if you come to find out who you are

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Summary

"A tangle of incandescent talent and ingrained character flaws that can only lead to one end: self-annihilation."

An Elementary/Downey films crossover.

Notes

Hey there, PhoenixFalls! I got a few of your requests in here: All of the pairings are here, at least in nascent form, plus I experimented with a canon divergent AU. I really loved your idea of a subtly 'wrong' and/or transplanted Holmes!

Enjoy.

See the end of the work for more notes.
tumors and pheochromocytomas of the adrenal gland may extend into the inferior vena cava, or even the right atrium. In these cases, curative surgery frequently requires partial resection

Joan dreams that she’s standing in a bright room with a vascular clamp in her hand. Blood flows into the surgical field with a force that seems obscene. The light and the heat, the useless clamp in her hand, the blood; there is nothing else. Gerald Castoro opens his mouth and his eyes and screams, soundlessly, and she wakes in the cold dawn with a metallic taste in her mouth.

Close your eyes, her therapist says. Concentrate on your breathing. Joan supposes that it helps a little.

In her apartment there is some tasteful wooden furniture, an outfit laid out on the back of a chair, the delicate blue serving plate Ty brought back from a conference in Morocco. The sheets on her bed are cream 1000-thread count cotton, crisp and cool to the touch. There is no such thing as atonement. That’s why you have to let go.

The patient exhibits extraordinary intelligence. Upon his arrival he was addicted to heroin and he was using a number of other narcotics on a regular basis. He also suffers from clinical depression, and refused to be medicated. It is the opinion of this report that this patient would benefit greatly from regular interpersonal interaction, especially since he has a tendency to self-isolate.

She gets a short email and a long phone call from a man with an asthmatic laugh. My brother escaped from the Hemdale facility almost two days ago. He is a brilliant man, but not when it comes to the practicalities of day to day living. I’ve no doubt he’s staying in his house in Brooklyn. Our father left him the worst house, you know. That was his idea of a joke.
Sherlock Holmes’ father’s worst New York house is a Brooklyn brownstone at $2 million, minimum. The door is wide open; there are dead leaves on the floor. It smells like damp and books and marijuana. There is music coming from above, but down here it’s cool and quiet and still.

There’s a pizza box lying on the landing. Grave Victorian faces stare back from the walls. Up here the damp smell is less noticeable, but she can smell something sweeter. In a dark room on the second floor, a slight man with tangled hair and a lot of tattoos is listening to hip-hop she doesn’t recognise at a volume that makes it hard to concentrate on anything else.

He’s naked apart from a geometric throw rug which Joan recognises; it’s from IKEA. There are three televisions, each playing a different, grainy video: a convenience store, a dark street, a parking lot. Smoke spirals through the shard of light coming through the gap in the curtains.

“Sherlock Holmes? My name is Joan Watson. Your brother hired me to be your sober companion. Did he email you about me?”

Holmes doesn’t look away from the screens. He escaped from rehab almost 48 hours ago—they still don’t know how he did it—and he’s sitting here clad in nothing but Scandinavian taste watching CCTV cameras.

A song finishes. He goes over to the speaker and presses a button on top of it. Heavy silence. He’s a slight man with quick, nervous movements. He doesn’t look her in the eye.

“Original Pirate Material. Second-best UK hip-hop album of the 2000s. If my brother did email me, I didn’t get it. My phone’s dead.”

“Are you high?”

“Not on heroin, which is what I went to rehab for.”

On one of the television screens, a man bursts into the convenience store waving a sawnoff shotgun, and Holmes says “Hmmm.”

An intriguing man, this Holmes. Not just another cokehead executive.

Weeks later, she asks him what he did in those two days, before Mycroft tracked him down (before he let Mycroft find him) and he must be in an expansive mood, because he says something that sounds very much like the truth. I walked, he says. I needed the time to think. I walked until I didn’t know where I was and my phone was dead and then I found my way back.
The brownstone has a depressed frat boy kind of vibe. In the hall closet there is a smashed violin. No food in the kitchen, but there’s an archaeology of fast food packaging and five kinds of coffee. Joan finds a Terumo 1mL syringe in the bathroom and disposes of it.

