A Journey to Love, Faith and Marriage

by GoodShipSherlollipop

Summary

This is set following the events of TFP. It is my interpretation of a possible future where Molly is a Christian and Sherlock becomes one. There will be a lot of Biblical perspective. There will also be a lot of discussion about dealing with human desires and emotions, and determination to remain pure for marriage. Read it if you dare!

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
Three Days

Chapter Summary

Sherlock comes to see Molly three days after the events at Sherrinford.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Three days. It had been three days and nothing, not a phone call or even a text from Sherlock.

Molly sat at her kitchen counter as the untouched cup of coffee in front of her cooled. She sat there, miserably reflecting on the phone call she had received the previous day from Mycroft Holmes. He had gently, yet firmly, explained to her the sequence of events that had led to Sherlock asking her to say "I love you" to him over the phone. Apparently it had been an elaborate scheme by Sherlock's "secret" sister to embarrass him and play with his emotions.

Molly and her feelings had just been unintentional collateral damage.

Molly had been in love with Sherlock for years now. During Sherlock's two year absence after his apparent suicide, Molly had attempted to move on with her life. Although she had been instrumental in helping the famous detective fake his death, Molly had fully expected to never see him again.

When she had met Tom, a tall young man who dressed similarly to Sherlock and who vaguely resembled him, Molly threw herself into the new relationship, even going so far as to accept Tom's marriage proposal. Of course, once Sherlock had revealed himself to her and resumed his "normal" life, it was just a matter of time until the pathologist had felt a resurrection also of her feelings towards the handsome detective. Tom had been smart enough to see the writing on the wall and had somewhat amicably released Molly from their engagement.

Since that time, Molly had had eyes only for Sherlock, and their friendship had developed to a point where the brooding detective counted on her and trusted her. Molly had been content to keep her feelings to herself and just enjoy whatever time she was able to spend with Sherlock. He had told her himself that she mattered to him.

Then, three days ago, everything changed and Molly's world was turned upside-down. First came that inexplicable phone call. Sherlock had sounded tense, and his request for her to say "I love you" was so strange and out of character.

Obviously something was going on, but what? The desperation in the man's voice as he begged her to respond had been her undoing. After her confession of love, making Sherlock actually say the words first had been the only thing that saved her from feeling completely humiliated. Then, there had been a feeling of utter confusion as the call was disconnected almost immediately after she uttered those fateful words.

Until the call from Mycroft had shattered Molly's hopes and dreams, she had dared to hope Sherlock's words of love had been sincere, especially when he had said them twice.
Molly's eyes filled with tears for what felt the hundredth time since Mycroft Holmes had delivered the devastating news of the forced love confession his brother had felt he had to make in order to save her life. She picked up the now cold coffee cup and poured its contents down the sink, then turned the kettle on again to boil the water for a fresh cup. Maybe next time she would actually drink it, not that she really needed the caffeine, after two nights of barely being able to sleep.

A knock at the door startled Molly and she hastily brushed away her tears with the sleeve of her jumper.

"Molly, let me in. I need to talk to you, to explain..." came the voice of the man she loved, and her heart skipped a beat.

"You've been crying." Sherlock remarked, as Molly opened the door to let him in.

She ignored the comment and said, "I was just about to make myself a cup of coffee, would you like one? Black with two sugars, right?"

"Yes, but I didn't come here for coffee. I came here to talk to you about the other night," he said.

Molly turned her back on him and busied herself with making two cups of coffee and adding sugar to both. "There's no need to explain. Your brother called me and told me what was going on."

Molly tried to keep the tone of her voice steady, not wishing to betray her anguish.

"I don't know what Mycroft told you, but I'm sure it wasn't the whole story. There was a coffin, and I deduced that it was meant for you. On the lid of the coffin were three words...""}

"You really don't need to tell me," Molly interrupted as she placed a coffee cup on the table in front of Sherlock and gestured for him to sit. "I mean really, there's no point, is there? I know you were forced into the situation. I admit, it is also my fault for making you say it first." Molly seated herself across the table from him and took a small sip of coffee, trying to act as if her heart was not being torn in two.

"Would you please just let me tell you the whole story?" pleaded Sherlock. "I think you will be glad to know everything."

Molly sighed, bracing herself for the convoluted story that was sure to follow, which would still result in her broken heart. "If you really need to unburden yourself, go ahead."

"I do," responded Sherlock gravely. "My sister Eurus had a coffin placed in a room, and I was able to figure out it was meant for you. On the lid of the coffin was a plaque inscribed with the words 'I love you'. Eurus informed me that your flat was rigged to explode in approximately three minutes, unless I could get you to say those words as the release code. I was not allowed to inform you of the danger, or she threatened to end the 'experiment' and your life immediately."

"I understand Sherlock, and I don't blame you for doing what needed to be done," said Molly flatly.

"Will you let me finish?" asked Sherlock in an irritated tone.

Molly lifted her hands in a gesture of surrender, then stared down at her beverage as he continued.

"Molly, we've been friends, good friends for a long time now. You are always the person I come to for help, my confidante, my conscience." Abruptly, he stood and walked to where she sat. "Look at me and pay attention," he commanded. "Until this crisis, I was happy with the way things were between us. I knew I could count on you whenever I needed something, but when I thought you might die and leave me forever..." he broke off, emotion washing over his features.
Molly looked into Sherlock's fathomless turquoise eyes, hardly daring to hope that he might, after all, have deeper feelings for her than she had thought.

"Another thing, my sister had somehow had cameras rigged to show you in your flat so I could see you, even though you couldn't see me. I wasn't just talking into a vacuum, I was looking at you, seeing everything I was putting you through." As Molly flushed with embarrassment, realizing he had seen her anguish, Sherlock continued, "After I got those words out, it hit me, the feelings I never knew I was capable of having. Eurus did me a favour in the end because she made me face the possibility of living the rest of my life without you." Sherlock drew Molly gently from her chair so she was standing directly in front of him. There was a look in his eyes that she had never seen before. Then came the words her heart longed to hear. "I do love you, Molly Hooper. When I told you that the second time, I knew it to be true."

As Molly flushed with embarrassment, realizing he had seen her anguish, Sherlock continued, "After I got those words out, it hit me, the feelings I never knew I was capable of having. Eurus did me a favour in the end because she made me face the possibility of living the rest of my life without you." Sherlock drew Molly gently from her chair so she was standing directly in front of him. There was a look in his eyes that she had never seen before. Then came the words her heart longed to hear. "I do love you, Molly Hooper. When I told you that the second time, I knew it to be true."

As Molly felt joy spread through her, Sherlock drew her close to him and leaned down. His lips met hers, gently and a little uncertain. When Molly put her arms around him, responding to the incredible feel of Sherlock's lips on hers, their kiss deepened in intensity. Molly felt she was drowning in it, the feel of his lips tender yet firm. It was heaven; it was bliss. Was this really happening to her? She had dreamed of it for so long, but never thought it would come to pass.

Molly pulled back from Sherlock's embrace and asked, "Are you sure about this, Sherlock? Are you sure you aren't still traumatized by your sister's machinations? If you truly love me, why did it take you three days to contact me?"

At this, Sherlock pressed his lips to Molly's forehead. "I needed time to figure out what I was going to do next. Molly, I had to work through these emotions I had suddenly unlocked and decide whether I could be the man you wanted me to be. After all, I'm a high-functioning sociopath, and I am pretty good at hurting people - sometimes intentionally, sometimes not. I'm by nature selfish and arrogant, and I know I've hurt you in the past. I needed to make some decisions about my - no, our - future."

To Molly's utter astonishment, Sherlock put a hand in his pocket and pulled out a small black velvet box.

"I know we've never gone out together, unless you count those times I've enlisted your help. Maybe you'll think I'm insane - I probably am. All I know for sure is I don't ever want to risk losing you to someone else." Dropping down to one knee in front of the bemused Molly, Sherlock opened the box and exposed the exquisite heart-shaped diamond solitaire ring nestling within. He then withdrew the ring and held it towards her. "Molly Hooper, will you do me the extraordinary honour of consenting to marry me? I know I'm not the perfect man; I'm far from it. You undoubtedly deserve much better than me, but you are the only woman I could ever contemplate sharing my life with."

"Oh Sherlock," Molly whispered as tears fell unashamedly from her lashes. "I can't believe that an hour ago I was imagining a future without you, and now you are here, asking me to marry you. Of course I'll marry you! But how are you going to tell John? Won't he be upset about you adding me to the 'inner circle'?"

Sherlock grinned at her in a carefree manner she had never seen before. "Who do you think helped me find the perfect ring in such a short time? He was there during the whole Eurus situation and knew almost immediately after my conversation with you that I was in love with you." Having said this, Sherlock rose to his feet and placed the ring on the third finger of his new fiancée's left hand. It was, of course, a perfect fit. Then he sealed the deal with a passionate, yet sweet kiss that left Molly breathless. She wrapped her arms around Sherlock's neck and kissed him back with all the
longing her heart had held for him these past seven years.

He was hers, incredibly, at last. "So, what do you think your brother's reaction will be?"

Sherlock grimaced. "Let's not worry about him for now. I think it will be more fun to go back to my place and tell Mrs. Hudson. I guess I should also let John know you said yes."

Chapter End Notes

This was my first ever fan fiction story. I was originally planning just a one-shot, but found I didn’t want to stop there. What do you think of my first effort? Are you brave enough to continue the journey?

Update - May 25, 2018
This is a very long story, much longer than I ever imagined. I hope you will stick with it and let me know what you think as you read.
"I was wrong," announced John Watson as he entered the debris strewn sitting room of 221B Baker Street.

Sherlock was in his favourite armchair which had miraculously survived unscathed from the recent explosion. He sat in silent contemplation with his fingers steepled. Having been rudely interrupted from his reverie, he looked up in annoyance. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"All this time I thought you were harbouring a secret torch for Irene Adler. After what happened yesterday, I know I was completely wrong. It's obvious now that the only woman you want is Molly Hooper."

"What makes you say that?" questioned Sherlock innocently.

"It doesn't take a super-sleuth like you to figure it out when the signs are all there in plain view. I heard the tone of your voice when you feared for Molly's life. I witnessed you smashing that coffin to bits. Until that particular test, you remained calm and collected in the face of danger and difficult decisions."

The doctor cast his mind back to the previous day's events. He had never seen Sherlock exhibit such desperation before that day. All of a sudden, Sherlock had seemed more human than ever before, and it was quite a revelation to discover this was even possible. Reflecting further on other past events involving Molly, he continued.

"I don't know why I didn't see it before. To my knowledge you have never apologized to anyone besides Molly, and you would never allow anyone else to tell you off the way she did after your descent into drugs."

"I have told you that was all done for a case, and I am perfectly fine now. I've been clean for weeks," defended the detective. "Discovering Molly was no longer engaged was rather illuminating, too. As for Irene Adler, she was an interesting enigma but ultimately just...a distraction."

"So are you going to admit that I'm right about our pathologist friend?" queried the doctor. He wondered briefly whether Sherlock would be able to express his true thoughts. He was quite surprised when his friend replied insightfully.

"I'm still trying to process this myself. Up until my sister's 'emotional context' game, I was content with the way things were with Molly. She was my friend and someone I could count on to be straight with me. It seems I have not been honest with myself."

There was a note of surprise in his voice as he continued, "That girl is in my blood; she has
somehow managed to find a place in my heart, a heart I never knew I had."

John gave a wry smile. "It's about time someone made you feel what the rest of us 'normal' people go through when it comes to love. You, my friend, are lucky, though. Molly already admitted that she loves you. All you have to do is figure out how to move forward."

Silence ensued for several minutes as Sherlock closed his eyes and became lost in thought once more. When he finally opened his eyes, it was to find his friend still there, sitting across from him and patiently waiting for the detective to return to the present. "So, have you decided what you are going to do?" questioned John.

"Yes," responded Sherlock. "Of one thing I am absolutely certain - I can't risk losing Molly. I know she deserves so much better than me, but I hope I can become worthy of her love. I'm not the type of man who would be comfortable playing at being a boyfriend, as you probably recall with my poor attempt at it with Janine. Besides, I've spent seven years getting to know her. The only solution is to ask her to marry me. That way I can do away with all the unnecessary frivolity that goes along with being in a new relationship."

John stared at Sherlock incredulously. "Don't you think you should at least kiss the girl first before you jump off the deep end?"

Sherlock waved off the question dismissively. "Details, details. I'll make sure I kiss her before I propose."

John could only shake his head. He should have known his friend would not do anything in a normal way. Sherlock had faked his own death, after all.

"So, are you free tomorrow?" Sherlock asked.

"What, we have a new case already?"

"No, I need you to help me find a ring."

John looked at the man in front of him and marvelled at how much things had changed since their early days as colleagues. Sherlock Holmes had grown into a true friend and someone who had finally learned that love need not be an impediment to his intellect, but an asset. "I think I can fit it into my schedule," he said with a grin.

Chapter End Notes

How did you find this chapter from John's POV?
"The game is on," announced Sherlock as he slipped on his coat, knotted his favourite blue scarf at his neck, and exited 221B Baker Street with his best friend in tow.

Four hours later, a very disgruntled pair walked into what must have been the fifteenth jewellery store. Sherlock was beginning to despair of ever finding the perfect ring for Molly. Burnell's Fine Jewellery was his last hope. He had looked at all sorts of engagement rings: diamond solitaires, surrounded by other gems of varying colours and sizes, rings made from gold, platinum and silver. Very quickly Sherlock had decided the ring should be gold, as he recalled the gold earrings Molly had worn to that long-ago Christmas party, the one where he had unintentionally embarrassed her and subsequently apologized.

The next decision was what type of cut he wanted. There were different shapes - round, marquise, pear, heart and more. Thoughtfully, the sleuth decided a heart shape would signify how Molly had changed his heart. Then came the decision on carat. Sherlock had decided on the 3/4 carat size for two reasons, both practical ones. He was not a wealthy man by any means, and he did not want Molly's finger to be dwarfed by the size of the gem. Large rings were just so gaudy and unattractive, in his opinion at least.

Sherlock's head was already swimming after learning all this heretofore unnecessary information. He had, after all, always assumed he would remain a bachelor.

Finally, there was the clarity of the diamond to be determined. Flawless diamonds were the rarest and most expensive. Then came the diamonds with varying degrees of inclusions, tiny flaws that were given a scale as to the degree to which they were visible.

Sherlock thought back to Molly's previous engagement ring, which had had a central diamond with smaller ones going down the ring on either side. He had decided that a solitaire was the best way to go; it should be simple yet elegant. Nothing had seemed just right so far, though, and he was beginning to despair of ever finding the right one.

"Good afternoon, sir. How may I assist you today?" queried the clerk. After Sherlock explained what he was looking for, the clerk smiled and said, "It seems to me the best thing you can do is look through our selection of loose diamonds and find the one you want. We can then make the ring to the correct size and set the diamond into it."

Sherlock nodded his assent. Finally, he had hope that this might be the right place to find the perfect ring.

John, who had been wandering around the little shop perfunctorily looking at different types of jewellery, strolled to Sherlock's side as the clerk returned with a velvet pouch. The clerk poured out
onto another large, flat piece of velvet an assortment of diamond hearts of varying shapes and sizes. He provided the detective with a magnifying glass to further inspect them.

