't miss a single night, except for a couple of them when they had to pull all-nighters for a case. Most of the mornings were also fully utilized by the two men, Sherlock often waking John to initiate it, then going back to sleep after they were finished. John would get up, get ready, then go to work.

Sometime during the day he would text Sherlock and ask how he was, the reply would mostly be one word. 'Bored' or 'Busy' or 'Reading' or 'Out'.

John kept meeting Mary on the side, though they didn't really go beyond an affectionate kiss or a hug. The sexual side of their relationship had faded away, much to John's shame and consternation. He knew sooner or later he would have to answer his lady.

But what would he say? *I like fucking a man now?*

Amidst all this, John managed to set up some time one evening to meet Sebastian Moran.

The colonel looked dashing, happy and very relaxed and easy. It was quite a difference from his army days or even those years spent as Moriarty's deputy. The legit life suited him just as much as it suited his former boss. John commented on that and the mini-giant roared with laughter.

"No way, he is still my boss and shall always be."

When John threw a quizzical glance at him Sebastian explained, already ordering a refill of Black Label. "Our work and business interests, our lives and hobbies, will always continue to intersect and collide. You see, Jim gave up a huge amount of wealth, a significant portion of which went straight to the government coffers and some were used to...erm....grease some palms. Even the Queen got a slice, which she gave to one of the charities she patronizes though. But even after all that, he was able to retain a sum that no ordinary businessman or even a super-successful actor or singer can hope to amass. Let's say it runs in the low billions. I look after some of those investments, am on the Board of Directors for some companies, and I have my own consulting firm. All thanks to my Jimbo....Jim Boss."

“So he will always control your life?”

“Nah. He doesn’t. But he can always ask, question or command.”

“Sounds like controlling to me.”

“No, it is called influencing and sheltering, something close friends and associates, sometimes partners share. Don’t you have a similar bond with Sherlock? I know, I know, Jim and I never started off on the right wavelength with the two of you but I was kind of hoping all that is behind us now and we can.....what happened, John?”

“Nothing,” John said too quickly, “Nothing at all.”

“You’ve found a woman yet?” Sebastian asked.

“How about you?” John threw the question back at him. He didn’t have an answer. He would be lying if he said he didn’t, but at the same time it wouldn’t be entirely correct if he were to say ‘I am in a steady relationship with Mary Morstan’.

Sebastian shot him a curious glance, “I am enjoying being footloose and fancy free. I dip my feet into the waters I like, then I dry myself and walk away. In other words, I am not ready for commitment, I don’t think I will ever be. But I have friends, I have people who will never refuse casual sex with me, I have Jim, I am good really. There is nothing to worry about, my life is right on those tracks I’d like it to be on.”

John nodded. That was vintage Moran. Always very clear about what he wanted. He wished he was a bit like that.

“You didn’t answer for yourself yet,” Sebastian waggled his brows, “What’s up with you and your sex life? I know you showed me a pic of the two girls you dated, Jenny from the high school days and later your neighbor Rachel.”

“Jenny is lost at sea,” John could help but snark and laugh at the same time, wondering what an amazingly peculiar luck he had always had with his dates/lovers, “Sea of humanity. Just disappeared one fine day man! Rachel and I broke up, she wanted a rich doctor, not a military surgeon, even the uniform couldn’t hold her back. She has two kids now.”

Sebastian burst out laughing and signaled to the barman to bring in shots. “We need to have two shots to this,” he said, while John finished his first peg and held out his glass for the second one. “So then, the sexy fatigues didn’t work, the officer rank didn’t work and therefore none of those girls are currently relevant,” the deep baritone of Sebastian’s reminded John of Sherlock, making him feel a weird pang in his chest, “But now I hear you’re a rich man. Sherlock’s making money which means you’d get a cut. You were honorably discharged, so there’s a pension. There is surely a neat sum paid to the Barts surgeon and I am sure there might have also been a temporary disability compensation given.”

“Gosh, you know everything colonel.”

“Nope. I don’t. You’re hardly telling me anything.”

“There is nothing to share, really.”

“Do you have a girlfriend or not?”

“Um.....no one really.”

“Then Jim was right all along. You are fucking Sherlock Holmes.”

John was trying to eat some batter fried cod but the moment those words were said he dropped his fork on his plate with a clang. His mouth fell open like a fly trap and his hand shook on his whiskey glass, almost letting a bit spill out. Sebastian gave a rich, roaring laughter and said, “So I *was* right. You *are* fucking him. But much before me Jim had told me so, he was absolutely certain.”

“Sebastian, please, I am not gay. I am just....you know sometimes it happens, boys and their libido, sometimes the situation is such....”

“Used to happen in the army all the time, I know about that,” Sebastian said, tilting his head and shrugging his shoulders, “But it never happened *to you* back then. You had control, you were discreet, you were picky. Look, you can talk to me about it now because I am the best man to give you advice on this. I am bisexual myself, I like women for sex and men for friendships and companionship. If this makes you feel any better, I have fucked Jim.”

John’s eyes went round as saucers and a grin spread to his lips. Oh yes, it did seem like they shared a chemistry. To his surprise Sebastian did blush a wee bit, lowering his eyes, “Yeah you heard that absolutely right my friend. I fucked my own boss, the great criminal mastermind James Isaac Moriarty and it was an absolute delight and joy.”

“Wait, wait, oh please, let this sink in,” John raised his hand, eyes still wide and filled with disbelief and wonder, “This will take some time for me to digest though I can actually see you two together....wait, okay let’s do the shots first. I think it’s time for them.” Sebastian nodded and the two picked up their shots, clinked shot glasses, said ‘cheers and down the hatch’ and gulped them down. Sebastian wiped his mouth with the back of his hand while John snickered and said, “You and Jim, Jim and you, oh well, well, well, wait.....what? I forgot one thing, isn’t he about to marry Mycroft Holmes? They live together Seb, they have been for months and you must be.....”

“Heartbroken?” Sebastian seemed a bit puzzled, “No, why?”

“You lost the man you love to Mycroft.....”

“That would soon be Sir Mycroft Holmes. He will be knighted soon.”

“Oh!”