She’s sitting in the kitchen waiting for the kettle to boil for tea when Holmes comes out of what she assumes is his bedroom, a curtained space separated from the kitchen by french doors. He’s wearing sweatpants and no shirt; she notices for the first time that he has what looks like a central line scar. Holmes spoons coffee into a plunger with hands that are barely shaking, adds a little cold water from the faucet. He grabs a coffee mug off the bench, sniffs it, fills it with water, then drinks it.

“It can be hard to return to surroundings in which you’ve used drugs previously,” Joan says. “It can challenge your sobriety. We can talk about that if you want.”

Holmes crosses his arms across his chest and stares at the floor.

“In the three days that you’ve been here I’ve seen enough of you to think that you’re probably not an idiot. It seems inexplicable to me that you would spend your time spouting platitudes to rich people, since it is clear to me that you have never had a drug addiction. My advice to you is to take the next six weeks off. I won’t be using heroin again.”

The kettle boils, and with a deft, almost theatrical gesture, Sherlock grabs the handle with a dish towel and pours the water first into the plunger, then into Joan’s mug. Then he takes the plunger and the mug and goes back into the bedroom. She doesn’t see him for eighteen hours.
States constitution. Since the mid-20th century, many states have adopted civil commitment laws which take into account the rights of any individual to due process.

The only conversation they have on the first day:

"Why did you come to New York?"

"I find the American mania for personal freedom to be refreshing. I'll spare you the bother of taking time to tell me you were born and raised in New York."

"I'll ask another question, then. Did you check yourself into rehab?"

"Yes, but there was a man with a 12-gauge Mossberg 500 sitting in a Jeep outside."

It takes her a month to realise that he isn't joking.

Sherlock spends entire days on the couch staring at a list of nonsense phrases on the wall; blank hazy television nights. Sometimes tough-looking guys in cheap suits come and knock heavily on the door and stand awkwardly in the hall texting and talk with Sherlock in the study. He closes the door.

Sometimes he doesn’t get out of bed at all. Once, he leaves the house dressed in a pair of Con Edison overalls, with a bag of tools slung over his shoulder. Another time, he leaves wearing a dinner suit with sneakers. When he comes back, he does her drug tests without complaint.

One morning, Joan’s slicing strawberries into her granola when a good-looking guy wearing a rumpled shirt and a semi-automatic pistol in a shoulder holster leaves Sherlock’s bedroom, closing the door carefully.

Marcus doesn’t have the closed-off stolidity of the other police she’s met: he’s quick, and just a little cynical, and thoughtful. It’s complicated, he tells her; as if a relationship with Sherlock Holmes could be anything but.

Sherlock spends two days pacing up and down in the study listening to the Waldstein sonata over and over. He bursts theatrically into her bedroom in the early hours of the morning and turns the light on and demands that they drive to the police precinct (he correctly identifies the make and model of her car, despite the fact that they have never discussed it).
The 11th precinct has the musty linoleum smell of old buildings. A big man her stepfather’s age shakes her hand and doesn’t shake Sherlock’s and then leads them both down a hallway and into a small room that smells, in turn, of sweat and stale coffee.

There are photos pinned to the wall. A young woman lying on a grease-spotted concrete floor, lying in a pool of blood half the size again of her body. *Commonplace*, Sherlock announces to the entire room. Bell folds his arms and stares fixedly at the carpet. A female uniformed police officer flinches.

A consultant. Gregson, the captain, greeted Sherlock with respect, even deference, despite the fact that he was standing in the corridor blinking as if his eyes hurt.

Driving home, she says “You’re a private consultant to law enforcement. A private detective. Is that what you did in London, too?”