John looked on with interest as his friend selected several gems for closer inspection. As the shop assistant returned the rejected ones to the velvet pouch, Sherlock peered through the magnifying glass at each remaining diamond. "This is it; this is the perfect heart!" he exulted with triumph in his voice. Looking at the diamond Sherlock was holding carefully in his hand, John had to agree— it was the exact size Sherlock wanted, and it sparkled brilliantly in the lights from the store.

"Excellent choice, sir," exclaimed the clerk. "This is the only 3/4 carat heart with a vvs2 clarity. As for the ring itself, are you wanting the standard 18K gold?" At Sherlock's nod, the clerk brought out a ring-sizer. "Would you happen to have a ring from the young lady so we can get the correct size?

Sherlock took the ring-sizer. "No, but I will tell you the size in a moment." Closing his eyes, he made a mental image in his head of Molly's ring finger. He opened his eyes and looked at the ring-sizer. "This is her size." He stated, pointing to the desired one.

The clerk seemed rather non-plussed at the method his customer had used to determine the ring size. Suddenly, his eyes widened in recognition. "Aren't you that famous detective, Sherlock Holmes?"

"That is indeed my name," Sherlock acknowledged.

"Let me be the first to congratulate you on your impending engagement," gushed the clerk. "I am sure we can give you a special price on the ring, too, knowing how much you help people."

He walked over to another, elderly man in another part of the store and had a quick, animated conversation with him, making gestures in Sherlock's direction. Returning to Sherlock, the clerk named a price which was less than Sherlock had expected.

"How quickly can the ring be ready? I really need it tomorrow."

"Usually it takes a few days, but perhaps we can make yours first priority, Mr. Holmes. I will consult the owner. One moment please."

While the clerk went back over to the elderly man and spoke with him, Sherlock walked over to a display case containing various items of jewellery. He spied a beautiful pair of delicate drop earrings with heart shaped crystals at the bottom. The price was reasonable, and he decided they would make a nice gift for Molly, perhaps for their wedding day? Of course, she had to agree to marry him first, but he was fairly certain she would say yes. Hadn’t she said on the phone that it had always been true, that she loved him? He didn’t want to think about how his life would continue if she rejected his proposal. For the first time a little seed of doubt crept into his mind but he pushed it away firmly.

The clerk returned to Sherlock and informed him the ring could be ready by 5 PM the following day.

"Thank you," said Sherlock. "I would also like to purchase those earrings today." He indicated the chosen pair.

John walked over to Sherlock while the clerk busied himself with filling out an invoice for the engagement ring and putting the earrings into a small box. "What happened to the man who said that ‘sentiment is a chemical defect found in the losing side?’"
"I was a fool. You know, Eurus said I lost, after I told her I saved Molly. She was right, I lost my heart to the one person that mattered the most. I thought I didn’t have a heart, but it turns out I had given it away. It just took me a few years to realize it and accept it."

As Sherlock produced his credit card to complete his purchase, he reflected on what he had just told his friend. He had certainly come a long way from those early days in Baker Street. He had a best friend, a semi–friendship with Detective Inspector Lestrade, and he was in love with an amazing girl. Who could have imagined this to be possible a few years ago?

Now he just had to hope that he could convince Molly of the truth of his love. No, sentiment was not after all a chemical defect, it was a necessary part of life if one wanted to have a life that meant something. And he wanted his life to mean more than solving crimes. He wanted Molly Hooper. She had always been the one who could see him, the real him, the man behind the mask. She had seen the lost little boy who had rewritten his memories to deal with tragedy, who had closed himself off from emotion rather than embrace loss as a part of being human.

For the first time, as they left the shop, Sherlock expressed his doubts to his friend. “John, what if she says no? What if I make a complete arse of myself when I’m trying to convince her I did mean it when I told her I loved her? What if the phone call was the last straw for her and she thinks I’m just manipulating her again?”

He held out a hand to flag down a taxi and the men got in. After instructing the driver to take them to Baker Street, Sherlock continued, “John, I have this queer sensation in the pit of my stomach, like I’m going to be sick.”

“What does logic tell you? More importantly, what does your heart tell you?”

“Logic tells me that Molly will hear me out. She’s a very sensible woman. My heart just tells me I’m scared of losing her.”

“Sherlock, putting your heart on the line is always a risk. As I said to you earlier, Molly loves you, she admitted it. You have an advantage over most people. You know already that she loves you. When you told me you wanted to marry her, I thought you were going a bit overboard. I’ve changed my mind on that. Asking her to marry you is the one definitive proof that you are not manipulating her. She is going to realize that and respond accordingly.”

“Do you really think so?” Sherlock asked hopefully.

“I’m sure of it.”

Sherlock settled back in his seat, feeling a little more confident about the future than he had been a few minutes before. He was lucky to have a good friend like John. John was much more familiar with women and the way they thought and reacted to things. He would trust that his friend was correct and that he, Sherlock Holmes, the world’s only consulting detective would soon be an engaged man.

Chapter End Notes

Picking out a diamond is really quite complicated. It’s what my hubby did, rather than just buy a ring and yeah, mine is a heart. Life imitating art or vice versa!
The evening had gone surprisingly well. Molly and Sherlock had gone to Baker Street and informed Mrs. Hudson that they were engaged.

Mrs. Hudson, the sweet lady, had exclaimed, "Sherlock, dear boy, you are finally taking the plunge. I am delighted you have found a lovely woman to share your life with. I never did like that Janine lady. Those nasty stories she spread about you, oh, it just made me so mad!"

Molly recalled Sherlock's short relationship with the maid of honour from John and Mary's wedding. Getting close to Janine had apparently been a scheme concocted by Sherlock to gain access to a dangerous blackmailer named Charles Magnussen. Janine had been his personal assistant.

The funny thing was, Sherlock was just using Janine for her connections, yet she had elicited sweet revenge by selling their "steamy romance" story to the tabloids, making enough money to buy herself a cottage in Sussex Downs.

Mrs. Hudson had gushed over Molly's ring and asked if they had set a date already for the wedding. At this, Sherlock had glanced at Molly and responded, "Not yet, but I am not anticipating an overly long engagement." At these words, Molly's heart had fluttered in anticipation at the thought of actually being Sherlock's wife.

Sherlock had texted John with the words, "She said yes!" The couple then went to visit him and their goddaughter Rosamund. Little Rosie had been fascinated by her "Auntie Molly's" ring.

John patted Sherlock on the back and commented, "Well now, I guess you two are going to have to get a move on so that Rosie can have a playmate."

At this, Molly blushed beet red and imagined herself holding a delightful little child with Sherlock's gorgeous dark curls.

"First things first, my friend," had been Sherlock's response. "You'll be my best man, of course?"

"Are you sure you wouldn't rather have your brother stand up for you as best man?" John inquired.

"God no. I don't even want to tell him I'm an engaged man," Sherlock responded with a short laugh.

"In that case, it would be my pleasure to act as best man."

Sherlock escorted Molly home soon afterwards. At the door of her flat she asked, “Will you come in for a bit?”

Sherlock nodded his assent and followed her back into the flat they had left a couple hours before.

“Would you like coffee or tea?”

“Not really. Do you,” he cleared his throat. “Do you think I can kiss you again? They say practice makes perfect, and I am a novice at the activity.”

Molly put her arms around him. “You don’t kiss like a novice so I suppose it comes naturally to you.”

“Nevertheless I feel the need for a lot of practice.” His lips descended on hers and his arms encircled her petite frame against his own long, lanky one.

They were both a little breathless when the kiss ended. It really was remarkable, Molly thought to herself. She had not been joking when she told him kissing came naturally for him. He applied just the right amount of pressure, angling his head slightly to cover her lips with his own. She had never felt this way before when being kissed. Sure, it had been pleasant, but Sherlock’s lips made hers tingle with electricity. It was as if their mouths had been shaped to fit each other’s perfectly. It was natural, it was right and oh, it was gloriously sweet.

“Molly, I have to tell you. I wasn’t entirely sure you would agree to marry me,” confessed Sherlock. "John told me that he thought I was crazy at first, but that he had changed his mind about it.”

“Really?” asked Molly with interest. “What changed his mind?”

“He said it was because he realised that by proposing to you I would be proving that I wasn’t manipulating you.”

“You wouldn’t have needed to propose to me. I could see in your eyes that you were telling the truth when you said you loved me to my face. During the phone call I thought maybe you did, at least a little, but I didn’t have the benefit of seeing your expression.”

“Do you think I moved too fast? Should I have waited awhile before asking you to marry me?” he questioned a little uncertainly.

“Sherlock, I’ve wanted to hear those words from your lips for years. I just didn’t really believe it would ever happen. Every girl dreams of her Prince Charming, her knight in shining armour who would sweep her off her feet, but I was resigned to the fact that you would never want a real relationship with me.”

“And now?” His deep baritone made her heartbeat accelerate.

“And now you have made my dreams a reality.” A tear slid down her cheek, but it was not one of sorrow. It was one of pure joy. “I’ve never been happier than I am right now, knowing you love me the way I love you. I want to be your wife, to take care of you and nurture you." She leaned her head against his chest and he held her close. For several minutes they just stood there, feeling the unfamiliar warmth of being in each other’s embrace and enjoying the sensation.

“I’d better get going,” said Sherlock finally, reluctantly. "I'll come by for you after work tomorrow, we can grab a bite to eat and start making plans. What time are you done?"

"I'll be done at six."

Sherlock nodded, kissed her once more and left her flat to return to his own.
After Sherlock had left, Molly looked in wonder at the heart-shaped diamond sparkling on her finger. It was the tangible proof of Sherlock’s commitment to her. How did one go from abject misery to utter joy in just one evening? She would never have allowed herself to picture this scenario. Her longing for him had been a constant in her life for so long. When she had broken off her engagement with Tom, she had fully believed she would never marry. Her love for Sherlock would remain unspoken, unrequited, but at least she would see him when he came to the lab and enlisted her help, and it would have to be enough to carry her through the long, dreary years ahead.

Now her heart felt like it wanted to explode, it was so full. It was a miracle. Maybe others wouldn’t think of it that way, but it was one, just for her.

“Thank you, God,” she whispered into the darkness later when she had gotten into bed. A peace like nothing she had ever felt before washed over her. She had always known she was loved by God, but now she had been given the most precious gift, a reciprocal love with a man who would share a future with her from this time forward. She was truly blessed.

Chapter End Notes

I know this is a pretty short chapter. You will find the chapters getting progressively longer as I’ve thought more about the characters and become more comfortable with writing for them. I hope you will enjoy my interpretation of this love story. Please feel free to comment after each chapter with your thoughts.
Sherlock stood among the mess in his sitting room, trying to decide where to start cleaning up. Mrs. Hudson had kindly provided him with a broom and empty boxes in which to deposit the irretrievably damaged items from the explosion of a few days before. She had even offered to help with the clean-up, to which the detective had responded, "You're my landlady, not my housekeeper." At this, Mrs. Hudson had smiled and left him to his own devices.

The sound of the doorbell downstairs interrupted Sherlock's musings, and he heard Mrs. Hudson open the door. As a heavy tread climbed the stairs, he groaned inwardly. His brother was there, and he was not ready to tell him about his engagement.

Apparently this was not to be necessary. Mycroft burst into the sitting room without knocking, and said, "Mummy called me early this morning and told me to look at the paper." He thrust the newspaper at Sherlock's face. "What the hell does this mean?" he demanded.

The younger Holmes brother read the front page which had a picture of him in his deerstalker hat and a huge headline of "Sherlock Holmes is getting married!"

"Must be a slow news day," he muttered, adding to himself, "I should have told that damn clerk to keep his mouth shut, or I'd expose his habit of drinking on the job."

Mycroft stared at him in utter shock. "So it's true then? When in the bloody hell did this happen? We just got back from Sherrinford a few days ago. How could you have found time to get a girlfriend, let alone become engaged?"

"Our Sherrinford experience was quite an eye-opener to me. It forced me to reconsider everything I believed was important in life. I used to look at sentiment as an indulgence, something only weak-minded people experienced in order to make themselves feel important. I now understand the emotion, and it is a humanizing one. Without knowing or understanding it, I was a shell of a man, never truly experiencing true pain or true joy. The only way I had come close to feeling those emotions before was with the use of drugs to produce an artificial high. I don't need that anymore. I guess you could say the Sherrinford experience has given me a new high- on life."

"That's all well and good little brother, and I'm very happy for you to have had this epiphany, but it still doesn't explain your sudden engagement. Who's the lucky girl?"

"Oh Mycroft, use that superior brain of yours and figure it out!" exclaimed Sherlock in exasperation. "It's not likely I just picked up a woman off the street and proposed, is it?"

"Ha," countered the oldest Holmes sibling. "I wouldn't deem anything unlikely from a man who would go to extreme measures like drugging his family on Christmas Day in order to get at a
"notorious blackmailer like Charles Magnussen." He thought for a moment and then said slowly, "By the process of simple elimination, I suppose your betrothed is the little pathologist Molly Hooper?"

"Well, it certainly isn't Mrs. Hudson," snorted Sherlock. "You are correct. When Eurus made me believe Molly's flat was rigged to explode, something twisted at my gut. Then, the moment I said 'I love you,' I realized it was true and that losing her would be like losing the best part of myself."

"I have to admit, your second 'I love you' sounded different than the first, but I thought you were just playing the game. I do apologize. I called Doctor Hooper afterwards to let her know the whole thing had been a test. If I had known you were sincere, I would have allowed you to make things right without my interference. Please do convey my apologies for any undue stress I may have caused."

Sherlock shrugged. "It all worked out. You of all people should know what an important role Molly has played in my life. Without her, I could never have pulled off my 'suicide.' She grounds me in a way I didn't think possible. You should try it, Mycroft- love, I mean."

"As it happens, I do have a lunch date with Lady Smallwood tomorrow." Mycroft flushed slightly, then continued, "I am truly pleased to see you happy. When are you going to tell our parents the news? I think you had better do it soon, seeing as apparently the 'cat is out of the bag' already."

"I'll call them tonight," promised the younger Holmes brother.

"Well, I'll leave you to your cleaning then. Good day, brother mine."

After Mycroft had taken his leave, Sherlock felt too unsettled to do any work. He needed to reflect a little more on when and how Molly Hooper had crept into his heart.

Entering his mind palace, the sleuth thought back to that long-ago Christmas party. He had been so rude to Molly, convinced that she was all dressed up to go see some new boyfriend after the little get-together at his and John's flat. In hindsight, he now recognized his poor behaviour as a by-product of the first twinges of jealousy he had ever felt. There had been an inner sense of both guilt and relief when he had discovered the carefully wrapped present was, in fact, for him.

Some time later, despite the shameful way he had treated her, Molly had been able to see something in him that nobody else could. She had offered help without reservation when he was making his elaborate plan to "die" and disappear, possibly forever, from her life. Sherlock had remained in exile for two years, until his name was cleared, and Moriarty's plot to defame him was exposed.

Another memory surfaced, one from a time shortly after Sherlock had returned to his consulting detective job. He had asked Molly to fill in as his assistant one day because John was not yet reconciled to the fact the detective had not made him privy to the hoax. Therefore, the doctor had spent two years in the dark, mourning the supposed loss of his best friend. Sherlock still felt a little guilty about that.

The day with Molly had been rather pleasant, but at the end of it, he had noticed an engagement ring on her left hand. He had kissed her cheek and wished her well, but there had been a slight nauseated feeling inside him at the thought of Molly moving on with her life. This, he now recognized as also being stirrings of jealousy.