“Yeah. The whole Moriarty business has been profitable for both. He has regained his sanity and Mycroft has garnered a stellar reputation as an intelligence and homeland security chief. The elder Holmes is now heading both Mi5 and Mi6 by the way and after being knighted he will become a part of the Queen’s counsel and a special advisor to the cabinet on external affairs. Good for them.”

“But where does that leave *you*?” John asked, thoroughly confused by now.

“You still don’t get it, do you John?” Sebastian asked. There was no sarcasm in his tone, only a hint of pity, “Why does everything have to be black and white for you? There are interspersed shades of grey and other colors in between and all of us thrive mostly in that space mostly.”

“You have to be a bit more clear,” John was aghast, both by what he was hearing and his own inability to read between the lines. Again he *missed Sherlock*. The brilliant mind of Sherlock’s would have grasped all this by now and predicted a few events ahead already.

“All right, if I have to spell it all out,” Sebastian chugged back his second drink and reached for a plate of fish and chips, “I am not the ‘committing and settling down’ kinds. Jim is not someone who can be managed by me, someone who is not at par with him intellectually. So we agreed on a middle path, something that works for both of us. Mycroft was sending him feelers and he responded to them agreeably, we saw a potential of a romance.....but more important than that, a relationship that could last forever. Believe me, had I been in a long term and exclusive relationship with Jim he would have either blown me up, turned me into shoes or had himself committed somewhere.”

“So you let him go?”

“No, we struck a good bargain, it was a win-win deal. See, Jim needed someone who wasn’t in awe of him and could overrule him sometimes if need be. Mycroft is just that man. At the same time Mycroft isn’t me, he isn’t a kinky slinky bastard in bed, so when Mycroft is too busy and I am around, I still get to have that odd one night stand with him. Though he never stays back, he always leaves once we are done.....what happened? Too much detail? Too scandalous. Hello, this is 2012, not 1912. If Oscar Wilde lived in our times he would have been a reality star, a playwright, a BAFTA winning scriptwriter. Anything but a man who went to the gaol for being in love with another man.”

“Several men.”

“He loved one, slept with many.”

John sighed, “I will never understand this concept Sebastian. Sorry, call me a prude or whatever....”

“Not a prude John, you’re in self-denial and behaving like a narrow minded bigot,” the colonel said in a voice that left no room for negotiation, “You just don’t wanna admit you love Sherlock because you’re also sexually attracted to him? Doesn’t that mean you’re a demisexual then, someone who sleeps only with people they have feelings for? Have you considered the fact that you might be attracted to him sexually because you have feelings for him?!”

“It’s not so simple....” John rubbed his face down with his hands, feeling miserable all of a sudden.

“Don’t complicate things in your head, keep them simple, *they are simple.*”

John reacted, “What do you mean simple? It is not. I am in quite a situation here. You see, there is also this woman, a very bright and nice woman, who I am sort of dating for nearly eight and half months.”

Sebastian rolled his eyes, “Now he tells me! So there is also a woman, and you’re saying you have feelings for her?”

“Yes. Of course. I do.”

“Slept with both of them?”

John said something in response that he would regret immediately because it seemed weirdly kinky and at the same time self-consciously defensive. “N-Not at the same time.....” he inadvertently blabbed, before coloring very severely, “.....No....I mean to say.....”

Sebastian was looking at him with lifted brows, half-laughing and shaking his head. John shut his mouth, there was nothing he could say to make his foolishness sound any better or worse. He had just blabbered out the truth and the truth sounded just as ugly as it did in his thoughts. "Captain John Watson," Sebastian snort giggled, "I have to tell you a story. You remember back in the army days, during our brief posting at Iraq, we had this guy in our unit who worked in the communications department? He was a junior officer and his name was Andrew Kirk Cherrington. Yes, that fellow! Ruddy skinned redhead with bright green eyes, medium height, rather bright and quick on the job?"

"Yes."

"He had a girlfriend back in Scotland. He genuinely loved her. But then he met....."

"One of the paramedics. Jeffrey, he worked with me under my command."

"Yes, absolutely. So you remember."

"I do, but I don't see the context, background or reason to mention him sir."

Sebastian's smile disappeared. "You were not in touch with Andrew later but I was, in fact I still am. He is still with the armed forces but in a base location and working as an interpreter and decoder, his posting is now within English borders. He and Jeffrey formed a great friendship and we used to tease them that their wives would be jealous of how much time they spent together. Later, when they returned home, Andrew never reconnected with his girlfriend. Broke it off with her. Naturally I was curious and asked him why. Guess what his answer was."

John held his breath, "Enlighten me."

"He said he had found love with a man."

"Jeff?"

“Yeah.”

“But you don’t.....you can’t.....how can you.....?!”

“You can,” Sebastian answered coolly, “As long as you believe some things are possible even if they are not common everyday events.”

Chapter End Notes

John won't be comfy with his new 'woke' status. It will take him a while and some serious ass whupping to see the truth the way it really is.

Unsolved Mystery

Chapter Summary

'Shit, he is right. I have. Mary will never forgive me, I know that.'

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

John was hardly convinced of what the other man was saying. He was just relaying and narrating his own thoughts, right? If it was a matter of mere opinion then Seb could be wrong too. How could someone just *turn* like that? He, John Watson, had always been straight, arrow straight, painfully straight. He had never felt any attraction towards any man, not even one.

At the same time, he thought of the past few days and how *confusion clouded him all the time*. Yes it was true he didn't feel like having sex with Mary while with Sherlock it had more or less become a routine. They had even stopped questioning their desires, they just *gave in* to them.

Sebastian watched him very keenly. His eyes narrowed, as if studying John's reaction in great detail. Feeling like an insect under an eagle's gaze, John ran his fingers through his dirty blond hairs and tried to keep his expression and body language as neutral as possible. "After a bit of prodding and probing he told me something I will never forget," Sebastian suddenly added to his earlier story, "He said love and fondness could exist in different forms and shapes and we could develop these feelings towards multiple people at the same time. But that intimate, romantic, monogamous relationship one craves for, that can only happen with one. Or at least, one at a time. After meeting Jeff he realized Christie, his girlfriend, was a damn good buddy but not someone he really viewed as a wife. Or at least as a potential wife."

John tried a feeble protest, more towards himself than Sebastian. "Mary is perfect for me."