Sherlock’s voice is curiously flat. “I prefer consulting detective. You are a surgeon—I can tell from your hands, and from the boot of your car—who no longer operates. Am I to presume that a patient died in your care? What other reason could you have for abandoning a lucrative career which requires years of training to work as a glorified babysitter for junkies?”

Joan’s stomach goes cold. There is a sour silence.

"If you don't poke around in my personal life, Dr. Watson, I won't poke around in yours."

Months later, she asks him what exactly it is that his brother does, and he says, shortly, "Among other things, Mycroft makes it easier for the British Government to commit acts of torture."

believed that Holmes assassinated a Russian national in a brothel in Amsterdam in 2003

Five things Gregson tells her about Sherlock Holmes: that they first met over in London in the early 2000s; that Holmes once inadvertently destroyed a priceless sarcophagus while preventing a bombing; that he refused to shake the hand of the London Police Commissioner; that he once disappeared to France and came back with a Légion d'honneur. That he’s different to the way he was
A serial killer. The staged murder of a Wall Street banker. Angel of death at Bellevue. So much of it feels natural already, especially the things that Sherlock hates, the meetings and the bull sessions and the phone meetups.

Joan's at the precinct chasing an evidence form one morning, texting Sherlock to see if he's awake, when Gregson comes over to the coffee pot and pours himself a cup. Joan puts her phone back in her jacket pocket and takes a sip of her coffee. At least she's already used to the taste of bad coffee.

"You enjoy this work, don't you?"

"I don't know if—"

"I'm just saying," Gregson says. "If you love this, and I think I do—since I saw you in there—then you shouldn't turn your back on it to do something you're only doing to punish yourself."

He takes his coffee and goes back inside his office and puts his feet up on the desk and picks up the phone.

When Sherlock is demonstrating an encyclopedic knowledge of HIIPA and other privacy laws to the hospital’s CEO, Joan slips out and goes downstairs and adds a single test to a chart. The patient is Carrie’s.

They've solved the case. Sherlock is silent on the ride home. He’s rolling a joint and ranking all the local takeout restaurants by the likelihood of obtaining intestinal parasites from the food when there’s a knock at the door. Carrie.

"I wanted you to know you were right. Morgan had endocarditis."

Joan feels nothing. Nothing but relief. She knew she was right.

She and Carrie slept together maybe four or five times. Joan had been post-call maybe four out of five of those times, awake for twenty hours, so the memories have a sort of hazy quality; Carrie slipping a hand up her thigh and pulling her underwear down, the taste of her. The noise she made when Joan first touched her clit.

"You were always a good friend, Joanie, but you were a better doctor."

Not any more.

Stay, Sherlock says, and of course she does.

If she was a great doctor, then she’ll be a great detective, too.
Butcher paper and post-it notes cover an entire wall of the living room. Sherlock is walking back and forth in front of them, drinking something clear from a crystal decanter. In the middle of the wall there is a large letter M. The overall effect is a little... manic?

“This M. thing again? Why do you keep torturing yourself with this?” Marcus shoves a file into his bag, his mouth drawn down into a grimace. “I’ve got real work to do.”

On the wall: a pool of blood on a parquetry floor. Fine blood splatter on the front of a stainless-steel refrigerator. A fridge magnet: 24HRS EMERGENCY PLUMBING IN CLAPHAM. Marcus closes the front door without quite slamming it. The living room of a prewar apartment.

They're silent for about five minutes.

“I believe that the serial killer M. Murdered. My girlfriend, Irene Adler. And I intend to prove it.”

* Murdered? Joan thinks. (Much later, and to her chagrin, she will think *girlfriend*?!? )

Sherlock takes another ethanol-smelling swig from the decanter and tells her that a year’s work on this problem—minus rehab—has brought him to the edge of a major discovery, and then he vomits into the wastepaper basket and sits down on the floor.

Joan takes whatever is in the decanter and pours it down the sink. On the terrace, Sherlock is watching the sun set over the Queensboro bridge.