Well, that was all in the past, and it was his own engagement ring on Molly's finger now. He was
very glad Molly had broken things off with that Tom fellow, but his curiosity was a little piqued about it. He would have to ask her what had led to the split.

That was enough reminiscing. There was work to be done, Sherlock reminded himself. After placing a quick call to Angelo’s to make reservations for six-thirty, he started ploughing through the piles of rubbish at his feet and determining what was salvageable.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoy my interpretation of Sherlock’s thoughts on his past.

This is a short chapter. Would you like me to post another today?
Molly was humming a tune from her favourite American band, Paramore, as she walked to her locker just before six o’clock to hang up her lab coat and retrieve her bag for the evening ahead. She had a strange feeling of déjà vu as she opened the locker and saw Sherlock's image reflected in the mirror inside it. Hastily hanging up her lab coat and grabbing her handbag, she smiled at Sherlock.

"You're early."

"Am I? It appears I am right on time, seeing as you are getting ready to leave."

Molly saw the approval in his eyes at the outfit she had worn beneath her white coat. She had paired a soft, light pink jumper with a calf-length grey skirt. The result was very feminine and pretty, unlike the casual clothes she usually wore to work. In fact, a couple of her colleagues had made positive comments about her attire. "You ARE early," she insisted. "I need to stop by the ladies room and make myself look a bit more presentable."

Sherlock brushed a hand caressingly along her cheek. "I think you look beautiful. I've been looking forward to this all day." He gave her a gentle kiss on her lips.

Molly pulled away and said, "Nevertheless, I want to freshen up a little. I'll be right back."

After releasing her hair from its customary ponytail and brushing it so it fell in soft waves to just below her shoulders, Molly searched through her bag for some mascara and a tube of lipstick. After applying both, she looked at her reflection in the mirror and smiled. This was definitely an improvement.

She remembered a long-ago comment from Sherlock, where he had made a comment about her mouth being a bit small and that wearing lipstick was an improvement. His lips on the other hand, thought the pathologist, were extremely full, sexy and ultimately kissable. She was still in a bit of a daze over the fact that those lips and that gorgeous man attached to them, were now really and truly hers.

Molly left the bathroom and found Sherlock still standing, patiently waiting where she had left him. He gave a wolf whistle, and she blushed. "Okay, I'm ready. Let's go. So where actually are we headed?"

"Angelo’s," replied the detective. "We have reservations for six-thirty. Oh, and by the way, you might want to be ready when we exit the hospital."

"Ready for what?" questioned his fiancée.
"I'm guessing you didn't see this morning's paper. The clerk at the jewellery store where I bought your ring decided to divulge the news of my engagement. I suspect some nosy reporters followed me to the hospital."

As he finished speaking and the couple passed through the front entrance of the hospital, a series of camera bulb flashes went off and a small group of reporters pressed in to ask questions.

Molly kept her head down, her hand firmly clasped in Sherlock's as he answered the reporters' questions with "No comment." This was not the time to be making any type of formal announcement. Hailing a taxi cab, they were soon away from the cluster of news people, and Molly breathed a sigh of relief.

"Sorry about that," Sherlock apologized.

"It's okay, not your fault." She responded.

They sat in companionable silence for the few minutes it took to reach the restaurant.

Sherlock paid the cabbie and offered his arm to Molly, then escorted her into Angelo's. Almost as soon as they entered, the proprietor himself bustled up to them. "Mr. Holmes, it is always a pleasure to see you. Our best table is waiting. May I ask, is your lovely companion the lady who has captured your heart? I saw the paper this morning, and there is much speculation over whom she might be."

"Yes indeed, Angelo. This is my fiancée Molly. Molly, meet Angelo, the owner of this fine establishment."

"Pleased to meet you," said Molly politely.

The proprietor led the couple to a small round table towards the rear of the restaurant. It was only dimly lit, and a candle was burning in the centre of the table.

As they ate their first dinner together as a couple, Sherlock told Molly about his meeting earlier in the day with Mycroft. He remembered to pass along his brother's apologies in regards to the phone call a few days before. He also said he had promised Mycroft that he would call their parents later in the evening. The couple mutually decided to make the call from Molly's flat as soon as they arrived after dinner.

Several times during the meal, Molly silently cursed the dim lighting which prevented her from seeing Sherlock's face clearly. She was glad of it when Sherlock pulled her right hand towards his and kissed the back of it, turned it over and pressed a tender kiss to her palm, though. It was such a romantic and surprising gesture she hadn't expected. Sherlock's lips touching her skin made her feel tingly inside. There was an almost palpable electric current flowing between them.

After the detective had paid the bill, the duo left the restaurant and took a taxi back to Molly's flat. It was time to make plans for their future together.

Chapter End Notes

Another fairly short chapter. Just getting the ball rolling.
Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Sherlock calls his parents and Molly makes a confession.

Chapter Notes

This chapter begins the inevitable discussion about S-E-X. It is also the start to the faith aspect of my story, so be forewarned.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

As soon as Sherlock and Molly arrived at her two bedroom flat, Sherlock said, "I suppose I had better call my parents before we do anything else." He removed his Belstaff coat and blue scarf, laying them over an armchair.

Molly sat on her sofa and patted the seat next to her. "You might as well be comfortable while you are being told off," she informed Sherlock impishly.

He gave her a wry smile. Having taken the indicated seat, the detective pulled out his mobile and made the call, putting it on speakerphone.

After two rings, the voice of Mrs. Holmes came on the line. "Well Sherlock, were your father and I supposed to be the last to know about this sudden engagement? Why didn't you say anything the other night, when you and Mycroft came to tell us that your sister was still alive?"

The younger Holmes brother cringed slightly at his mother's acerbic tone. "Hello Mummy, nice to talk to you too. I couldn't tell you what I didn't know at the time! I was still dealing with a huge amount of memories I had blocked, and emotions I hadn't realized I possessed. I also didn't anticipate that damned clerk spilling the beans to the world before I had a chance to speak with you."

"Language, Sherlock," said his mother reprovingly. "Molly Hooper…isn't she the one who helped you fake your death a few years ago after that dreadful Moriarty tried to discredit you?"

"Yes, how did you guess it was her- or did Mycroft tell you?"

Mrs. Holmes snorted. "He didn't tell us anything. You might want to turn on the telly. You'd think it was Prince Charles and Lady Diana all over again. This time it's the famous detective and the specialist registrar."

Molly, who had been silently listening to the conversation, ready to offer her support if needed, reached for the remote and turned on the television, immediately muting the sound.

"I'm sorry Mummy, I don't control the media. Molly and I just got back from dinner. Would you like to say hello to her?" Without waiting for an answer, he thrust the phone at his fiancée.
"Hello, Mrs. Holmes," said Molly tentatively.

The older woman spoke in a gentler tone. "Hello, dear. So you are the one who has managed to finally capture my Sherlock's heart? I was beginning to despair of either of my boys ever getting married. I would really like to have some grandchildren to spoil in my old age."

Molly blushed furiously as Sherlock watched her, a slight smile on his face. "Well, we haven't talked about that yet, ma'am." Glancing shyly at the curly-haired man beside her, she added, "I would say it is certainly not out of the question."

"I am very glad to hear it," said Mrs. Holmes approvingly. "I an sure you both have things to do, so Would you please put my son back on so I can say goodbye?"

Breathing a sigh of relief, Molly returned the phone to Sherlock, feeling as if she had just been judged and found worthy of Sherlock's affections.

After Sherlock had finished the phone call, Molly restored the sound on the television. A reporter was standing outside of St. Bart's hospital and speaking.

"...and we have ascertained the lady in question to be Specialist Registrar, Dr. Molly Hooper. It appears London's favourite detective has had a long-standing relationship with this woman, and we all wish them the very best." A short video clip ensued, showing Sherlock and Molly's exit from the hospital. The way Molly's head was shyly downturned did indeed seem reminiscent of video footage of the late Princess Diana, during the early stages of her relationship with the Prince of Wales many years before.

"So, how does it feel being an instant celebrity?" asked Sherlock, putting an arm around Molly and drawing her close to him.

She looked into his eyes and replied, "If that's the price I have to pay to be with you, I guess I'll just have to deal with it."

The detective smiled and leaned in to give her a tender kiss. He then drew her to her feet. "Well, come along, Dr. Hooper. We have plans to make."

Molly, being always organized, grabbed a blank pad of paper and pen to write down notes. "You can lead Sherlock, where do we start?"

They sat at the small dining room table, across from one another. Sherlock thought for a moment, then said, "We should probably settle on a date for the wedding before we do anything else."

"To be honest, I don't particularly care for a long wait in order to plan a fancy wedding. After all, I have nobody to give me away, I haven't spoken to my mother in years and I don't really have many close friends. People tend to be a little intimidated when they hear I perform post-mortems for a living." She added, sighing, "I miss Mary. She and I were becoming really good friends. She used to tell me how great it would be if you and I would get together, so we could go out with her and John. She even told me that was one of the reasons you and I were both asked to be Rosamund's god-parents."

"Great, how does a week from Saturday sound then?" At Molly's look of wide-eyed consternation, the sleuth laughed. "I'm kidding! I don't think the law even allows you to get married that quickly, and I'm sure you at least want to go out and buy a dress. When is your lease up on your flat? I hope you are okay with moving in with me. My clients are used to my Baker Street address."

"That makes sense," agreed the pathologist. "I have about three months left on my lease."
"Perfect," declared the detective. He consulted the calendar on his phone. "So, if we want to make sure you are moved into Baker Street before your lease expires I'd suggest about ten weeks from this Saturday. Is that enough time?"

Molly felt a little thrill of anticipation as she consulted her own calendar. "Works for me." She wrote the date onto her notepad and then typed 'My wedding day!' into her phone calendar. A little over ten weeks and she would actually be Mrs. Sherlock Holmes. She almost pinched herself to make sure this wasn't some incredible dream.

After making a note of his own on his phone calendar, Sherlock asked, "How about a venue for the wedding and reception?"

"My church," responded Molly promptly. At Sherlock's raised eyebrow she said a little defensively, "You might doubt the existence of God, but in my profession I've seen too much evidence of the perfect design of the human body. No ridiculous amount of chance could have made that happen. So yeah, I have a church, a small one I attend when I'm not working on a Sunday."

"Forgive me, Molly, I didn't mean to look at you that way. It was just a surprise to me. I look forward to learning a lot more about you. Maybe you'll even be able to change my way of thinking." He smiled beguilingly and added, "Stranger things have happened. Until the other day I was a high-functioning sociopath who didn't believe in love."

Molly smiled back at her handsome fiancé. "There's a small reception hall attached to the church. It can accommodate about seventy-five people. I made inquiries when I was engaged to Tom."

Molly saw the curious gleam in the sleuth’s eyes, as he saw his opening and took it. "Speaking of your former fiancé, why did you break off the engagement?"

"I do feel rather awful about it because Tom is a really sweet guy. When you came back though, I kept making comparisons between him and you. John and Mary's wedding was the last straw. After he took me home, Tom said he could tell I was in love with you. I couldn't deny it, so I gave him back his ring and that was that. I haven't spoken with him since."

Sherlock took Molly's hand and pressed his lips to her fingers. "I'm sorry for the poor chap but very glad for my sake."

Molly looked into her fiancé's blue-green eyes. They had an amazing tendency to change colour from day to day. "I, um, have a confession to make in regards to Tom. Do you remember the day you wanted me to help you figure out how much alcohol you and John could have, without becoming too intoxicated?" At Sherlock's nod, she continued. "Well, you asked how things were with Tom. I told you they were good, and that were were, uh, having quite a lot of sex." Molly blushed slightly before taking a breath and going on. "Well, the thing is, I lied."

"You lied," stated Sherlock matter-of-factly at the same time with a half smile.

"How did you...how could you have possibly known that? I made sure I was looking directly at you."

"Well, I didn't exactly know. It just seemed unlike you. That's not the sort of information one generally shares out of the blue. In view of your heretofore unknown to me religious views, it also makes sense why you were NOT 'having quite a lot of sex' after all."

"Well yes, there is that, but it was more than that, too, why Tom and I never..." Molly blushed
again and went on, "...never did it. “ If I'm being perfectly frank, I never had any desire to be with him that way. I know he wanted more than kisses, but I told him I didn't believe in pre-marital sex."

Sherlock gave Molly a sultry look that made her go hot all over. "Is that a challenge?" he asked wickedly. At Molly's wide-eyed, deer-in-the-headlights stare he backed down hastily. "Kidding, kidding! I have waited all these years, a few more weeks won't kill me, although you are pretty damn tempting. Just don't wear anything too sexy, or I might change my mind and try to seduce you."

Molly thought with chagrin that if Sherlock really wanted to seduce her, she just might have a hard time saying no. This really would be a rest of her ingrained values. That hair, those lips, those bedroom eyes- she brushed the idle thoughts away, not wanting to go further down the path that would lead to her ruin. Briskly she said, "Well that's one awkward conversation settled. Just for the record though, I am not opposed to some pre-nuptial cuddling."

The detective cocked an eyebrow at her and winked. "Duly noted, ma'am."

Molly cleared her throat. "Getting back to the wedding planning, I'll call the church tomorrow and make sure it's available that day. Does three o'clock sound okay to you? I can also book the reception hall if you are agreeable to it? Unless you want a bigger venue?"

Sherlock waved his had dismissively. "That all sounds fine with me. While you do that, I'll research honeymoon destinations. Make sure you ask for two weeks off after the wedding. I presume you have enough vacation time accrued?"

"No problem there. I'm the consummate workaholic with no social life to speak of. I have accrued so much leave, I could take a month off and still have one left." She made some more notes on the pad in front of her.

"Very good." Sherlock glanced at his watch. "I didn't realize it was getting so late. Don't you have an early shift tomorrow? I should probably get going." He stood to retrieve his coat and scarf.

"I start at seven. You could...you could stay here, if you like," ventured Molly a little shyly. "You can use my room, and I'll use the spare bedroom. When you were laying low for those few nights between your supposed death and funeral, you had brought over a couple changes of clothes and a dressing gown. Obviously you never had a chance to retrieve them; they're still here in a corner of my wardrobe," she admitted. "I couldn't bear to get rid of them, and they smelled like you. I may or may not have occasionally buried my nose in them."

The sleuth grinned. "Well now Dr. Hooper, you are certainly spilling a lot of secrets tonight. I guess I could be persuaded to stay, and therefore avoid any entanglement with nosy reporters outside my flat. Promise me you won't try and have your wicked way with me." He waggled an eyebrow suggestively.

Molly stood and took Sherlock's coat and scarf from him, depositing them back on the top of the armchair. "Only if YOU promise to keep those 'come hither' looks to a minimum."

The detective drew her into his arms and gave her a long, lingering kiss that left both of them breathless. He trailed little kisses from his fiancée's lips to her ear and whispered, "I have a feeling these next few weeks are going to really test my willpower." He then withdrew from her, giving her a gentle pat on her shapely bottom. "Now off to bed with you. We can make more plans tomorrow."
Molly turned away obediently and went to her bedroom to retrieve her rose coloured, short satin chemise she wore as a nightie. She went into the bathroom, scrubbed off her makeup, changed into her nightie and brushed her teeth. "There's a spare toothbrush inside the vanity," she called to Sherlock as she finished her evening ablutions.