"You don't really believe that. If you did, you'd never have cheated on her. Sleeping with a man doesn't mean your woman will take that as a 'forgivable offense'. At the end of the day you shared your heart and body with someone else, which tantamount to cheating on her."

Shit, he is right. I have. Mary will never forgive me, I know that.

“It is your life, so I shall draw the line here,” Sebastian asked for round three of their whiskies, “But if I were you I’d take a call and stick to my decision. But before you do decide, think about which one you wanna let go of. Because there’s no way you can have both of them.”

“I never said I want both of them.....” John held his head in his hands.

Sebastian pushed John’s glass towards him and forked a piece of fish, bringing it to his own mouth. “I understand that. You don’t want both of them in bed with you. But the alternate arrangement, of one being a lover and the other being a friend or housemate, that too doesn’t look likely to happen. If that was what you wanted, you shouldn’t have started fucking Sherlock.”

“You make my situation look unsolvable.”

“There is one solution. Tell Mary the truth and offer friendship, true and genuine friendship.”

While John had enjoyed the evening it had also been too heavy for him. All the information download about Sebastian, Jim, Mycroft and later about him, Sherlock and Mary, he was dumbstruck and also a bit brain-drained. His head felt light, his gut heavy, his limbs were fidgety as if something needed to be done to release the tension contained in them. Eventually the conversation had veered towards army days, old colleagues and funny stories but the remnants of the earlier topic lingered on in his mind.

Instead of booking an Uber or taking any other random cab, John decided to walk the three miles back to his abode.

When he opened the door, he found Sherlock talking to a client. He was initially a bit offended that Sherlock was entertaining a client without informing him, he could have certainly given him a call, but he wasn't the kind to create a scene around others so he calmly perched on an ottoman and listened to the tail end of the chat. It was a beautiful woman in love with another woman and ever since she had disclosed so to her tyrant of an elder brother, she feared he was trying to get rid of her in order to 'save face' with family and friends. She had found her car brakes removed one morning and narrowly avoided an accident. Another time she had dropped her ice cream and the cat that licked it up died soon after. Two days ago she had found her balcony bannister broken deliberately and saved herself at the nick of time by grabbing a chair and arresting a fall on to the lawns below.

Sherlock asked her some questions while he kept researching something on the laptop, his face as usual a mask. Not a single emotion showed.

"I will pay you your fees....I earn my own money on the side, so my brother won't know," the lady said. John estimated she was around thirty five or so.

"Have you considered marrying a man instead?" Sherlock said unexpectedly.

At that, even John looked up in surprise. The client squawked, "What?"

"If your brother is a killer then he will be behind bars but then....do you *really* want to be in that situation? Imagine this, he is the only family you have and you don't really wish him harm. Since he's the patriarch now, he will for sure disown you, so you'll have to start all over again, move out of that house even. All for living with a *woman*?"

"Mr. Holmes," she cried, "She is not just 'a woman'. She is Diane, I love her, she is *my girl*."

"Oh okay."

"I didn't get you."

“At the moment I don’t think you need to. All good then, I shall take up this case and I need an outer limit of five to seven days to take it to its conclusion. My fees is ten grand for any work of these proportions. Please pay half the money upfront and the rest upon the solving of this case. If I am unable to solve this or the solution is not to your liking, you won’t get the initial sum back. If you’re okay with this, we can go ahead.”

She swiftly took out money from her purse and handed it to Sherlock who casually placed it on the edge of a side table. Then he did what he normally did to indicate to clients it was time to leave. He sat up a bit and flashed a plastic smile.

It worked again and the lady, whose name John learned as Claire, got up and left, looking hugely disturbed and tense. John murmured ‘Don’t worry, things will be fine, Sherlock Holmes is on the case’ as she passed by and she gave him a grateful smile. John always soothed ruffled feathers and distressed souls while Sherlock did the cold, hard calculations in the background. Once the door closed, John threw a quizzical glance at his housemate and co-investigator. “It’s not like you to ask for money like this, unless the client offers it on their own.” He saw no reaction from his friend and added, “You didn’t even text me asking me to come home sooner. If there’s a client you usually do that.”

Sherlock didn’t answer.

“What’s crawled up your arse now?” John asked a bit irritably. He was already tense and Sherlock’s weird behavior was the last thing he needed.

Green eyes looked at him and Sherlock exhaled. He didn’t say a single word, just got up and walked into his bedroom. His body language suggested he wanted no conversation with John and somehow that irked the doctor too much. No way was Sherlock going to ignore him. If he was upset he needed to at least tell John what the hell was wrong. Without that how was John going to correct the situation?!

He kicked the door open just as it was about to close on his face. The door swung the other side and Sherlock backed off, one arm flailing a bit. His robe fell open, revealing only pajamas beneath, that too riding really low on his hips. The hipbones jutted out, John could see the ‘V’.

“What the fuck…….”

John growled as arousal coursed through him like an all-consuming forest fire, scorching up everything in its path. He had so much to say, so much to think about, so much to ponder over, but all he could do now was to claim this man standing in front of him.

His hand slid down the loose waistband of Sherlock's pajamas. John gasped with lust.

No underpants.

He squeezed the perfect arse and pulled Sherlock closer, kissing him hard on the lips. Sherlock melted into his arms, aided him as the pajamas and the robe over his shoulders was swiftly removed, and lifted one leg to give John easy access to the sweet little hole that was twitching in anticipation already.

John knew he had no time or patience to strip completely. Either he would end up tearing off his own clothes or he would end up soiling them in his own seed. Neither was his preference. He wanted to cum deep in that pert, rosy arse.

With some roughshod movements, grunts, growls, hands grabbing, fingers probing, mouths clashing with abundance, John managed to prepare Sherlock while he got his pants open mid-thigh and freed his cock. Then he pulled Sherlock right on top, parting his butt cheeks and lowering him on the thick phallus. Despite their earlier tryst that day and John slathering a huge amount of lube on himself, it was still quite an effort for the younger man to accommodate his girth. The look of pain and agony on Sherlock's face almost made him call this off but soon he felt immense tightness surround his cock and Sherlock's features relaxed and contorted with pleasure, and the doctor sighed with relief.