“What was in that thing, anyway?”

“Formaldehyde,” he says. They watch the sunset for a minute. There is a soft hum coming from the beehives, and a warm sweet smell.

“The police don't understand my methods.”

(Three years later, when Sherlock is lost, or rather, when she's desperately trying to convince herself that he just doesn’t want to be found, Marcus will be teaching his methods at CCNY.)

“Is this your way of saying you're angry with Marcus? He’s used to a different kind of police work,” Joan says. “Like most of the rest of the world, he has to do a little paperwork every now and then.”

Sherlock takes a pipe out of his pocket, tamps it down with his thumb, then lights it with a match. The smoke smells sweet; it smells like home.
It’s four in the morning and they’re in a cab, she and Sherlock. Sherlock winds the window down and looks up at the low grey sky, then lights a cigarette. The air is very cold.

“No smoking,” the cab driver says, his voice flat.


“There’s something I should tell you before you find out from my brother, or Marcus. After I came to New York I had what is so vulgarly termed a mental health crisis. They told me to avoid stress and to go to rehab, and my brother, uh, compelled me to attend rehab, where I was likewise advised to avoid stress and to attend at least one recovery meeting a week. The work we do has a cost, Joan. I accept that. I will find M. even if it means... That.”

“I understand,” Joan says.


(Two years later, Joan will be speaking to Sherlock’s brother in a room full of hushed voices and the smell of overboiled coffee, when he says “Our mother had it bad, too.”

“The… depression?”

Mycroft takes a bite out of a catered sandwich, chews, swallows, and says “Do—did he ever use that word with you? Or was it some infuriating euphemism?”

“That,” Joan says. “And my mind rebels at stagnation.”

“So dramatic,” Mycroft says. His tone is just jolly enough to be jarring. “He was embarrassed. Extraordinary, isn’t it? I think it was because of her. He didn’t want to think that he’d inherited this. Sickness.”

Joan thinks of Sherlock shooting holes in the wall, wearing a bathrobe, in a dark room at noon on a quiet weekday, and she smiles, and then she is gripped by such a sudden and complete sense of Sherlock’s absence that she cannot speak.

Later, sitting with Gregson in a cop bar downtown, she watches television. A heavyset uni cop she barely remembers buys her a beer.

“The smartest guy I ever met,” Gregson says, and Joan leans into him (finally) and weeps.)
Tiny, almost inconsequential things that Joan remembers about doing surgery: the feeling of tying a suture with one hand. The smell of burning flesh. The way that relief seems to slacken every muscle in the face, just for a second.

Sherlock: quick, nervous hands with dirty fingernails. Life too chaotic to do regular laundry or check his bank account balance. At least one overdose. He doesn’t play the violin any more, but he can pick a lock behind his back.

It’s a nice day out, and there’s a dead body in a storage locker in Hell’s Kitchen. No clear cause of death; Joan suspects that the post-mortem will show carbon monoxide in the blood. Sherlock’s bedroom door is still closed. In the kitchen, the kettle is boiling itself dry. Joan turns the burner off and knocks gently on the door, then opens it.

“Sherlock? You’ve been in here a week.”

"Is that all?" His voice comes not from the bed, as she expected, but from the corner.

"Gregson called me; he said your voicemail inbox was full—"

"Body in a U-Stor-It in Hell’s Kitchen? I heard it on the scanner. Commonplace."

"We’re meeting Gregson in 45 minutes," Joan says, and she takes some cleanish clothes out of a laundry sack in the corner. “You’ve got time for a shower, if you hurry.”

"Please don’t turn the light on, Watson. Watson!”

Joan flicks the light on as she leaves. Five minutes later she can hear the water running.

In a nice apartment on the Upper West Side there are four liters of blood on the floor but no body.

“We can talk about it, if you want,” she says. They’re standing on the sidewalk outside. It’s late at night, so there isn’t much foot traffic. A food delivery guy vrooms past on a scooter.