"Bathroom's free," said Molly as she exited, then bumped into Sherlock, who had been standing right outside the door.

He surveyed her rather skimpy attire and said silkily, "Just waiting for my goodnight kiss, Dr. Hooper."

Molly complied with a quick, chaste kiss, then disappeared into the smaller bedroom, closing the door firmly behind her. She lay in the single bed and listened as Sherlock completed his own bathroom ritual. She heard the door of his- her bedroom close, then finally she fell into a deep and peaceful sleep.

Chapter End Notes

I always thought Molly's talk about her and Tom having “quite a lot of sex” was her attempt to gauge his reaction. And I think he knew it. What are your thoughts?

I know a lot of fics portray her as this extremely experienced woman, but I just can’t see her that way. To me, she has always been soft and sweet, not a dirty little hussy who just wants him in her bed. Again, just my opinion, and this is my story, so I get to show my own interpretation!
Molly's phone alarm went off at five-thirty. Yawning, she reached over to the side table to grab it and turn it off. As she did so, she noticed a text that had come in at around two in the morning.

"Your bed is very comfy, but it smells like you, and that is distracting me from getting any sleep. I'll probably be asleep when you leave for work, so I'll text you later in the day. Love you. SH"

Quickly, Molly texted a response. "Sounds good. Love you too xx MH" Idly, she thought about the fact her initials would still be the same after they were married.

As the pathologist headed into the bathroom for a shower, she realized she had forgotten to grab any clothes from her wardrobe for the day.

After an invigorating shower, Molly wrapped a towel around her hair and another around her body. She gently opened the door into her darkened bedroom to see the sleeping silhouette of the man she loved.

Creeping into the room, she went to the chest of drawers and fished out a clean bra and knickers. In the bottom drawer was a fresh pair of skinny jeans which she set onto the top of the chest of drawers with the underclothes. She then went to the wardrobe. Using her phone as a flashlight, Molly selected a blue cable knit jumper and was just about to grab it off the hanger when a strong pair of arms wrapped around her from behind, making her gasp with surprise.

Sherlock nuzzled her neck and asked softly, "What is that intoxicating scent?"

Holding firmly to her towel, Molly turned towards him in the semi-darkness. His hair looked adorably rumpled and curlier than usual, giving him a boyish look.

"You, mister, are supposed to be asleep! I didn't mean to wake you; I forgot to grab a change of clothes last night. Oh, and I guess you are smelling my jasmine vanilla body wash."

"What can I say? I'm a light sleeper. Then, when I opened my eyes and saw an almost naked woman in the room, I had to get up and say hello." The detective flashed a wicked grin at his fiancée.

"I saw your text and you were still up at two o'clock. It is now a quarter-past-six which means you need more sleep, so go back to bed," scolded Molly. "I need to get dressed, or I'll be late for work."

She kissed Sherlock on the cheek, determined not to tempt him any further when she was in this state of undress. Grabbing the jumper from the hanger and the rest of her clothes, she left the bedroom and returned to the small one to dress.
Just before leaving the flat, she poked her head into the master bedroom. Sherlock had taken her advice and returned to bed. She closed the bedroom door and left for the hospital.

Upon arrival at St. Bart's, the specialist registrar was relieved to discover there were no early bird reporters hanging around.

Shortly after beginning her work for the day, Molly's closest friend from work hurried into the lab. Kaitlyn was very different from Molly in appearance - tall and blue-eyed with wavy blonde hair. She was a few years Molly's junior and worked as a lab assistant under Molly's guidance. She had been one of the few people to whom Molly had confided her crush on Sherlock years earlier.

"Oh my gosh, Molly, I just saw it on the telly last night. I can't believe it! You and Sherlock, engaged!" she enthused. "Please, let's have lunch together in the cafeteria later, and you can tell me all about it. Now, let's see that ring!"

"Lunch sounds great," agreed Molly. "I'm sorry I didn't get to tell you about it. It was all a bit unexpected. I would have told you yesterday, but it was your day off." She lifted her left hand and showed off the ring on her third finger, as requested.

At around ten o'clock, Molly heard a text coming in from Sherlock. She had customized his text tone so she would always know when he was texting her. It was a pretty quiet day in the lab, and there were no bodies waiting for her to examine, so she picked up her phone and the following conversation ensued.

SH: Lunch?
MH: Sorry, can't. Already have plans.
SH: Should I be jealous?
MH: You are silly. Kaitlyn wants details. Also planning to ask her to be my maid of honour.
SH: After work, then? I can swing by and get you, then we can pick up something for dinner on the way back to your place.
MH: Sounds good. I'm done at four. About to call church re: date and reception.
SH: Okay. Guess I should go do some heavy-duty cleaning. Need to make the place habitable for guests. By the way, what's your schedule for this weekend?
MH: It's my turn to work the weekend, but I'll be off on Monday and Tuesday. See you at four.
SH: XX
MH: You always need the last word, don't you?
SH: And kiss as well X

Molly placed a call to her church and got the church secretary, Nancy Schmidt. Molly made her request for church availability on the day she and Sherlock had selected. Fortunately both church and reception hall were available so the booking was made immediately.

"I can't believe our Molly is marrying that famous detective, Sherlock Holmes. I'm so thrilled for you dear," gushed the older woman. "He's such a handsome fellow, isn't he? He's a very lucky man to be marrying a lovely girl like you!"

"Why thank you, Nancy," Molly said warmly. "You and your husband will be getting an invitation of course."

"I look forward to it! By the way, I should let you know Pastor Briggs always likes to meet the engaged couple for a pre-marital counselling session or two. You probably want to schedule it within the next month, so check with your fiancé for when you are both available, and we will set up an appointment."
"Oh yes, of course. I'll speak with him tonight. Thanks so much Nancy, I'll talk to you again soon."

After finishing the phone call, the pathologist bit her lip apprehensively, wondering how Sherlock would react to the news that he was expected to attend a pre-marital counselling session with her pastor. She hoped he wouldn't make a big deal about it.

Settling back in to work for another hour, Molly was quite startled when Kaitlyn came into the lab a few minutes before noon.

"Ready to go downstairs for lunch?" The bubbly blonde asked. "I can't wait to hear all your news."

A short time later the pair was seated at a quiet table in the corner of the cafeteria. Fortunately, it was a little earlier than the usual noon-time rush.

Molly answered Kaitlyn's questions about how everything had happened with Sherlock and how he had shocked her with his unexpected proposal. As usual, Kaitlyn was enthusiastic and happy for her best friend.

"I have something to ask you, Kaitlyn," Molly said once her friend had finished gushing about how exciting it all was and how it was about time Sherlock realized Molly was the best thing to ever happen to him. "Would you be my maid of honour?"

The blonde gasped and said delightedly, "I would be thrilled, Molly; I've never been in a wedding before!"

The two talked animatedly about the upcoming wedding until it was time to return to work.

A little later, during another slow period at the hospital, Molly called a friend from church to ask her if she would be a bridesmaid. Kayla was almost as excited about the prospect of being in Molly's wedding as Kaitlyn. Like most people, she was in awe of the fact that Molly was engaged to the famous detective Sherlock Holmes.

Molly smiled contentedly as her work day drew to a close. It had been quite a productive day in terms of wedding planning rather than work; things were coming together nicely. She was looking forward to her evening with Sherlock, except for the necessary conversation about counselling...

Chapter End Notes

Enjoy the roller coaster ride of wedding planning. I am attempting to make it as true-to-life as possible, which means lots of research about English weddings. I hope I can make the process as authentic as possible from an English point of view. As a native Australian who is now in America, I use mostly English spelling, but do use the American way with “z” instead of “s” for words like recognize/recognise. I try to stick to British terms for things also whenever possible to keep the authenticity.

I have also created two original characters in this chapter, who will feature significantly in the story. Every girl needs friends to confide in, and the television show did not dwell on Molly’s life outside work (not surprisingly because the show is called Sherlock). I hope you will enjoy these characters as well.

Comments welcome :)
Sherlock Plans a Surprise (Thursday)

Chapter Summary

Sherlock has a very romantic idea.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sherlock Plans a Surprise (Thursday)

After he had been ordered back to bed by Molly, Sherlock slept soundly until around nine o’clock. The flat seemed oddly empty without Molly’s presence, so he took a quick shower and then left the flat to return to his place in Baker Street.

Mrs. Hudson heard him come in and followed him upstairs. "Sherlock, there were some reporters here earlier, but I sent them away. You must have been out and about very early this morning." She gave the detective a knowing look.

"Mrs. Hudson, nothing escapes you. I'm sure you are aware I didn't come home last night."

"You didn't?" she questioned, feigning innocence.

"If you must know, Molly and I were making wedding plans, and she invited me to stay over when we realized how late it was." Noting his landlady's raised eyebrows Sherlock hastily added, "We slept in separate bedrooms." He wasn't sure if she quite believed him, but she nodded and went back downstairs to her own flat.

He sent a text to Molly, and their text conversation ensued. Sighing, he observed the mess still everywhere around the sitting room and wondered why it hadn't somehow magically been cleared away. He half-heartedly threw a few irretrievably damaged books into boxes, swept up the shattered glass from test tubes, bunsen burners and the like, that littered the kitchen floor, and then sat in his chair, lacking motivation.

Suddenly, a text alert with Irene Adler's unique text tone came in. "Are we ever going to have dinner?" read the text. Surprised, Sherlock realized that the dominatrix who had once intrigued him was no longer of any relevance to him. In fact, the only time he had even been reminded of her was during his conversation with John after the events at Sherrinford.

Irene had been the first woman for whom the detective had felt a vague attraction. It was not really an attraction though, more of an awareness for the first time that women were built differently than men, softer, curvier. Her air of mystery and self-assurance was an allure to the man who prided himself on being able to read and understand anyone by their mannerisms and attire. The fact that "The Woman" as she was known to her clients had presented herself to him completely naked at their first meeting had been extremely disconcerting. Without clothes, he could not establish any clues about her habits, and her enigmatic smile similarly told him nothing. That combination had served to interest him and make him rather uncomfortable at the same time.

In the end, he had seen through her duplicity and gotten the upper hand after she was revealed to be
working for Moriarty. He had noted that her flirtatious act was more than just flirtation, and it had led to her undoing.

After Irene had left the country to go into hiding, a sense of duty had obligated him into keeping an eye on her movements. He had saved her from execution by terrorists and then lost track of her movements. She was presumed dead now and thus safe from more threats, and she continued to text him every once in a while.

Taking up his phone, Sherlock sent her one last text. "I am an engaged man. No dinner, ever. Good luck to you and goodbye." He pressed send, then deleted her from his contacts and blocked her number. That chapter of his life was closed. Molly was his future. She had captured his heart, body and soul with her devotion and sweetness. His attraction to her was so much more than merely physical; it was emotional and even, if he could allow himself to think it, spiritual.

Sherlock let his mind wander to wedding-related matters. He thought about Molly walking down the aisle towards him in a beautiful, full wedding gown. Thinking of her in a wedding dress drew his mind back to a conversation from a few months ago, which he had overheard between Molly and her friend Kaitlyn, on an occasion where he had been using the hospital's lab equipment for one of his cases.

"Don't forget you're coming over tonight so we can watch the latest episode of 'Say Yes to the Dress'," Kaitlyn had said to her friend.

"Oh, thanks for reminding me. I love that show. If David Emmanuel was good enough to design Princess Diana's wedding dress, I'd trust him to find the perfect dress for me," Molly had declared enthusiastically.

Sherlock had filed away this bit of trivia in his mind palace without consciously being aware of it.

Now he was glad of his ability to store and retrieve information that most people would forget immediately. What was the name of that bridal boutique, he wondered. As he had never watched the show, he turned on his laptop and made a quick search on Google.

Sherlock found the name, address and phone number of the boutique. "Confetti and Lace" was its name and it was located in Essex, about an hour and a half's journey outside of London. He punched in the digits and waited for his call to be answered.

"Confetti and Lace," came the voice of a receptionist. "How may I direct your call?"

Sherlock cleared his throat. This was a new experience for him, and he felt a little nervous. "Ah, yes. I would like to make an appointment please for my fiancée.

"One moment please," came the crisp reply. "Putting you through to appointments."

After a few more seconds, another woman's voice came on the line. "Appointments. May I have your name, please?"

"Um, this is Sherlock Holmes, but I am trying to book an appointment for my fiancée, Molly Hooper, so it would be in her name I presume?"

There was a gasp on the other end of the line. "You are THE Sherlock Holmes?"

"If you mean the London detective, then yes I am. I know this is probably short notice, but my wedding is only two and a half months away, and obviously my fiancée needs a dress. Is there any possible way I could make a time for her for next Tuesday? I want to surprise her, and she seems to
"Well, we are usually booked up weeks ahead. Seeing as you are in a bit of a time crunch, I'll just have a word with our manager and see if we can squeeze you in. One moment please."

After about two minutes, Sherlock was starting to think he had made a mistake, and this was all too much trouble. Then, the woman's voice came back on the line.

"I have good news for you, Mr. Holmes. We can fit your fiancée in at two o’clock on Tuesday. Mr. Emmanuel will be here, although we can't promise that he will be the one to assist her."

"That would be fine," said Sherlock.

"And will you be accompanying your fiancée?"

The detective thought for a moment. It might be fun to hire a limousine and ride with Molly to the appointment. He'd enjoy sitting with her and perhaps drinking a little champagne with her during the ninety minute journey to Essex. "Yes, I will be accompanying her."

"Wonderful," said the reservations lady. Sherlock thought he detected a note of excitement in her voice.

After he had furnished her with his mobile number for contact purposes the woman said, “We shall see you then at two o’clock next Tuesday."

Sherlock disconnected the call and consulted his watch, relieved to have done something productive. He could smell scones baking downstairs and decided to see if he could persuade Mrs. Hudson to provide him with lunch. He grinned to himself. A little flattery about her baking skills would surely do the trick.

Half an hour later, Sherlock made his way back upstairs with a belly full of hot scones and tea. Mrs. Hudson had been only too happy to feed him as she grilled him about his future with Molly.

Placing a call to a company that would help with debris removal, the detective was well satisfied. Two men would be coming over on Saturday to clean up the flat properly.

As soon as he hung up, he noticed a phone call had come in during his call to the removal company, and he had a voicemail.

The message was from Detective Inspector Greg Lestrade. "I have a case that could use your attention if you can come in today or tomorrow. Give me a call and let me know."

Sherlock decided it would be too difficult to make the trip to Scotland Yard as well as meet Molly at four, so he called Greg back and arranged a meeting for the following morning at eleven o’clock.

The next couple of hours were spent browsing the internet and getting ideas about possible honeymoon locations. Then it was time to meet up with Molly.

As he hailed a taxi to take him to the hospital, Sherlock noted he was being followed. This time, if the reporters were still there when he left St. Bart's with Molly, he decided he could give them a brief statement. Then they would hopefully leave him and Molly alone.
Okay, I admit it. I have been a fan of the two American incarnations of “Say Yes to the Dress” for several months now. It’s fun to watch women try on beautiful gowns in which to marry their loved one. When I discovered there was a British version, I thought it might be a cute addition to my story. I looked up the location of the boutique and found out how long it would take to get to Essex from London.

In regards to Irene Adler, I have always thought Sherlock is much too good and ethical of a man to be interested in her. She worked for Moriarty, too. There is no way he would ever want to be with her. That ridiculous scene in “The Lying Detective” made me cringe, and John trying to encourage him to be with her was the most out-of-character thing I’ve seen on the show. Just my opinion.