Stopping at this point would have been devastating.

He thrust up, hard!

"Ohhh," Sherlock opened his eyes with a snap, pupils dilated. His mouth opened wide.

An evil grin spread on his lips and John thrust up again into the tight vault, this time angling it just right. The already open mouth opened even wider and a scream left Sherlock's throat, deliciously loud. "Yes, yes, yes, feel me deep inside you, so deep you feel it all the way in your gut, moving and probing, stroking you so good, yeah, feel me and enjoy me baby, I am all yours, fuck yourself on my cock."

Sherlock's eyes widened this time. John sometimes used words to arouse him, pep him up, urge him on, but these words....even John was shocked by how he sounded and how easily those words had rolled off his tongue. He grabbed Sherlock's cock and started to jerk him off.

"Ah," Sherlock threw his head back in ecstasy, exposing his long neck. John's teeth sank in at one side, a little above the collarbone, a bit below the jawline. He began to bounce on John's dick, holding on to John's shoulders, his long legs spread wide.

John knew how hot they looked. He closed his eyes and imagined himself watching the two of them, like a third person viewing them through a sheet of clear-glass. The sexy image formed in his head, his heartbeat sped up, his cock began to throb in the deep heat it was buried in.

Sherlock saw the vein on John's forehead stand out prominently, felt his body tighten, heard his throaty groans get louder and louder. He was very close, almost teetering on the edge. With a sneaky grin he clenched his arse.

"HOLY MOTHER OF GOD!!!"

John's cry was very robust and high pitched and perhaps that was what triggered Sherlock's orgasm. Seeing the veritably quiet and controlled John lose it like that was the straw that broke his controls. Several choked and strangled cries left him as he came all over John's hand and his clothes, five streaks of creamy milk shooting out of his throbbing, erupting dick which John stroked through his lover's orgasm. At one point Sherlock was over-sensitive down there and squirmed and shuddered, at which point John let it go, fingers trailing down to the place where they were joined. Warm semen had already started to trickle out of Sherlock's hole even though John was still buried deep in there.

Minutes passed and their pants ceased, giving way to steadier breathing. At that point John wrapped both his arms around his lean, willowy lover and whispered into his ear, "Come on, off to bed for you. I'll wake you after I've made some dinner for you. Have you eaten anything?"

"N't hungry."

"You hardly produced much semen. When you don't eat, that's what happens."

"But I did....there was enough."

John licked at his fingers and shook his head with a sneaky grin. Sherlock understood the joke and snorted, then let his head fall on John's shoulder. "I can't move."

"Spoilt brat."

"Hmmm, Mmmm!"

Seeing no other way, John pulled out, managed to get his trousers back up and lifted Sherlock in his arms like one would carry a child. Despite the difference in their heights he managed it very well and Sherlock wrapped his legs around John, to prevent them from dragging over the ground. It was not an easy carry but John made it to the bed easily and lowered Sherlock on the mattress, putting him on his side.

"Sure about the dinner?"

"Yeah...."

"Milk and cookies?"

“Okay.”

Fifteen minutes later, as the two men sat on their bed, Sherlock nibbling on the cookies and sipping the milk and John having some tea, the doctor couldn't help but ask that burning question. “Why did you tell Claire to give up on her love just so she can lead a....an easy life. Her brother is trying to kill her just because she wants to live with a woman and....you actually took up for her brother?! This is....so last century, so medieval....was that a test of some sort, some way to understand her better?”

“Yes,” Sherlock replied briefly, yawning wide and rubbing his eyes. He attempted to slide back under the covers but John kept looking at him, clearly expecting more. He shrugged and said, “Well, sometimes women can be foolish. They'd fall in love, think all that's important for them is the person they're sleeping with, and in such an obsessed state it's very easy to fall for bad advice. Maybe her girlfriend is trying to get the brother into some trouble, so she can get a bigger share of their father's estate. It could be Claire's own stupid delusions. There might be so many things. After a year and half of working with me you should have learned not to take whatever I say at face value.”

“You sure?”

“When am I not?”

“Well.....”

“Why are you so inquisitive? You usually trust me on the way I handle a case, don't I?”

John felt a bit foolish asking this but he had to get it out of his system. “You didn't tell me there's a client and you're taking up the case. Usually you let me know and we listen to the client's backstory, their fears and their context together. I make notes, you do the deductive reasoning, that's been our math. Right? Today I came back and found the meeting was almost over and I hadn't been informed.”

Sherlock finished his milk and picked up a glass of water, draining that too. He pursed his lips and pulled the blanket up. “Don't think too much Jawn. Sometimes you've got to let it

go.”

“Let go...what do you mean?”

“Goodnight Jawn.”

John sat there, gob-smacked, as Sherlock rolled over, faced the other side and soon fell asleep. The doctor waited, holding the tray, dishes, cups, glasses in his hands, waiting for a response. When twenty minutes had passed and Sherlock seemed deeply asleep, John got up with a sigh and walked out of the room. When did Sherlock start keeping things from him? Here they were, solving mysteries for the world while a huge unsolved mystery existed right here, in their home.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for being late with this update but the lockdown has been hard. Working from home is a big pain when everyone else is doing the same and the calls, mails and tasks seem to arrive throughout the day and evening. At the same time 'everyone being at home' means you gotta do your family time too. But no complaints.

Stay safe, stay healthy, stay at home.

Temper Down John

Chapter Summary

John finds out something that helps him label Sherlock, Mary and himself according to their present situations. One is furious, one is oblivious and one is doomed.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

John sat in the room, tears streaming down his cheeks. He looked haggard and zombie-like.

How did it come to this?

The more he thought, the more he cursed himself for everything that had happened over the past four days. It had started with the odd way Sherlock had behaved with the case given by the client named Claire Terence, then that weird evasive behavior had continued throughout the case as he dodged John's questions and kept him in the dark about most things. It was not just the lack of information that bothered John, but a sudden change in the way his friend was behaving with him. That famous Sherlockian coldness and icy responses were back and that was what got John totally riled up. But what happened on the day the case got solved was the ultimate straw that broke the camel's back.