Sherlock starts walking toward the subway, his hands thrust deep in his pockets. Over his shoulder, he says “I have nothing to say.”

She watches him walk back and forth on the Subway platform. “Do you think M. came to London to find you?”

Sherlock methodically flattens the lid of a takeaway coffee cup beneath the heel of his Doc Marten. “I don’t know if M. is M. at all.”

“What does that mean?”

“I don’t know.” A long pause. She can hear a train in the tunnel. “There something not—god I wish you could smoke in more places in this city. I can’t. fucking. think.” His hands are shaking. They get on the train, where they sit in the rattling silence.

Later on, in the half-empty Subway carriage, he leans across and kisses the corner of her mouth.
She really didn’t think him capable of tenderness.

Irene Adler tells a very harsh story with scrupulousness and precision. Joan can understand what Sherlock saw in her.

“Holmes seems to me to be the kind of guy that could only handle being hurt like this once,” Gregson says. Joan doesn’t take her eyes off of Irene Adler’s face. Her self-control seems almost monstrous.

Sometimes I hurt people without meaning it, Sherlock tells her, and she thinks of Gerald Castoro, and Ty, and finally, of Irene Adler, and then she thinks, well, there are a lot of different ways of not meaning it.

Joan wakes on a cold night to Sherlock standing over her. She hasn’t seen him in three days; he’s wearing the same clothes.

“Watson, we need to leave. Pack a bag; bring that little medical kit you’ve got stashed in the cupboard, the one that’s sadly devoid of opiates. There are only two hours before dawn.”

Marcus’ car is running on the street. Joan locks the door. Sherlock has a gym bag, a laptop and a couple of books under his arm, and a fresh bee sting on the back of his right hand.

In a Budget hotel room halfway to Canada, they squeeze together on the bed, side-by-side together in a drafty room that smells disconcertingly of carpet cleaner. When Joan wakes up, sometime after lunch, Marcus has his arm around her shoulders and Sherlock is standing on his head against the bathroom door, naked.

While Marcus checks out (cash, of course), Sherlock smokes a cigarette while Joan packs the car.

“He’s a good guy,” he says, his tone conversational. “Look after him.”
Sherlock Holmes, English Detective and Crime Consultant, Believed Dead.

Sherlock Holmes, a private detective who worked for Scotland Yard and the New York Police Department, died yesterday in an apparent suicide. Mr Holmes, who was born in London and raised in Sussex, was also the author of a single volume from a projected three-volume series of philosophical works on crime. He was the recipient of

we are going to state that blood volume, in the average adult, is about 7% of body weight. Therefore the average “70-kg adult” has about 5 liters of blood

A tangle of incandescent talent and ingrained character flaws that can only lead to one end: self-annihilation.

written finding of presumed death, made by any person authorized to make such findings by the federal missing persons act is prima facie evidence of the death

Pressed between two frames inside his weakest beehive, she finds a Ziploc baggie with a USB drive in it. On the USB there is a document called MORIARTY_ORG_FINAL.docx.

In his bedroom there is a quick, hurried note scrawled on the flyleaf of a book: Marcus, Joan. I’m sorry. I have thought much on the matter and I can see no other way.
(Six months earlier, he lay down on her bed and said, I want you to hurt me).

There are a lot of different ways of not meaning it.

the best and wisest man whom I have ever known.

They're in the living room and Joan is reading *Beekeeping for Beginners* while they wait for a pizza that neither really wants. Marcus is reading Sherlock’s M notebooks for the second time.

"I mean, when we first met, I thought he was such an ass."

"Yeah," Joan says.

"He was sick," Marcus says. "There were better times for him, I think. They were good times for me."

That night they lie side-by-side, silent, and neither of them sleeps very much.

End Notes

the first quote is from this article, the second quote is from S01E18, but I reworded it a little, the fifth quote is from this book, the sixth quote is from S01E14, the seventh quote is from
this site, the last quote is from The Final Problem. Everything else is me.

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