I hope you enjoy this chapter and do let me know your thoughts :)
Molly was ready for Sherlock when he arrived. Kaitlyn had shooed her from the lab a few minutes early, saying she would finish cleaning things up so Molly could get ready for her "date."

Molly had taken her hair out of its usual ponytail and allowed it to hang loose down her back. She had reapplied her lipstick and a touch of mascara as well.

"You look beautiful, my darling," stated Sherlock. He seemed almost as surprised as Molly at the term of endearment that had slipped out of his mouth. He lifted her right hand and kissed it in a gentlemanly fashion which delighted his fiancée. Sherlock was becoming quite adept at romantic gestures.

As the detective offered his arm for her, he warned her, "A couple reporters followed me here again. I think we should make a statement so that they will leave us in peace. What do you think?"

"I'm fine with that. What do you want to tell them?"

"I'll acknowledge you as my fiancée and wing it from there. If we allow them five minutes, that should be enough."

Molly nodded in agreement and braced herself for an interrogation.

As soon as they walked outside, it was like the previous day all over again. Flashbulbs were popping and reporters were thrusting microphones towards them. A small crowd of onlookers had also gathered, curious to see what was happening. "I thought you said a couple of reporters?" whispered Molly.

"Apparently they called their friends," whispered Sherlock back to her.

Then they were surrounded and questions were being fired at both of them.

"Would you give us a statement, Mr. Holmes?"

"Where did you and Dr. Hooper meet?"

"How long have you been together?"

"When is the big day?"

"Does she help you with your cases?"

"Can we see the ring, Dr. Hooper?"
"How have you managed to keep your relationship under wraps until now?"

With the air of someone used to fielding questions, as indeed he was, the self-proclaimed consulting detective addressed only the questions he wanted to answer. For each acknowledged question, he spoke directly to the person who had asked it.

"Dr. Hooper and I have been close friends for several years. She does indeed help me at times with cases. Our change of relationship status is quite recent, but we are very happy to be sharing it with you now." He deliberately lifted Molly's left hand to the woman who had asked to see the ring and several more cameras flashed. "We are not ready to share the wedding details and would appreciate it if you could respect our privacy in this matter for now."

Raising a hand to show he would answer no more questions, the crowd parted. Sherlock and Molly climbed into the waiting taxi that was idling at the side of the road. Sherlock had retained the cabbie from his trip to the hospital, anticipating he would need a quick exit from the waiting paparazzi.

Molly breathed a sigh of relief as they settled into the back seat and headed to her flat after Sherlock gave instructions to the driver. "I never expected to marry a celebrity. I am definitely going to have to buy a new wardrobe if I am going to be constantly photographed. I wouldn't want you to be ashamed of me."

Sherlock slid a sidelong glance at her. "I would never bee ashamed of you. I'm sorry to have complicated your life this way. Are you sure you want to go through with this?" he questioned only half-jokingly.

Reaching across the seat and squeezing his hand reassuringly Molly said, "Do you really think I'd throw away seven years of longing for you, just because of a few reporters? You won't be able to get rid of me that easily."

As they neared their destination, Molly said to the driver, "You can drop us off at the next corner." At Sherlock's questioning gaze, she explained. "There's a fish and chip shop there, and we were going to get something to eat, right?"

After purchasing their chips, the couple walked the short distance to Molly's flat.

Upon entering, Molly asked Sherlock, "Would you like a cup of tea?" She went over to the kitchen nook and put on the kettle.

"Yes, please- two sugars and milk. Do you always take yours with honey and lemon?"

"No. I usually take sugar and milk, too. If I've got the sniffles, I substitute that for honey and lemon, like a few days ago when you called and I had been feeling like I was coming down with something. Luckily that wasn't the case and..." She stopped suddenly. "Oh my gosh! You really could see me the other day when you called me, couldn't you?"

"I did tell you that," affirmed the detective. "I saw you not pick up your phone the first time. I saw you getting ready to hang up on me as well. You were being so stubborn; I was afraid time would run out, and you would die. My God, how could it have taken me so long to recognize that my feelings for you were more than those of a friend?"

Molly could hear the note of anguish in his voice and walked to him, temporarily distracted from her tea-making. She traced his high, aristocratic cheekbones with her fingertips and said, "It all turned out okay, and you said there was no bomb anyway."
"But I didn't know that at the time." Without warning, Sherlock put his arms around her and held her close. He then crushed his lips to hers in a searing kiss that revealed how much she meant to him—how terrified he had been at the prospect of losing her. Molly returned the embrace in full measure, thrilled at the knowledge this man really, truly loved her.

It was several minutes before they detached themselves, and Molly resumed making the tea, while Sherlock unbuttoned his coat and put it on the armchair along with his scarf as he had done the previous day.

The couple drank their tea and ate the chips in companionable silence. Molly had turned on the TV and set the volume low to provide some background noise. The evening news came on and shortly into the broadcast she heard Sherlock's name.

Turning up the volume, they watched themselves on the television. Sherlock, as always, looked self-assured and calm as he fielded the questions. Molly looked shy as Sherlock lifted her hand to show off the engagement ring on her finger. Even through the TV it was obvious this was a couple who was very much in love.

As soon as the short piece about them was finished, Molly rose from the table, turned off the television and picked up the empty tea cups, depositing them in the sink, while Sherlock put the now empty cardboard containers into the rubbish.

After this was accomplished, Sherlock asked, "Now that we're done with dinner, should we pick up where we left off earlier?"

"By earlier are you referring to half an hour ago when we were kissing or last night when we were making plans?" teased Molly, knowing full well he was referring to the latter.

"You little minx," laughed Sherlock. "Maybe we can do both." Grabbing his fiancée's hand, he led her to the sofa and deposited her on a cushion before seating himself close beside her.

Sherlock's deep voice took on a serious tone as he said, "Would you tell me about your family? You told me your dad was dead. Then last night you said you don't talk to your mother. I want to know everything about you, Molly Hooper, and I want you to know you can share anything with me." He put his arm around her.

Molly snuggled close to her curly-haired man. "There's not much to tell, really," she responded. "My dad was great. He was ten years older than my mum, but they were devoted to one another. After I was born, my mother wasn't able to have any more children. I was my daddy's spoiled little princess." She smiled, remembering many happy times spent with an indulgent father. "When I was seventeen, he started having pains in his abdomen. At first he thought it was chronic heartburn or something, but then he started feeling nauseous all the time."

She paused. "By the time he decided to see a doctor about it, we found out he had stage four pancreatic cancer. The doctors said there was nothing they could do and recommended pain medication to keep him comfortable. He was told he had six months, maybe a year if he was lucky."

Molly choked on the last word as tears filled her eyes and spilled down her cheeks. "Oh Sherlock, he was so brave. He never complained about the pain. He was a simple man of faith. He didn't ask God 'why me?" He just told me he was grateful for the time he had had with my mum and me. He made his peace with God, and he was ready to leave this earth, but I knew it made him sad to leave us behind. He was gone in five months, less than the time the doctors had given him."
The tears were pouring down Molly's cheeks now. She had never shared this with anyone before.

Sherlock held her close to him and rocked her gently as he tucked her head against his shoulder, kissing the side of her face. "I'm so sorry, love," he whispered. "I didn't mean to stir up bad memories."

The pathologist allowed herself to be comforted by Sherlock's warm embrace. Being in his arms felt so right, so natural. After a few minutes, when she had recovered from her emotional breakdown, Molly continued. "Dad's cancer is one of the main reasons I went into the medical field. I wanted to understand how the body works and what causes people to get sick. Anatomy is a truly fascinating thing." She gave a wan smile and pulled back a little from Sherlock, determined to keep going with her story.

"Anyway, after my dad died, my mum went off the deep end. She started drinking, left our church and began making excuses to not see me. When I would be home on holidays from university, she was distant. I think my presence was a reminder of what she had lost. I just couldn't get through to her, so eventually I gave up. When I moved into this flat, I wrote to her and gave her my address and my phone number. To this day, she has not contacted me. I guess I could have called her, but I wanted the decision to reconnect to be hers."

The hurt in the abandoned daughter's voice was very evident. Her eyes remained dry though. This was a hurt with which she had long ago come to terms.

"You have no other family then?" pressed the sleuth gently.

"Not a one. Neither of my parents had siblings. Dad's parents died before I was born and mum's when I was a teenager. It's one of the reasons Mary and I bonded. She had no family either, so we could relate to one another. I think she asked me to be a godmother to Rosamund because she knew I was lonely. Well, aside from doing it to bring you and me closer. I also happen to love kids." Molly smiled then. This was the perfect segue into another topic that needed to be discussed.

"Sherlock, how do you feel about having children of your own? If you haven't really thought about it yet, that's fine. I just want you to know that if you do, I'm ready to be a mother. I can't think of anything more wonderful than one day bearing your child...or children."

The detective looked deeply into her eyes and said, "As a matter of fact, I have thought about it. I'm not a young man anymore; I'm forty years old. You heard my own mother saying she wants grandchildren. I do want to have a child with you, preferably more than one. Once we are married, I see no reason to wait before we try for a baby of our own, if that is what you want."

Molly felt a deep contentment spread through her at these words. "Try for a baby," he had said. She forced the mental image of it from her mind. She was not going down that path. The road to temptation was very wide, indeed! Why did he have to look at her in that intense manner? She needed to regain control of the situation and change the subject.

"So, on a lighter note, Kaitlyn agreed to be my maid of honour. My friend Kayla- you don't know her, she's a friend from church- I asked to be a bridesmaid, and she also said yes. Will you ask your brother to be an usher?"

"Either him or Greg Lestrade."

"It should be Mycroft," stated Molly firmly. "He might act as if you are a pain in the you-know-what, but I know that deep down he loves you. He wouldn't keep such close tabs on you otherwise."
"I suppose you're right. Maybe he'll say no though?" he suggested hopefully.

Molly rolled her eyes. "Of course he won't. One more thing too, I booked the church and reception hall today. There is something though you may not be too happy about."

"What is it?" prompted Sherlock.

"Well, my pastor likes to conduct a pre-marital counselling session with couples before he marries them," she explained nervously. "We need to set up an appointment for it pretty soon."

"I hope he isn't going to try and get me to come to church every week. I am a man of science, you know. I believe in what I can see."

"Oh, Sherlock. Being a scientist doesn't preclude you from being a believer in God. In fact, in my opinion, science supports, rather than refutes the existence of God."

"Really? Why do you say that?"

"Just look at nature. It's perfectly balanced. We need oxygen to live, while plants produce it and need the carbon dioxide we expel for growth. The earth is so perfectly aligned to sustain life. The human body is so incredibly complex; it would be the epitome of arrogance to think it all happened by chance. Dmitri Mendelev, who first created the periodic table, was a scientist, and a believer himself." The passion in Molly's voice was very moving.

"I can see this means a lot to you, and I promise you I will definitely give it some thought. Recent events have shown me I am not infallible. A week ago I didn't believe in love, didn't believe I was capable of the emotion. Thanks to my sister, I know I was wrong to think that. If I could be wrong about something as universal as love, I have to entertain the possibility that I could be wrong about other things as well."

Molly was amazed to hear those words coming out of the detective's mouth. He really had changed immensely from the arrogant man she had met years earlier- a man who spoke offensive things without thinking, a man who rarely showed vulnerability.

"I love you, Sherlock Holmes. Thank you."

She leaned over and kissed his cheek.

"For what?" questioned the man. He looked somewhat confused.

"For being willing to grow beyond what you thought you knew, for loving me, for becoming the man I've always known you could be."

Sherlock shifted slightly in his seat so he was facing his lady love. "I should be the one thanking you. Your love makes me WANT to be worthy of it." Tenderly, he kissed her.

It was some time later when Sherlock said, "By the way, keep Tuesday free for me. I have something special planned for us."

"A special day, huh? That sounds intriguing. I guess I can clear my calendar," teased Molly. I'm glad to hear it. For now though, I guess I should be heading home," he said with some reluctance.

"Please stay," she begged. "I don't have to be at work until eleven tomorrow. We can do some more planning in the morning."

"Very well, we can share a taxi in the morning. I have an appointment with Inspector Lestrade at
the same time."
"Does Greg have a case for you?"
"Possibly. I'll know more tomorrow."
Molly yawned. "Well, I'm going to get ready for bed."
"Did you want your bedroom back?"
"You can use it again, but this time I'll grab some clothes for tomorrow first. I wouldn't want to tempt you again in the morning," laughed Molly. She disappeared into the bathroom.

After kissing her fiancé goodnight, Molly retired to the small bedroom, leaving Sherlock to get himself ready for bed as well.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you found my explanation about Molly’s father’s death interesting and believable. Did you enjoy Molly’s explanation about science supporting the existence of God?

By the way, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes was not an atheist; therefore I have no compunction in having my Sherlock change his pre-conceived notions about the existence of God.

Originally I had Molly say Einstein was a believer, but a reader pointed out he believed in a pantheistic god, so I changed it to Mendeleev.
Sherlock couldn't sleep. He glanced at the digital display on the nightstand next to the bed. 1.47 AM. He had been tossing and turning for two hours, his mind filled with memories of last night's conversation with Molly. All that talking about death, about God, about children- it gave him much food for thought.

Slipping out of bed, he quietly left the bedroom and went to the kitchenette to make a cup of tea. He idly tapped his fingers on the counter as he waited for the kettle to boil. Then the sleuth noticed Molly's phone there, plugged into a charger. She must have forgotten to take it into her room when she went to bed.

An idea formed in his head. It could be brilliant, or it could be a total disaster. Picking up the phone and removing it from the charger, he was surprised to see an image of himself on the display screen. It was a picture from John's wedding that she must have taken at some point during his best man speech. “I'll bet the ex-fiancé would not have liked seeing her taking a photo of another man for no apparent reason,” he thought, smiling a little.

A press of the button revealed the lock screen and notification to enter the passcode as the touch ID did not recognize his fingerprint. He tapped the keys for Molly's birthdate. The 'try again' message came up. Thinking for a moment, he wondered if it could really be so simple? She had used a picture of him on her screen after all. Slowly he entered the digits of his own birthdate. The phone immediately came to life in his hand, revealing a screen of icons.

By the time he had done this, the kettle had boiled, so Sherlock made his tea and sat at the table to sip it, while he entered the numbers to once again unlock Molly's phone. Feeling a little guilty at having access to her personal data, the detective deliberately avoided looking too closely at any of the icons displayed.

Knowing exactly what to look for, he pressed the green icon with the phone symbol on it, followed by the contacts image at the bottom of the phone screen. He scrolled through Molly's contact list. There were surprisingly few contacts; Molly had obviously not been kidding when she said she didn't have a lot of friends.

Finding the "H" section, Sherlock saw only two names- Mycroft, with an eye roll emoji after it, and his own name, with a love heart after it. He wondered briefly if that heart had been a recent addition. Unfortunately the entry he was looking for was not there. No Hooper.

Pondering his next move, he then decided to check the "M" section. Kaitlyn Martin's name was there and below it there was one word- "Mum." Delighted at his success, Sherlock transferred the contact details from Molly's phone to his own.
After finishing his tea, Sherlock put Molly's phone back on the charger where he had found it. He had every intention of owning up to hacking his beloved's phone, but not until he had put his plan into action.