It turned out that Claire's girlfriend Diane was actually a bisexual woman who was romancing both the brother and sister duo, whereas she was actually engaged to one of their employees named Carter. Carter was an American art agent and on his advice Claire, who was a half-American herself, had decided to play one sibling against the other and get them both out of the picture. Then she would, using her status as a partner, grab as much of their wealth as possible.

When she was unmasked, Carter reacted violently. John, who had been repeatedly warning Sherlock not to take too many chances, had found himself locked in a room while the two of them confronted a weaponless and lonely Sherlock. John knew he would never forget that sight, which he watched on close circuit television, where the two of them and their accomplices had Sherlock, Claire and Jonathan, Claire's brother, tied to chairs while they

tried to set fire to the room to make it look like an accident, a short-circuit of the old electrical wiring system that needed an upgrade.

Sherlock had eventually very cleverly talked himself out of it and managed to rescue Jonathan, but Claire had got some burns and John had got a heart-stopping scare as the flames licked closer and closer to Sherlock.

He had escaped too and reached the scene just in time to find Sherlock still standing there, while everyone else was safely out.

“Come on out you....what the fuck were you thinking?”

Sherlock had not replied.

An angry John had dragged him out minutes before the roof of the outhouse had caved in. The case was solved thereafter, the cops and ambulance had arrived and in the aftermath John was thanked over and over again by Jonathan who handed him a cheque with a ridiculously high value on it. “I wanted to thank Mr. Holmes, tell him how sorry I am for being rude towards him initially, but I cannot find him. At least this should suffice...show how appreciative and grateful I am.”

Sherlock had indeed disappeared. Biting down on his tongue where a few curses were just begging to roll off, John tried to stay calm and said, “It’s okay, he knows you are grateful. He’s not so great with communicating once the case is solved. Take care of Claire, hope she gets well soon. Thank you!”

He had returned to Baker Street, worried out of his mind, hoping Sherlock was okay and had not concealed some wound he had incurred. Though he was somewhat relieved to find his Sherlock in the flat, sitting there as if nothing was wrong, as if they hadn’t had a life-threatening moment an hour and half ago, as if everything was as normal as they could be on a summer evening, he was riled all over again by the way Sherlock tried to get up and walk away the moment he stepped inside.

“Care to explain what’s going on in that head of yours?” John couldn’t control his temper as he blocked his lover’s path, “You’ve been acting like a total arse for the past few days. If you’re upset with me then you need to spell out your grievance or anger, tell me what went

wrong. I am no fucking mind reader. I can't deduce like you do fuck me to hell, I need to hear it in clear, simple English."

"You are not very bright John," Sherlock said in an icy tone, "But I never thought you'd be this daft."

"What? Wait, what the fuck are you on about?"

"You think I can find out a 100 things about someone with a mere look and I can't tell what's going on with you?"

"You are not making sense....."

"Neither are you."

John did a facepalm, "Okay, so it's all my fault now. Fine, fair enough, I am wrong. But how exactly have I been wrong? How have I wronged you? Just give me a hint."

"I met Mary."

John's heart almost stopped. He looked at Sherlock through wide, bewildered eyes, his mouth falling open. A sudden bolt of guilt shot up in his chest and throat and blocked whatever words he was about to say. He went on the back foot and averted his gaze from Sherlock, suddenly feeling like an ant under a microscope. "I-I am not sure how....meeting Mary is related to whatever we are talking about."

"For the records she didn't tell me anything. But I....I knew. I found out. I had known all along. I was never convinced that.....forget it."

John wanted to lash out, yell at him for forming imaginary things in his head and calling them facts but his conscience stabbed at him. *He is not wrong. You have been carrying on*

something on the side with Mary. John hyperventilated, not used to such confrontations, especially with Sherlock. A feeble excuse formed in his head ‘But I never slept with her since the day we shared a bed together’ but he knew just how ludicrous it sounded.

“I-I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said, wishing this conversation had never started. But this had to happen someday. *Some things can never stay under wraps. I wonder how much Mary knows.*

Sherlock answered that question right after. “We found out together, during the course of our conversation where your name cropped up. You have been.....” Sherlock stopped and it was that stricken and hurt look in his eyes that was John’s undoing. He had never seen Sherlock hurting. He had seen him mostly icy, cool or arrogant. A brilliant man but a total dick with words, capable of unleashing a sharp tongue any moment. He had seen him afraid, apprehensive, worried, but never ever had he seen him like this, all broken. *I am the reason, I did this to him, possibly Mary is suffering in the same way as well, it’s all fucked up....no I am the one who fucked it up. What the fuck do I do now?*

“You were foolish to think I am so dense,” Sherlock went on, swallowing hard, “Then you made the same mistake with Mary. You thought she’s just.....guess what, she told me she’ll step aside and I told her the same but then....do you really deserve any one of us? I have stayed away from sex, from attraction, from infatuation, diligently, carefully, zealously. But you pranced in, made me change, made me vulnerable and then you hurt me.”

By the tail end of the sentences, Sherlock’s hurt and dejected look and tone had transformed into one of anger and disdain, as if he no longer cared. John flinched as the detective added, “I just want to go back to where I was before, alone, on my own, where alone protected me..... when I said *alone protects me* I also meant.....from any emotional bruises. I have had them before and I don’t want to.....”

No, no way am I losing him. No!

Extreme distress turned to self-loathing and self-loathing turned to an uncontrollable anger. John felt his blood pressure throb at his temples as Sherlock said, “I want to work and deal with my life on my own.”

“NO.”

Sherlock blinked and stepped back, shocked.

“I said NO,” John advanced on him, “You will NOT do any such stupid thing. You have no idea how these things work. People make mistakes.....”

“They do, but they at least *confess*, or *repent*, or *promise* to change their ways, but you’re just behaving like an asshole who thinks it’s pretty cool to put his dick into two places at the same time. Well, I am not going to be your secondary orifice of pleasure.”

Something snapped inside John and every little bit of frustration, fear and folly combined together and pushed him into making a monumental mistake. He raised his hand and struck Sherlock across the face.