The detective returned to his- Molly's- bedroom and fell asleep, thinking of Molly and their future together.

Sherlock awoke to the touch of Molly's lips on his forehead. "It's nine o'clock, sleepyhead. I've made bacon and scrambled eggs if you want some breakfast." Sure enough, the delicious scent of cooked bacon wafted into the bedroom, making an interesting contrast to Molly's freshly showered scent. She smelled good enough to eat, too, he thought.

He sat up and pulled Molly down onto the bed so he could plant a firm, good morning kiss on her lips. "I look forward to when you can awaken me with a kiss every day," he murmured. "Do I need to choose between you and the bacon? If so, I choose you."

Molly laughed and said, "You are so ridiculous, Sherlock Holmes. Now come and eat before the food gets cold."

Obediently, the sleuth followed her from the bedroom and went to the table where two servings of bacon and scrambled eggs were waiting on flower-patterned china plates.

The couple ate together, occasionally glancing at each other and smiling. "Delicious," remarked Sherlock as he collected the plates and took them to the sink.

"Thanks," responded Molly. "I've had quite a few years of living alone to work on my culinary skills. Just wait until you try my homemade pasta sauce- it will blow your mind." She grinned. "Go take a shower, and I'll take care of these dishes."

"Yes, ma'am." The idea of domesticity and wedded bliss suddenly became even more real to Sherlock. It was a rather appealing prospect.

When he came out of the bathroom, it was to find that Molly was sitting at the little dining table, busily writing on her notepad.

The detective peered over her shoulder to see what she was writing. He saw she was making a to-do list of things for the wedding. There were check marks next to some of the words at the top like 'church', and 'reception'. Then there were a few more things listed, such as 'flowers', 'cake' and 'honeymoon.'

"You might want to add 'photographer' and 'videographer' to that list," suggested Sherlock. "I will take care of the honeymoon arrangements if you give me an idea of what you'd like to do for it."

"The only thing I don't want to do is a lot of travelling from place to place. I just want to be alone with you, somewhere quiet and romantic."

Sherlock was extraordinarily pleased with his fiancée's words. He too was looking forward to them being alone together with no other distractions.

Once Molly had added his suggestions to the list, the detective drew Molly to her feet and gave her a long, lingering kiss. He clasped her tightly to him, cherishing the feel of her soft body pressed against his.

When they left the flat together at half past ten and settled into the seat of the waiting taxi, Molly asked, "So, besides seeing Lestrade today, what else do you have planned?"
"Oh, I'll probably speak to Mycroft at some point and ask if he will be an usher then make some other wedding-related arrangements," he said vaguely. "I need to see whether this new case of Lestrade's is going to be time-consuming or not."

Upon arrival at St. Bart's hospital, Molly leaned over to give Sherlock a quick kiss goodbye and said, "Text me later, okay?"

Sherlock nodded and watched her walk into the hospital as the taxi pulled away from the kerb and went towards Scotland Yard.

As soon as Sherlock entered the New Scotland Yard police station, he was accosted by what's-his-name Anderson, the forensic scientist who had often annoyed him in the past when they were both working the same case. Of course, Anderson was doing his job, while the sleuth was acting in his capacity as unpaid consulting detective as a favour for Lestrade. The men weren't exactly friendly, but the relationship had definitely mellowed over the past several years.

Anderson clapped him on the back and said, "So you finally got a clue, eh? I told Lestrade years ago that you and Molly Hooper had a thing going. So have you been seeing her secretly all this time? Congratulations on your engagement, by the way- saw it on the telly last night."

"No," responded Sherlock shortly. "Molly and I were not a secret couple. She was even engaged to someone else for a while, but thank you anyway for your congratulations."

Nobody stopped the detective as he walked towards Greg Lestrade's office; he was a regular fixture at Scotland Yard. Tapping on the open door, he poked his head into the office.

"You have a case for me then?"

Greg Lestrade looked up from the paperwork on his desk. He shuffled through some of the papers and pulled out a case file, proffering it to the detective. "Here you go. I just can't figure out who did it."

Sherlock examined the case file and looked at the forensic analysis of items found at the crime scene in question. A few minutes later he stated confidently, "It was the pregnant girlfriend of course. Explaining his logic to Lestrade, the detective inspector was amazed as usual at how obvious the answer was once Sherlock explained it to him.

"Well that went a lot faster than I thought," he commented and placed a call to have the suspect in question arrested.

"You called me in for a case that wasn't even a three. Well, if that's all you have for me..." began Sherlock.

"Just a minute, before you go on with your day. I wanted to congratulate you and Molly. Do give her my best wishes. I did wonder if her relationship with that fellow who looked and dressed like you would last. I had my doubts, once you were back in her life. I always figured you were the one she really wanted- glad too that you finally woke up and smelled the coffee. She's a fine lady, and you're a hell of a lucky man."

"I know I am," agreed the sleuth. "Believe me, I'm not wasting any more time. I know Molly will be putting you on the guest list, so expect an invitation in the mail sometime in the next few weeks." He made a mental note to tell Molly to add 'invitations' and 'guest list' to her notepad with wedding preparations. "Well, I'm off. Let me know when you need me again, Greg."

Sherlock smiled in satisfaction as he left, glad that he had finally added the detective inspector's
name to his long-term memory.

Now THAT was progress.

Chapter End Notes

I just had to address Anderson’s “theory” of Sherlock surviving the fall from the roof. If he thought about Sherlock and Molly having that totally hot kiss, he had to think they belonged together LOL

Do you think he was the first Sherlolly shipper?
When Sherlock arrived home, he was ready for lunch. Disappointingly, there was nothing to eat in the fridge. Apparently it had not magically refilled itself during his absence. He really had to do some grocery shopping soon.

"Mrs. Hudson?" He called downstairs.

The landlady appeared at her door. "What is it, dear?"

"I don't suppose you could spare a couple of your delicious scones for me for lunch could you?" He was walking down the stairs as he spoke, putting on his most charming smile.

"Sherlock, you need to take better care of yourself. I certainly hope Molly is better at keeping house than you are. I suppose you stayed with her again last night?" She tried to look disapproving but failed miserably at it.

The detective knew his landlady liked Molly. The younger woman had always been kind, asking how her hip was feeling, and her health in general whenever they met.

"Well, you'll be glad to know she did make me a nice breakfast."

"I certainly am. I hope, once you are married, you will stop putting dismembered body parts in the fridge. It's just not sanitary." She shuddered.

"Im my defense, most of those body parts were provided courtesy of my dear fiancé." Mrs. Huddson just shook her head. Without another word, she set some scones and a dish of jam in front of Sherlock along with cream.

After lunch, the detective returned to his flat. He put in a call to Mycroft. As usual, the elder Holmes brother asked for a face-to-face meeting after his work day was ended.

Mycroft avoided texting and phone conversations as much as possible. This was probably due to his paranoia that somebody might always be listening, or his phone could get into the wrong hands. The brothers set up a seven o'clock meeting for that evening.

That being done, Sherlock decided it was time to make the other phone call. He was nervous, not knowing at all what to expect. He didn't like the feeling.

With a slightly unsteady hand, Sherlock pressed the numbers for Molly's mum, half-hoping there would be no answer or that the phone had been disconnected.
However, on the third ring the voice of a woman came on the line.

"Hello?"

"Hello, is this Mrs. Hooper?" inquired Sherlock politely.

"Yes, it is. Who is calling?"

"Mrs. Hooper, my name is Sherlock Holmes and..." he broke off at the unmistakeable sound of sobbing on the other end of the line. "I'm sorry, is this a bad time for me to be calling?" He waited for the woman to regain control of her emotions.

After a minute or so, the woman's voice came back on the line. "Forgive me, Mr. Holmes. You are an answer to my prayer, and I have been praying for so long about my daughter. You are the famous detective who is going to marry my Molly," she stated with conviction.

Sherlock was nonplussed. Him? An answer to a prayer? He had never, as far as he knew, ever been referred to as an answer to a prayer.

Not waiting for a response, the older woman continued. "I've been trying to find a way to reconnect with my daughter for quite some time. I don't know if she told you the story, but we have not spoken in about fifteen years, and it is entirely my fault."

"Molly did tell me a little about the situation. She mentioned you had a very difficult time after your husband's passing. She also told me she hadn't heard from you since she moved into her flat a few years ago. I was hoping we could find a way to reconcile your differences."

"Oh, Mr. Holmes, I do want to be a part of Molly's life again. I have wanted it for years. I got into some trouble, you see. Shortly after Molly wrote to me with her new address and phone number I had a car accident. It was my fault. I had been drinking, and I foolishly went out to buy some more alcohol. It was night, and I hit a pedestrian," she explained.

"He survived with fairly minor injuries, thank God, but I was arrested at the scene of the accident after the police discovered I was inebriated. I ended up spending some time in jail. It was a real wake up call for me. I got help and got sober. But I was too ashamed to tell Molly what had happened. I couldn't let my daughter see how far I had fallen, and I felt she would be better off without me."

She paused to take a breath.

"Mrs. Hooper, I don't believe Molly would have turned away from you. It is not in her nature to hold a grudge. She has forgiven me many times for making thoughtless comments in the past. Oh, and please call me Sherlock. I am going to be your son-in-law, after all."

"Thank you Mr. Hol...I mean Sherlock. Anyway, since I've turned my life around and started going to church again, I have been desperately wanting to contact my daughter. Unfortunately, I lost the letter which she had sent me with her address and phone number. For months now I have been praying about my darling daughter and for a way to be able to find her. Two nights ago I was watching the news, and I saw her coming out of St. Bartholomew's hospital with you. Now here you are, calling me…it is truly a miracle. Did Molly ask you to call me?" There was a hopeful note in her voice.

Sherlock hated to burst the woman's bubble, but he had to be truthful. "Actually, she has no idea I am calling you. I, uh, acquired your phone number from her contact list. I have an idea, if you are willing to be a part of it. Perhaps this may be the opportunity for reconciliation you are looking
With this, Sherlock outlined his plan to Molly's mother.

Just before the conversation ended, Mrs. Hooper said, "Thank you Sherlock for answering my prayers. You are a true God-send to my daughter. What a thoughtful young man you are, to be willing to go to such lengths to make my daughter happy. I am very much looking forward to meeting you."

After Sherlock pressed the button to end his phone call, he sat back in his chair and closed his eyes. All that talk about him being an answer to prayer. It was most unsettling.

He felt even more so, when he heard Molly's text tone come in. She had booked a meeting with Pastor Briggs for the following Thursday, at seven o'clock. Apparently they also had to decide on the service format too, Bible verses, hymns and the like. There were also different options for the vows to be determined.

This was really happening. He was getting married and in the sanctity of a church, too. He put his head in his hands. For the first time in his life, Sherlock found himself talking to the God who was or wasn't there. 'If you are real, and not a ludicrous fantasy, I'm gonna need a pretty big sign.'

Opening his eyes, he stood up and paced the litter-strewn sitting room. Suddenly his eyes alighted on his precious Stradivarius violin, a long-ago gift from his parents. The violin had been well within the blast radius from the explosion a week before. In fact, everything around it was completely destroyed. Yet the violin itself, however, was curiously unmarked. Yes, there was some dirt and powdery ash dusting the outside of the instrument, but nothing had damaged it.

Sherlock picked up his beloved instrument and blew off the powder on its surface. He retrieved the bow from the floor. It too had survived the explosion without any damage to the delicate horse hair. He gently drew the bow across the strings. The Stradivarius sounded as hauntingly beautiful as ever.

How on earth had the violin been left undamaged when so much destruction was all around?

He searched his mind palace for a logical explanation but found none. He just had to accept that it was so, even though he could not explain the reason for this miracle. Then, a thought popped into the detectives head. "Sometimes you have to accept the unexplainable because you see the evidence with your own eyes."

Maybe it was the same with a belief in God? It was an acceptance of something that could not be explained away?

His mind palace recalled reading a sign in front of a church years ago. He had dismissed it without really thinking about it. The sign read "Faith is believing in what you can't see because of what you CAN see." How ironic. He had asked for a sign, been given one, then recalled seeing a physical sign as well.

Sherlock desperately wished Molly wasn't at work so he could ask for her opinion on this "God" stuff. Well, perhaps her pastor could help him make sense of it all.

Sherlock remained agitated until he forced himself to relax and play his violin. The violin was like a panacea to his soul, and as he lost himself to its beauty, the music calmed him.

The doorbell rang at precisely seven o’clock. Sherlock had forgotten to eat and had forgotten also that Mycroft was coming to see him. He paused in his playing just long enough to determine that...
Mrs. Hudson was letting him in.

Upon reaching the top of the stairs without a greeting, the older Holmes brother inquired, entering through the landing door, “When did you buy another violin?”

Raising an eyebrow as he stopped playing, Sherlock responded, "I didn't. This is my Stradivarius."

Mycroft stared at him in astonishment. "You mean to say it survived the blast? How is that possible?"

Sherlock shrugged. "Divine intervention, I guess."

"Well, I never thought I'd live to see the day where you would give credit to a higher power."

"Recent events have forced me to reconsider some previously, at least to me, incontrovertible truths. In any case, that is not why I wanted to speak with you." The younger Holmes paused, considering how to say his next words. "I wanted to ask if, well, if you would take part in my wedding as an usher."

Mycroft looked slightly taken aback. "You want me? In your wedding party?"

"Well, you are my brother after all. John will be my best man of course, so you don't really need to do too much. Although, if you prefer not to, I understand."

Somewhat to Sherlock's surprise, his brother simply said, "I would be honoured, brother mine."

Soon afterwards, Mycroft took his leave, and Sherlock checked his watch. Molly would be finishing work soon, so he decided to send her a text.

SH: How has your day been?
MH: Rough, had to do a post-mortem on a thirteen year old boy. Brain aneurism.
SH: I have a pair of willing arms if you need them.
MH: Yes, please. I'll be there in about an hour.

He was looking forward to it.

Chapter End Notes

Author’s note: I decided to use the “survival” of Sherlock’s violin as a miraculous sign, primarily as the final episode shows him going to Sherrinford with his violin to play for Eurus.

I also used a legitimate church sign reference. Personally, I think it’s a beautiful way to describe faith.

I would appreciate it if you take the time to comment. Getting feedback on my labour of love is an encouragement.
Chapter Summary

Sherlock invites Molly to stay the night, platonically of course!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It had indeed been a rough day for Molly- at least the latter part of it.

Things had been quiet at first, and she had managed to put in a call to her church and make the pre-marital counselling appointment. Pastor Briggs had been there this time and had told her he had a booklet to give her and Sherlock.

Apparently, the booklet contained the standard service order and options for how they said their vows as well as suggestions for Bible verses they could choose from. The Pastor also reminded her that two hymns were generally sung, so she should think about which ones should be put in the marriage service programme. The church secretary would be in charge of getting the programmes printed, once everything for the service was decided.

Molly had brought her to-do list with her to work, so she could add items to it if she thought of them. Kaitlyn was assisting her in the lab that day and asked if Molly had a colour in mind for the bridesmaid dresses. The pathologist added 'bridesmaid dresses/colour scheme' to the list.

At around five o’clock, Mike Stamford called Molly to his office. He let her know she would be doing a post-mortem on a young teenage boy, and he wanted her to be prepared. Mike was very good at preparing her in advance for these rare instances.

It took a lot of mental fortitude to do an autopsy on a young person, and it was very draining on Molly. Anyone would be affected by the death of a young person, especially if they then had to be the one to determine a cause of death.

When Sherlock's text came through at the end of her work day, Molly was relieved. They hadn't discussed any plans for this evening, and she had figured she wouldn't be seeing him.

When she arrived at 221B Baker street approximately an hour later, Sherlock was at the door, waiting for her. He looked very dashing as usual in his Belstaff and scarf. Instead of ushering Molly into the building, he came outside, put his arm around her and started walking along the street.

"Where are we going?" asked Molly.

"We are going to get some dinner. I hope you like Chinese. There's a restaurant around the corner that stays open until 2 AM."

"How do you know I didn't already eat?"

"After the day you had, I figured you would not have had much of an appetite," replied the detective confidently.
"Good deduction, Sherlock." Molly was enjoying the feel of his arm slung around her shoulders. "Are we eating there or ordering take-away?"

"We had better eat at the restaurant. My flat is not yet in a completely livable state."

"My goodness, are you still cleaning it then?"

Sherlock smiled guiltily. "I've been a bit, uh, distracted lately. Anyway, I hired some people to come in tomorrow and get rid of all the rubbish."

Molly shook her head in mock consternation. "Sounds like you need a live-in housekeeper."

The sleuth grinned salaciously. "Are you applying for the job?"

"Oh, I might be, in about ten weeks," shot back Molly, winking broadly.

The couple's banter continued throughout their meal and the walk back to Baker Street.

Once the door was safely closed behind them Sherlock whispered, "I've been waiting for this all day." He pulled Molly into her arms and kissed her thoroughly. His lips moved along her cheek, towards her ear, tickling and delighting her at the same time.

Molly's heart pounded and she reached her hand up to Sherlock's neck. He was obviously as affected by their kiss as she was because she could feel the rapid pulse at his throat. Finally they drew apart, breathing heavily.

"You've bewitched me, Molly Hooper," said Sherlock huskily.

Molly quivered at the raw passion in his tone. Her legs felt like they would not support her, and she leaned back against the door for support. What was it about this man that made her respond so wholeheartedly to him?

Of course he was gorgeous with those locks of curly dark hair across his forehead, those mesmerizing blue-green eyes and the high, aristocratic cheekbones, but this connection was so much more than merely a physical one. What she had felt for her former fiancé Tom did not even come close to this overwhelming desire to be with Sherlock, to belong to him with every part of herself.

"I should probably be getting home now," the pathologist murmured.

"Don't go, please Molly. I promise I'll keep myself under better control if you stay." His eyes pleaded with hers, and she was unable to refuse him.

"I'll stay, but I need to go home in the morning so I can shower and change before work. Luckily I'm on the eleven to eight shift again, so there should be plenty of time."

Sherlock nodded. "I'll come with you too. I want to find those hidden cameras in your flat and remove them. I intended to search for them this morning, but your breakfast distracted me. I wonder how those cameras even made their way into your flat. Have you had a stranger in there lately - perhaps some sort of maintenance man? That would be my educated guess."

Molly thought for a moment. Then she said slowly, "Well now, come to think of it, there was a man who came to the door last week from the electric company. He did show a badge though - said they were checking wires in the flats due to some unexpected power surges. It was almost time for me to leave for work, so I let him in to do his business while I finished getting ready."
"That would have been it then. He obviously planted those cameras when you weren't looking. Thank God he wasn't there to hurt you. It does make me think it would be better if you moved to Baker Street sooner rather than later. That way I can protect you."

"You're thanking God now?" asked Molly. "Does that mean you are willing to at least consider the possibility that He exists?"

"Well, I did want to show you something that is making me consider it." replied Sherlock. He fetched his precious violin. "Look at this. There's not a scratch on it. I cannot logically conceive an explanation for it. I was sure it would have been destroyed in the explosion."

Molly put a hand on his arm. "Sometimes you have to be willing to accept the unexplainable because it flies in the face of logic. I know you are highly intelligent, much more so than most people, but not all things are meant to be explained. If we could explain everything away, wouldn't that make us gods in our own right? I know you, Sherlock. I can see past that exterior of cool logic and calm reason. I've watched you struggle with the idea of being human like everyone else, and I've seen you come to terms with the notion that you have emotions- strong ones."

"You've tried to hide it, but I've always known your heart was in there somewhere. My dearest love, you have called yourself a high-functioning sociopath, but that's simply not true - not anymore," she continued.

There was a shimmer of tears in the detective's eyes as he said in a deep voice full of emotion, "I don't know what I did right to deserve you, but I am truly grateful. Don't ever give up on me. I'm sure there will be times when I regress, but I promise you one thing: I will do my utmost to live up to your expectations of the man you deserve to be with."

Molly felt like he was making a solemn vow to her and responded in kind, "And I promise to stand by you, no matter what - oh, I feel like I should be telling you this on our wedding day. In fact, there is an option for people to say their own vows after the official ones are given. If you are open to doing that, I think I'd like to express myself to you in front of my church family and friends."

"I'm not sure you want me to do that. I didn't do the greatest best man speech at John's wedding."

"Well, you might have gotten off to a rocky start," conceded the pathologist, "But by the end of it you had the whole room in tears with your moving words about how John was your best friend."

"In that case, I will try not to embarrass you or myself. I had better start working on it now," Sherlock said, only half-jokingly.

Molly reached up on tiptoes to kiss his cheek. "You'll do fine. Now I think we should be getting ready for bed. I suppose the bedroom upstairs is ready for guests?"

Sherlock gave a start. "As a matter if fact, I have no idea. I never go up there. Mrs. Hudson has always taken it upon herself to do the cleaning. She seems to think I'm not very good at keeping the place clean."

Molly laughed at his statement. Mrs. Hudson was undoubtedly correct.

The couple proceeded upstairs to the spare bedroom. To Molly's dismay there was a duvet on the bed, but not sheets. She knew some people slept with a single sheet over the mattress and just the duvet to cover them, but she preferred the extra warmth, albeit limited, that a sheet provided. A search of the wardrobe revealed nothing but empty clothes hangers.

"Do you think Mrs. Hudson might have taken the sheets to wash them?" asked Molly.
"It's possible. She does tend to take large items to the launderette on Fridays. It's too late to ask her about it tonight, though."

"I could sleep on the sofa? " suggested Molly. Then she remembered the carnage in the sitting room. "Oh, your sofa was destroyed."

"Well, I do have a queen sized bed, if you want to share," offered the sleuth.

Molly hesitated. "I'm not sure that would be a good idea Sherlock. I wouldn't want us to get, um, carried away if we are too close to one another."

"Hey, are you saying I wouldn't be able to keep myself under control?" protested the handsome detective.

"I'm more worried about myself than you." laughed Molly. "I could so easily lose myself in you. When you look at me like that way..." she trailed off.

"What way?" asked Sherlock in feigned innocence. At Molly's look of exasperation, he backed down. "If I promise to face away from you in the bed, will you share it with me?"

"I guess that could work," said Molly slowly.

"It's settled then, you are staying with me."

True to his word, after getting ready for bed, Sherlock gave Molly a chaste kiss goodnight and slipped under the sheets, facing the edge.

Molly got into the other side the bed, keeping close to her side.

"Goodnight, my Molly," whispered Sherlock's voice in the darkness.

"Goodnight, my Sherlock," his fiancée whispered back. Molly lay in the big bed, trying not to move an inch, very aware of the man only two feet or so away from her. After awhile, she heard the rhythmic sound of his breathing and knew he was asleep. Only then did she allow herself to fall into her own slumber.

Chapter End Notes

So Sherlock is starting to re-evaluate things.

I hope you are as excited to find out what happens next as I am to reveal it.

Once again, I appreciate any and all feedback.

Thanks for reading!
Chapter Summary

John comes for a visit. Sherlock and Molly struggle to deal with their strong emotions and desires for one another.

Chapter Notes

This chapter really kicks off the “dealing with human desires and emotions” portion of my story. I recommend you gloss over the rather elevated passion scene if you are a younger teen. Well, to me it’s an elevated passion scene, others might not think so. It still fits the T rating I think. I really want to keep this T, because teens are struggling with strong feelings and emotions from quite an early age. If anyone disagrees with the T rating, please comment. Actually, comment anyway with your opinion on this chapter :)

Pale sunlight was filtering through the curtains when Sherlock opened his eyes in the morning. Judging from the angle of the light, he deduced it to be somewhere around seven-thirty. During the night his body had reoriented itself so that he was now facing the centre of the bed. Molly too must have moved in her sleep because her body was also angled inwards. It was an odd sensation, seeing a woman in the bed next to him, yet in some way, it also felt completely natural that she should be there so close to him. Molly’s mouth was slightly parted as she slept, and Sherlock could not control his impulse to lean forward a few inches and brush his lips against hers.

Molly's eyes fluttered open, and she smiled. "Now that is definitely something I could get used to, being awoken every morning by your kiss."

Sherlock looked deeply into her brown eyes. "I would not be opposed to altering our current living arrangements a little earlier than we planned."

Before Molly could respond, he placed a finger against her lips. "There are some practical reasons to start the process of moving you in with me earlier rather than later. As you have no doubt seen, I am currently somewhat lacking when it comes to furniture, thanks to a nasty little bomb that obliterated the bulk of my kitchen and sitting room furniture. If your furniture was here, we would save the cost of purchasing replacement furniture. At the same time, wouldn't you feel more at home with some of your own things around you?"

"Well, maybe. It would have to wait until your place was in a slightly more, um, livable state."

"The cleaners are coming this afternoon," Sherlock reminded her.

Molly sighed. "I'd be happy to discuss this further, but I really need to be getting home so I can get ready for work."
"I'd offer you breakfast, but Mrs. Hudson didn't go shopping for me. I suppose I'll have to go out and do some myself this afternoon." He gave a mock frown. "Landladies. What use are they if they can't go out and buy some food for their tenants?"

Molly laughed at him. "You are so silly. I can see I will have my work cut out for me, training you to be a model husband."

A short time later, the pair was on their way to Molly's flat. As soon as they entered, Molly immediately went to get her clothes and take a shower. She called over her shoulder, "Feel free to fix yourself some breakfast. There's cereal in the cupboard, eggs in the fridge, and bread if you prefer toast. I'd love a cup of tea, too, if you wouldn't mind putting on the kettle."

While Molly showered, Sherlock busied himself making tea for the two of them. He popped some bread in the toaster and found some butter in the fridge as well as a jar of strawberry jam. After putting the butter and jam on the table and getting out plates and knives, Sherlock waited until he heard the water shut off in the shower.

He then pressed down the side of the toaster, wanting to make sure the toast was still hot when Molly came out of the bathroom. He was just putting the toast on their plates when she came into the room.

Sherlock bowed and pulled out a chair for his fiancée. "Your breakfast awaits, my lady," he said grandly.

As they ate and sipped their tea, Sherlock reflected that he would enjoy having breakfast with Molly each day while gazing into her soft brown eyes. He knew he was falling more in love with her each day that passed, and this was just the beginning of their lifetime together.

After eating, Molly gathered up the dirty dishes and put them in the sink before walking over to where Sherlock was standing. "Thank you for the lovely breakfast," she smiled up at him, kissing his cheek.

"Oh, I think we can do better than that," he responded as he swept her into his arms for a kiss that was full of the promise of things to come. He forced himself to release her after a minute or two, realizing with regret that she needed to leave for work.

"Molly, I will take care of doing those dishes. I still need to find those cameras too, so I can dispose of them. You can leave, and I'll lock up when I've done that."

Molly agreed and was soon gone, leaving a hint of delicious jasmine vanilla lingering in the air after her departure.

After Sherlock had cleared away the breakfast things, he closed his eyes and withdrew to his mind palace. He thought back to the night of the infamous phone call and viewed her from the perspective of those three cameras.

Bearing their orientation in mind, Sherlock had no trouble finding the three tiny cameras. Funny how something so tiny could contribute to so much havoc.

He couldn't be upset, though. He knew that he wouldn't be planning a future with Molly if he hadn't been confronted with the truth of his feelings for her via Eurus's emotional context test.

Slipping the now deactivated cameras into the pocket of his coat, Sherlock went into Molly's bedroom. He selected some of her clothes to take back to Baker Street. That way he might be able to persuade her to remain with him again tonight and leave for work from his place in the morning.
It would save a taxi fare, he reasoned with himself.

Finally, he gathered his own discarded clothes from the two nights he had spent at Molly's. He supposed he would have to ask Mrs. Hudson nicely to do some washing for him.

Shortly thereafter, bags of clothing in hand, Sherlock made his way back to 221B Baker Street. As he entered the building, he knocked on the door of Mrs. Hudson’s flat and asked hopefully, when she had opened it, "Ah, Mrs. Hudson, I don't suppose you could pop these clothes into your washing machine for me, could you?" He gave her his most charming, boyish smile.

Mrs. Hudson obligingly took the bag of clothes. Peering into it, she gave Sherlock a questioning look. "Why are you handing me a bag with women's clothes?"

"Oops, wrong bag," said Sherlock with a sheepish smile. He quickly retrieved the bag and offered the other. As the elderly woman refused to move out of his way without some sort of explanation, Sherlock felt he needed to give it to her.

"I brought some clothes over for Molly. She is working this weekend, and I didn't want her to have to travel back and forth from here to her flat. By the way, did you happen to have the sheets from the spare bedroom washed?"

"As a matter of fact, I did. I can bring them upstairs for you later. I don't suppose you are in urgent need of them though." She gave him a conspiratorial wink.

"Mrs. Hudson, Molly and I are not sleeping together!" said Sherlock in exasperation.

Unfazed, the elderly lady just sniffed and said archly, "Well now, that's none of my business, is it?" Then she turned away and left Sherlock staring after her.

As Sherlock walked upstairs, he thought about what he needed to get done that day. The removal men were coming at around two o’clock. He would have time to go and do some shopping first.

He planned also to pick up various toiletries for Molly's use. He'd taken a peek at the body wash Molly used, that delicious-smelling jasmine vanilla scent. The brand was unfamiliar to him.

It came from Bath and Body Works, an American company. How on earth had she acquired something from America? To his knowledge she had never been out of the country, at least not since he'd known her.

Placing the bag of Molly's clothes in the spare bedroom, Sherlock sat on the bed. Closing his eyes, Sherlock made a mental image in his mind of Molly's bathroom. He recalled the Pantene shampoo and conditioner, the body sponge, then the mint toothpaste which, coincidentally, was his own toothpaste of choice. He would need to buy a toothbrush, of course. Oh yes, she used roll-on deodorant, too. He made a mental checklist of what he needed to purchase.

A short time later, Sherlock headed out to the local supermarket. He picked up the toiletries for Molly, except for the American body wash. Disappointingly, a quick search in the health and beauty aisle yielded no results for a similar item. He'd have to find a way to obtain it.

Next, he bought some food basics - milk, eggs, bread, bacon and other food staples. His cupboards at home were woefully bare. Usually this didn't bother him, he often forgot to eat anyway, especially when he was on a case.

When he did eat, more times than not, it was take-away from a fish and chip shop. Often, it was Mrs. Hudson who brought up food for him. He suspected she often cooked extra servings.
especially for him. Now, though, he felt a need to stock his cupboards. He didn't want Molly to think he couldn't take care of himself, even if that was not far from the truth.