His hand connected with Sherlock’s jaw and lower cheek and suddenly the detective had lost his balance and fallen, landing up on a small side table with a glass top. His arm hit the glass and it shattered, with a shard piercing Sherlock’s palm. The crimson blood that poured out sickened John to the stomach and he automatically moved forward to help the dazed man. Sherlock was still on the floor and in a state of shock, one of his hands having flown to his cheek and his eyes on the other one which had the cut, and it was only when John tried to pick him up that he realized John was still in the room. He recoiled from John as if the latter was some kind of demon or dirt, someone either horrid or disgusting. On his hands and knees he moved away, throwing a horror filled look at his lover.

“DON’T TOUCH ME.”

“Sherl I am not....”

“I said don’t touch me.”

“It was a mistake, I am sorry, can we please talk?”

“No.....”

“I should have never done that. I apologize, please give me a chance to.....”

“NO!”

John watched, mortified, as the same eyes that used to stare at him in utter adoration now looked at him as if they were afraid of him. Not just afraid, *terrified*. He also saw the split lip in the left hand corner of Sherlock’s mouth and closed his eyes. *Oh God no, what have I done? I wish I could turn back the clock and change all of this. He will never trust me again, never love me again.*

“I am going out and you will NOT follow me,” Sherlock yelled, uncharacteristically emotional and loud, “If you do I will slash my wrists.” As if to prove he could do that, he picked up a sharp shard of broken glass and held it close to his right wrist.

“No, please, no,” John stepped back, “I won’t, I won’t.”

“I hate you. You hit me. My parents have never hit me. No one ever hit me before..... not in the family....”

“I would never have.....Sherlock, wait, please.....”

Sherlock went into the bathroom and slammed the door. John followed him, keeping a distance, not wanting to spook him out further. He rested his cheek against the unfeeling wood of the door and kept talking, apologizing, requesting but heard not a single sound from the other side. After a long time John slid down and sat on the floor. If Sherlock was coming out hours later he would still find him right there, waiting. But then something happened that made the doctor change his mind and back off, at least for a little while. He heard Sherlock vomiting and crying, then the shower and the faucet were both turned on, presumably to drown out the sounds.

That was when John realized Sherlock needed space. Unlike women, men never felt comfortable expressing emotions or showing themselves in a distressed or vulnerable state.

Perhaps his lingering presence was stressing Sherlock out so much that he was gripped by those psychosomatic symptoms of gagging, dry heaves and puking even though there wasn't anything to throw up.

He needed to move away, at least for a while and let Sherlock compose himself and be in that space where he was comfortable enough to talk. Forcing him to open up would only break down the process of communication and one of them would end up reacting badly.

"Listen," he rapped his knuckles on the door, "I am going to my room. You...you take your time, then we will talk, okay? Talk. Yeah. Just give me five minutes. Right, then I will go now, I am leaving the room. I am.....sorry. Sorry."

He went to his room, picking up his phone on the way, and jumped when he saw at least six missed calls from Mary Morstan. "Good Lord, *no*," he groaned. He couldn't handle both on the same day, could he?

Still, he needed to return her calls, especially since he was aware she had met Sherlock and the two of them had talked. So, deciding to use this time to calm her down and also check on her, he closed the bedroom door and pushed the button to return the call.

She picked up on the second ring. "John, you okay?"

She is asking me if *I am okay*? Something is amiss here. "Yeah," he said, clearing his throat. He was not a good liar and she was a clever woman. He was worried she would find out within two minutes that he was possibly going through the worst day of his life. First the scare at the client's place, then the fight with Sherlock and now Sherlock being all upset and teary. It couldn't get any worse.

"You sound different, a bad throat or have you been crying?" She asked, her voice filled with concern and kindness. She wasn't irate. What exactly had she and Sherlock been discussing that Sherlock was all stressed out and unhappy but she seemed totally okay and at ease.

"Crying?" He cleared his throat and tried to sound extra cheerful, "What? C'mon Mary, you don't think I will be crying, of all things. Yeah, a bit of a bad throat. I had a shouting match

today, at a case, during a showdown. That's all. But I am alive and kicking, completely hale and hearty." He paused and said, "I heard Sherlock and you met today or was it yesterday. How did it go? Did he manage to scare the living daylight out of you or annoy the hell out of you?"

"Oh no, none of those things," she said cheerfully, sounding pleased with herself, "He had come to me for some help with a case, possibly the same case you guys just wrapped up. It involved some woman's past medical records and I managed to twist the system a bit to give him some 'masked' information. The way I took the information out impressed him and we ended up spending some quality time together. We are both interested in bees, we both love the same kind of music and musicians, so it was a nice little chat. Then he did an amazing series of deductions based on our chat. My God, he is some genius! I have never met a man as bright and perceptive as him."

John heart sank. *You can't hide stuff from vastly intelligent men!* "What did he exactly deduce?"

"Oh our relationship. He rattled off his knowledge which he developed just by observing me and my mannerisms, a few words I had spoken and a picture of yours on my phone screen. But that was all stuff which had already happened, like where we might have met, what do we usually do when we have our date, how long have we known each other etc. What was remarkable was how he predicted a couple of things even you don't know."

"Is it? What might those be?"

"That I have a ring for you....yeah, sorry, I am not putting any pressure on you John, I don't want to, but it's been close to nine months and I felt it was time to....so I bought it, but I wouldn't have broached the topic unless....oh and the other thing was something private, he was saying, Gosh that made me color tomato-red." Mary hesitated and said, "He even told me some of your preferences in bed, with me."

"WHAT???"

"Yes and they were spot-on. I told him he was quite accurate but I also asked him to stop that....I was laughing and blushing at the same time. Honestly, had you not warned him about him and how eccentric he could be, I would have probably gotten offended by those words."

So Sherlock got all the confirmations he needed, from Mary. And Mary provided it all to him, without knowing John was just as close to Sherlock as he was to her. The result - One is oblivious, one is furious and I am doomed.

Chapter End Notes

I know AO3 has a diverse group of readers and writers, therefore a small word of caution to all. This story doesn't exactly have saintly characters and a lot of things they do in this series are wrong, just wrong. But it's only part of a plot line and I do not intend to encourage anyone to behave like these characters. It won't hold up in real life and you'll most likely get either into trouble or get hurt.

Examples:

Hitting someone you love, even in extreme anger, isn't right.

Double crossing people, no matter what the excuse is, isn't right.

An Unconditional Apology

Chapter Summary

Now it was up to him to find Sherlock and bring him back home. He wasn't going to get any help, at least not right away.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

John looked around the bedroom Sherlock occupied, or rather, used to occupy. He was not sure if the man was coming back anytime soon. Though his heart shattered into pieces whenever he thought so he knew it was better to be hit by the truth than a bunch of self-propagated lies. Ignorance was not always bliss.

After that call with Mary he had rushed back to Sherlock's room only to find it empty. The bathroom was also empty. There were no signs of Sherlock anywhere. The detective had left the flat while John was on the call.

He had called Sherlock's number instantly but the number was unreachable. He called the next alternative number, Mycroft's private number, but the man texted back saying he was in an important meeting with the Queen and it would take him some time to return the call. John cursed himself for not keeping Jim Moriarty's number before it occurred to him that maybe Sherlock was at Mrs. Hudson's. So he had rushed over to her place, ignoring the late hour, and knocked on the door. To his surprise there was no response. Frustrated, John was about to turn back to his own flat when he saw a rather startled Mrs. Hudson walking out of the elevator, eyes on him.

“What's the matter John?”

A bit cautiously he said, “Is Sherlock....I mean did you see him downstairs?”

“No. Isn't he with you?”

“Of course not, why else would I be asking you this?”

His tone was more curt than he would have liked and her eyes widened slightly at that. But Mrs. Hudson *being Mrs. Hudson*, she paid scant attention to his tone and said in her usual affectionate, soft manner, “Oh don’t you worry. Probably you two had a little domestic.....again. He will come back home when he has blown off that steam. Or maybe you can call him or text him, just say sorry. Sorry works every time.”

No it doesn't, not when the mistake is unpardonable.

“Yes sure,” John said and walked back into the flat. He spent an agonizing night, awake and wondering whatever the hell was going on, repeatedly trying Sherlock’s number and reaching his voice mail every single time. He thought about leaving a message but knowing Sherlock it would only annoy the detective more, so he held back. Whatever they had to discuss was best done face to face.

Eventually Mycroft called around 6 am.

“Mike? Oh thank God you called, I wanted to know.....”

Mycroft interrupted him quite uncharacteristically. He had always been a very good listener and his impeccable manners prevented him from cutting off someone/anyone in the middle of a sentence, *unless it was some kind of an emergency of course*. “John, what kind of medication, I mean over the counter meds can I buy and administer to someone who has an ear ache due to a cold?”

John was stunned into speechlessness. Here he was, out of his mind, anxious and desperate to find out where Sherlock was, and there was Mycroft, totally unconcerned by his tone and voice, his earlier call, and talking about some stupid ear ache..... Or that was what he thought until Mycroft added more to his unusual question. “I just came back home and found Jim writhing in pain. He had a flu which he threw off, but it was a very bad one and the cold was heavy and gave him a severe chest congestion and sinusitis. It seems he always had this ENT problem; heavy colds always turn into an ear infection for him. I.... I can’t.... I have never seen him in pain, can you please help?”

In a mere blink of an eyelid John changed his opinion. No, this was not Mycroft being cold and heartless. It was Mycroft being warm and caring. He was just like any husband concerned about their suffering partner and looking for the easiest and fastest way of relief for them. Jim's condition was not life-threatening or even bordering on it, but ear aches could be nasty, even in adults. Mycroft was suffering because Jim was suffering.

This was love.

A love he could have shared with Sherlock and missed his boat. He blew it. Fuck, he felt so stupid, useless and like a total loser.

“John?”

“Yeah, I will text you the names of two sets of meds, one is an antibiotic to kill the infection. 500 MG tablets, three times a day for five days. The second one is a pain killer and also a mild sedative. Give that to him twice a day for two days. After that there should be no pain. Also, I'll text the name of an ear drop solution. It's a soothing disinfectant. Use it on both ears, even the one that is not aching. Just in case.”

“Thank you John, thank you. Is Sherlock asleep?”

Whatever John wanted to ask Mycroft afterwards got killed right there. Obviously Mycroft knew nothing about Sherlock at all.

The problem was he couldn't really call Sherlock's parents. If they hadn't heard from Sherlock they'd end up freaking out. Not fair to do that to two people in their mid-sixties. He couldn't call Lestrade either. No station took any action on a missing person unless 24 hours had lapsed.

Plus *this was Sherlock*. No one was going to take him seriously if he said Sherlock had left the flat and gone somewhere without informing him. The great detective was notorious for disappearing for days, sometimes weeks. After John had started living with him, those cases

had become few and far between but even then, they did occur at times. If he called the DI he would be simply laughed off.

John sighed as he weighed his options. Now it was up to him to find Sherlock and bring him back home. He wasn't going to get any help, at least not right away.

After two days John was at the end of his wits. He didn't know what to do, who to go to (without making it awkward or being asked a thousand questions) and how to find Sherlock. He had barely eaten or slept during this time, he had not even taken a bath. He knew he was stinking, dirty and repulsive in his unwashed state but he just didn't care. But after today, he had to care. The weekend was over and he had to resume work tomorrow, therefore he had to wash up, dress properly, eat something, be presentable. Oh no, he had to do his quota of surgeries therefore he had to sleep as well.

Sleeping on that bed *without Sherlock*? No!

He looked around. Sherlock's clothes were scattered everywhere. A suitcase and a duffel were missing. He had clearly returned to the flat when John was not around, packed a few items and left again. Was that for good? There were still many, many items of Sherlock's lying around. But if John knew his lover/friend, he was aware Sherlock could do without all those items or just buy them again. Thanks to John and his interventions on Sherlock's finances, the detective had a neat sum tucked away in accounts and investments that Mycroft had no visibility to. He could rebuild his whole life and no one would be any wiser.

"John?"

John jumped. *No, it couldn't be!* "Mary?" He croaked.

She stood there like an angel, looking horrified at his condition and the general condition of the flat. But at the same time she was sympathetic towards him and didn't seem judgmental or disappointed. She was there as a friend, he could easily tell that.

Shame and remorse engulfed him. He had wronged her too. *I am such a wretch!* “Why didn’t you tell me?” She asked, “Just stay put there, I will get you some water. Your lips are dry and cracked. You are dehydrated and starving, for Christ’s sake.”

John tried to get up, tried to speak, but a groan escaped him and he fell back on the bed, everything spinning around him. “Please,” she rushed up to him, “I said, *stay put*, I’ll be back.”

John wanted to protest but he couldn’t. He was too weak, too saddened, too confused to do anything but just lie there disoriented and ashamed and hurting, guts cramping up, head spinning, throat so dry he felt sandpaper was stuffed in there. So he lay there until Mary returned. On a tray she had two tall glasses of water, a cup of tea with milk, a sugar dusted cookie and a banana.

His first instinct was to refuse but she was being kind, being caring, there was no way he could hurt her any more than he already had.

The first glass of water went down *incredibly* well. It felt like a burning fire in his stomach had cooled down. The second one was *equally* good and finally that parched throat problem seemed to be over. Mary pushed the sugar cookie, saying ‘You need a sugar rush in this state’, which John agreed to. As a doctor he knew she was doing the *right* things. Masochism had taken over and he was hesitant in eating anything after that cookie but it felt so Goddamn good with something finally getting into his stomach that he couldn’t refuse. By and by he finished the banana and finally drank the tea. All along, Mary just *sat there*, patient and watchful, not saying a word or asking anything.

Finally, when she got up to take the tray away, he grabbed her hand. She paused, still holding the tray, and gave him a curious look. There was a half-smile on her face but he could tell she was also holding back. She knew something, she was on to something. He had to apologize to her before the situation got as bad as it had with Sherlock.

“I am sorry.....”

“Yes?”

“Yeah. I bet you wanna know *what for*.”

“No, I already do.”

“....??.....!!”

“We will talk. But first, use the washroom, at least brush your teeth and wash your hands and face, get out of these clothes. I will get you PJs and a clean set of underwear out.”

“Oh....kay.”

Five minutes later he emerged from the bathroom in a robe to find the bed made, the curtains open, the lights dimmed and most of the things on the floor picked up. There was a lavender scent in the room. Mary had done some customary clean-up and used an air-freshener. He felt very grateful towards her. He also felt terribly sleepy. He could barely keep his eyes open or his mouth shut. Several yawns popped up one after the other.

“What.....?” He asked, consciousness fading, “What did you g-givvmeee?” As a doctor he knew what it must feel like to be drugged, though he couldn’t say it was anything dangerous. He felt no pain or discomfiture, only extreme grogginess.

“Sleeping pill,” Mary said, pulling the covers up around him, “You need to sleep or you’ll collapse. If that happens there’s no way you’ll be able to look for Sherlock.”

John woke up feeling so refreshed it seemed like he had been reborn overnight. The sun was shining and the room was nice and warm, breezy and comfy. He was not sure exactly when he’d fallen asleep but it felt so amazingly good to have finally got some rest, whatever number of hours they were, that he knew he was ready to take on the world again. He sat up,

rubbing his eyes and smiling, temporarily in the same happy head space he inhabited until a few days earlier. He reached out to the other side of the bed, “Sherl, wake up, I think we might have overslept....I have definitely overslept.....”

Then he realized the truth he was assuming was something he had destroyed with his own hands.

A sadness that was at once debilitating and heartbreaking enveloped him and he fell back on his pillow, his mouth curling downwards and his eyes fluttering shut. *Sherlock!* All he could remember was the way he had hit the man, struck him right across the face and made him fall sharply on the floor. How God awful he had been, what a butcher, a bloody abuser. He would have wallowed in that self-pity and self-loathing for hours but the sound of the door opening and someone entering the room thankfully brought him out of his aggrieved zone. *At least for a few moments.*

“You’ve slept fourteen hours,” said the very familiar and pleasant female voice, “I can see it did your body a world of good but you’re still sulking and brooding and stewing in your emotions like a scorned man on a pity-fest.”

He felt the need to acknowledge the support his girlfriend had provided. First that, then anything else. “Thank you Mary.”

“Hmmm, you’re awake.”

“I-I am....you know what happened?”

“No, but I do know you’ve been behaving like a madman. Mrs. Hudson called me. I did some probing around and figured out Sherlock is missing. Or at least you think he is.”

John’s eyes snapped open and he gave her a shocked look, “That means....that means he is *not*? Do you know *where* he is?”

“Not really but I know someone who might know,” Mary stated, startling John. “But how,” John asked, “How would you even know?”

She took a deep breath and served him some tea and sandwiches in bed. Her face didn’t betray any emotions she felt inside, but John could see the indifferent body language and knew she was here as a friend, only a friend. She no longer seemed interested in him as a partner. It felt liberating. At least she was taking the initiative of setting him, and herself, free. Had she clung on, he would have messed up again. He simply didn’t have the strength in him right now to fight anyone, to make them stay or ask them to go away. “John,” Mary began after a long moment of silence, “I don’t know for sure but I am quite certain we can find out. If he’s left in an emotionally distressed state, then the first person he’d have turned to would be a friend.”

John felt a lump in his throat. “He-he doesn’t have any friends.”

“Except you?”

“Y-Yeah.”

“Don’t be so sure. During these moments people reach out to childhood friends, friends from an earlier time, or even an ex they are still on friendly terms with. If we talk to his brother, we will figure out who such friends or an ex might be.” She paused and gave him a quizzical look, “But before we even get there, is there something you wish to share with me? I think you do, don’t you?”

John’s hands shook on the tea cup. No point in denying. But he couldn’t form the words.

“John, why didn’t you tell me?”

“T-Tell you what?”

“You *know what I mean*. You have *always* known. Initially you may not have been sure but maybe over the past six or seven months it’s become such an integral part of your life, you

can't do without it, without *him*. Cutting off that part would only reduce you to half."

Her eyes were glassy with unshed tears. She didn't seem spiteful but there was a sadness in her eyes and that stabbed at John's heart. "I don't want only half of a man. No John."

John hung his head in shame. After screwing up with Sherlock, he didn't want to do the same with Mary. He wanted to protect her. She had proved to be a good friend and support, the least he could do in return was give her the truth and his unconditional apology. "I was afraid to lose you," he began sincerely, "I did love you and I still do...."

Chapter End Notes

John will get a taste of his own medicine soon (no pun intended for the doctor!)

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