Back at home, Sherlock unpacked the groceries and consulted his watch. He saw it was almost time for the cleaning men to arrive. Mrs. Hudson had left him some biscuits while he was gone. He wondered if it was a peace offering for her earlier nosiness. He deduced she had been there to bring the sheets.

When he headed upstairs to the spare bedroom, he discovered that his deduction, as usual, had been correct. The bed was now neatly made and Molly's clothes were folded at the foot of the bed. Sherlock deposited the toiletries next to the clothes on the bed and smiled in satisfaction. Now Molly had no reason to return to her flat tonight.

The doorbell rang. As was her custom, Mrs. Hudson was quick to open the door and let the workmen in. They wasted no time in getting to work, sweeping debris and depositing rubbish into big garbage bags.

John popped around unexpectedly with little Rosie in tow. Sherlock had not seen John since he and Molly had gone to his friend's place to formally announce their engagement. Sherlock looked at his little goddaughter through different eyes than he had done before.

Now that he had embraced the idea of being a husband and hopefully one day, a father, he was anxious to observe in greater detail the bond between John and his little daughter. Presently, John took Rosie downstairs for a visit with Mrs. Hudson so that he and Sherlock could talk without distraction about potential cases. There were a few promising ones on the horizon.

As Sherlock and John discussed these, a text alert came in from Molly.

"Better day today, thank goodness. Could always use another dose of comforting arms, though. Should be done on time at eight -MH"

Sherlock texted her back quickly. "You know where to find me -SH"

"So how are things going with Molly then?" asked John.

"We set a date for the wedding," Sherlock said, reflecting guiltily that he should have spoken about this earlier with his friend. "Ten weeks from today."

John nodded. "A summer wedding will be nice. Let's hope yours is a little less, um, eventful than mine. I hope you have no new enemies. Thank God Moriarty is dead, or he'd make trouble for sure."

Sherlock had a horrifying mental image of Moriarty crashing the wedding and blowing up the church with everyone in it. "The world is a much better place without him in it. Speaking of Moriarty though..."

Sherlock retrieved the three tiny cameras from his coat pocket. "These were in Molly's apartment. Eurus obviously had access to some of his network. I may have dismantled the international part of it, but it appears there are still some local affiliations active. Eurus couldn't have pulled off all of those things without help."

John groaned. "We will never be able to get out from under the shadow of that psychopath."

"I fear you are right, John," agreed Sherlock solemnly. He and John talked awhile longer, making plans to do some case work on the following Wednesday. Then, the pair walked companionably
downstairs so John could pick up Rosie.

"Bye bye, Rosie," said Sherlock, kissing his little goddaughter's sweet baby cheek. He smiled delightedly when she dimpled up at him and waved her chubby little arm.

"See you on Wednesday," said John, taking his leave.

Back in his flat, Sherlock observed that it looked decidedly better than earlier. In fact, the workers were just finishing up. The room definitely looked bare now that the destroyed furniture had been removed. Hopefully Molly would agree that it made sense for her to move in soon and bring her furniture with her.

It really was a practical solution, although, if he was honest with himself, he would really like to have her with him already. She would also be safer with him. These next ten weeks were going to be the longest of his life.

After heating up a can of soup for his dinner, Sherlock opened up his laptop and started browsing the internet, while he waited for Molly to arrive. He bookmarked some potential honeymoon destinations. These were almost all little bed and breakfast inns some distance from London in more secluded country areas.

Time seemed to be passing too slowly.

After what seemed like days of waiting, he heard the doorbell ring and flew down the stairs to let Molly in before Mrs. Hudson could get to the door first. Greeting Molly with a tender kiss, Sherlock ushered her upstairs.

"I suppose you ate dinner at work this evening?" he inquired. At Molly's nod, he asked, "Tea or coffee, then?"

"Coffee would be great," said Molly, yawning. "If I don't have some caffeine, I'll fall asleep on you, and I won't be able to drag myself home later."

"Well, I have a nice surprise for you, then," said Sherlock, as he gave her the hot beverage. "You can use my chair," he offered generously, as it was the only chair that was left in the sitting room now that the room had been cleared of its mess.

Once Molly had finished her coffee, Sherlock took her empty cup to the kitchen, then took her hand and led her upstairs to the small bedroom. He gestured at the bed.

"You can stay here tonight. The bed is made, and I brought you a change of clothes and everything else you need so you can just leave for work from here tomorrow."

He was feeling very pleased with himself until Molly remarked, "I guess you are providing me with something to sleep in?"

Sherlock groaned. So much for being clever. Thinking fast he said, "Wait here," then went downstairs to his own bedroom.

Pulling a long white shirt out of the wardrobe, he then hurried back upstairs and offered it to Molly. "Problem solved." He was relieved when she took it from him and laid it on the bed in quiet acquiescence of the overnight invitation.

Heading back downstairs to the sitting room, Molly asked, "Do you want to do some more work on our wedding to-do list?"
Sherlock answered her question with a question of his own. "When do you start work tomorrow?"

"Early. At seven," was the response.

"In that case, I'd rather spend our limited time tonight in non-verbal communication."

Seating himself in the lone chair, he proceeded to pull Molly onto his lap. "I missed you today," he whispered as he drew her head down to his in order to kiss her with all the passion he felt for her, all the longing he had been feeling at her absence throughout the day.

As Molly's arms wrapped around him and her fingers tangled in his curly hair, he held her tighter still, kissing her possessively and murmuring "Molly, my Molly." She evoked feelings within him that he had never dreamed possible - this girl, no, this woman who had always been there for him, ready to help him, even when he had been less than kind towards her.

He didn't deserve her, but she was his anyway.

It was several long minutes before Sherlock could force himself back into some semblance of control. He longed to lift his woman up into his arms and carry her to his bed...but he would not, could not do that to her. He had promised her that he would wait until their wedding night. He knew it meant a lot to her, even if it was the hardest promise to keep that he could possibly have made. Putting a lid on roiling emotions, he stood up, lifting Molly with him.

"You had better go upstairs now before I do something I, well, you will regret," he said, his voice deep with passion.

"You're right," agreed Molly. Her voice held the same note of passion as his. "I love you so much, Sherlock, and I'm quite looking forward to our wedding night as well."

"I don't suppose we could just elope now to Gretna Green?" asked Sherlock, only half in jest. Did people even still do that these days? He honestly didn’t know.

"Tempting as that sounds, I don't think your parents would be happy to miss the opportunity to see one of their sons get married. Besides, this is a good distraction for John. He needs it after losing Mary so unexpectedly."

Sherlock knew she was right, although knowing it didn't make it any easier. Keeping a tight rein on his emotions, he kissed Molly on the cheek.

"Do you need me to wake you in the morning?"

"It's okay," she replied. "I'll set my phone alarm. Send me a text later when you are up so we can decide what we're doing tomorrow. Goodnight, my love."

With that, Molly made her way upstairs as Sherlock went to his own room. Having shared the bed the previous night, it felt big and empty without her presence. He lay there, thinking of how lucky he was, until sleep finally claimed him.

Chapter End Notes

This is a longer chapter. There are many longer ones like this to come, so I’m giving you a heads-up.
I am ramping up the passion factor, as Sherlock and Molly explore their feelings, and deal with the realities of balancing strong desires with a commitment to wait for marriage before consummating their union. It will not be an easy path. A note to my readers, being a Christian does not mean abstinence is any easier, and through my research on the subject I have discovered the majority of professing Christians give in to their desires before the wedding night. So yes, it’s going to be a (hopefully) realistic struggle for this pair.

I have always perceived Mrs. Hudson as a person who loves to know everything that is going on around her. Do you agree with me portraying her as a bit of a sticky-beak/busybody?

Did anyone notice the text from Sherlock? I used the wording from the text he sent at the end of the final episode. In actual fact, I think the text was to Lestrade. It uses the same words as in the very first episode. I do not believe it was to Irene Adler.
The jangling of her phone alarm woke Molly at five-thirty. She reached over to turn it off and looked around, disoriented for a moment. Then, she remembered she was in the small bedroom of 221B Baker St. She stretched and yawned, enjoying the feel of Sherlock's shirt on her body.

She then padded downstairs to take a shower, toiletries and clothes in hand. She was rather impressed that her fiancé had gone to the trouble of buying the bathroom items for her. She hoped the shower wouldn't awaken her fiancé, being right next door to his bedroom.

Molly stepped into the tub and pulled the curtain across, then turned on the shower. In the absence of her usual body wash, which Sherlock had obviously been unable to obtain, she used the cake of soap on the side of the tub.

She recognized the scent of the soap immediately as the scent with which she associated Sherlock - crisp and clean. There was something almost intimate about using that same soap with which the detective cleaned his own body.

After a luxurious lather followed by washing her hair, Molly climbed back out of the shower and dried herself with the towel that had been thoughtfully provided for her on a small laundry basket next to the tub. Then, she wrapped the towel around her hair and got dressed.

Opening the bathroom door, she gasped in surprise as Sherlock stood there blocking her exit.

"Oh, I'm so sorry, Sherlock! I was hoping the shower wouldn't wake you," said Molly apologetically.

"You didn't really think I was going to let you leave for work without saying goodbye, did you?" Sherlock cocked an eyebrow. "I've already made a cup of coffee for you."

"That's so sweet of you," smiled Molly. "In my defense, I was intending to pop into your room before I left to give you a quick kiss goodbye."

"Well that wouldn't do at all," responded the detective, pulling her into his arms for what was definitely NOT a quick kiss.

He looked so adorable with his curly hair still mussed from sleep and wearing a long dressing gown instead of his usual coat. Molly, on the other hand, felt very self-conscious of the fact that her hair was still wrapped in a towel, and she wasn't wearing any makeup whatsoever.

She couldn't help but respond to his caress however, taking the opportunity to run her fingers through those dark, silky curls.
When they broke apart and walked to the kitchen where the coffee awaited, Sherlock commented, "We really need to do something soon about the lack of seating in this place."

Molly drank quickly and soon returned to the bathroom, removing the towel from her hair. She brushed and plaited her hair into a side braid, applied a little makeup then walked back to the kitchen where Sherlock still leaned languidly against the counter, sipping his coffee.

"I remember you had your hair like that the first day I saw you after I returned from my two years away. You look extremely becoming, Molly Hooper."

Molly blushed. "I'm not sure why you think that, but I'm not complaining. I guess I should get going now or I'll be late. Are we going to work on some more wedding-related stuff tonight?"

"Yes, I think we should use your flat so we have somewhere to sit," replied Sherlock. "I'll come to the hospital at four o'clock, and we can go together."

At the hospital, Molly was busy looking at some blood samples through a microscope when she heard Kaitlyn's voice.

"Hey Molly, how are things going with that hot fiancé of yours? How's the wedding planning?"

Molly smiled at her best friend. "Things are going great. Sherlock will be coming by later so we can work on some more things for the wedding. When we set the date, I didn't realize just how much work goes into planning a wedding. I promise I'll let you know soon about what colour I'd like for the bridesmaid dresses."

"No hurry," said Kaitlyn complacently. Her friend was the most laid-back person she knew. It probably came from having an American mother who had met and married a Londoner she had met while studying abroad.

In fact, Kaitlyn was the person who had gotten Molly the jasmine vanilla body wash during one of her trips to see her American grandparents. Molly also owned a black currant vanilla wash by the same company - actually, she owned three bottles of each. After Kaitlyn had given her two bottles for Christmas a couple years earlier, Molly had been so enthusiastic about the great lather they made and the wonderful scent, that Kaitlyn now made a point to pick some up for her on her annual visit to the States.

"So, do you and Sherlock have any plans for next Saturday? Well, this coming Saturday," the bubbly blonde clarified.

"We're kind of taking things day by day for the most part, so no plans as of yet. Why do you ask?"

"Well, you know how my sister Madison sings with the opera chorus here?"

At Molly's nod, she continued. "Well, the final night for the Puccini opera Turandot is on Saturday and I have two tickets for it. I completely forgot that my boyfriend was taking me on a romantic getaway this weekend. He booked it months ago and I forgot to mark it on my calendar. You know what a scatterbrain I can be."

Molly laughed at her friend who did at times fit the "dumb blonde" stereotype, although she was actually a very clever girl. "I've never been to an opera, but I do love classical music. Sherlock plays the violin, but I don't know if he has ever seen an opera. What is the opera about?"

"Oh, I'm sure he would love it. It's about this rich princess in China many years ago. She promises to marry any prince who can solve her three riddles. A bunch of them fail and get their heads cut
off. Then comes this unknown prince who is able to figure out the answers. I know how your detective loves to solve puzzles so I figured it would be a fun challenge for him to guess the answers for himself."

"That does sound like something Sherlock would find intriguing. I'll text him on my lunch break and let you know what he says, okay?"

"Awesome!" enthused Kaitlyn, who used the occasional American word, probably due to her mother's influence or her trips to America.

At lunchtime, while eating a serving of canteen pasta, Molly sent off a text to Sherlock.

"Kaitlyn offered me two tickets to the opera for Saturday. Wanna go?"

"Opera? Not really my thing."

"Well, it does have a Chinese princess who tells her suitors to solve three riddles. If they fail, it's off with their heads."

"Solving riddles and killings? That's more like it. Would be nice to listen to a full orchestra too. Sitting in a darkened theatre with you is also a plus."

"Awesome, I mean great. Kaitlyn is rubbing off on me. I'll tell her yes then."

"See you in a few hours, love."

The next few hours went by torturously slowly. Molly told Kaitlyn they would take the tickets and offered to pay for them, but the blonde insisted she wanted them to have them and to consider it an engagement present.

Kaitlyn really was a great friend.

Molly and Kaitlyn were just finishing up for the day when Sherlock appeared in the doorway. Kaitlyn was the first to notice him. She immediately went to him and said "Congratulations! I'm so happy for you and Molly!" In typical Kaitlyn fashion, she offered a hug to Sherlock which he accepted, awkwardly patting her on the back.

Molly grinned to herself. Her man was definitely not used to open affection. It was a miracle he was expressing it to her. Hopefully, as time passed, Sherlock would learn to receive affection and express emotions more easily.

Sherlock waited until Kaitlyn had left the lab and walked over to Molly, leaning his six foot frame down to kiss her.

"Not comfortable with PDA's?" asked Molly.

"PD what?" inquired Sherlock, a look of confusion on his face.

"It's an American term, courtesy of Kaitlyn. It means public displays of affection."

Sherlock shrugged. "I'm good with public displays of intellect, but affection? That's going to take some time."

"I'm okay with that as long as you don't balk at the wedding kiss."
"Practice makes perfect, and a high-functioning sociopath like myself needs it," said her fiancé with a smirk, demonstrating that his private kissing prowess needed no practice; it was already far more than adequate.

Molly lost herself in his embrace for a minute and then pulled back and looked at him. "You know, Sherlock," she said seriously, "you really can't call yourself that anymore. You've outgrown the parameters of a sociopath. You clearly have a conscience; you care about people, and you have a higher degree of morality than most people. You nearly killed yourself just to get John to forgive you for Mary's death which, incidentally, was not your fault. I still can't comprehend how you were to blame for the accident. Wrong place at the wrong time." John hadn't really explained how Mary had died. He had said she was shot by accident, but hadn't elaborated. Molly only knew that for some unknown reason, John had blamed Sherlock for her death, and the detective blamed himself.

She shuddered and tears formed in her eyes. "When I think of how close to death you came, how your body was shutting down on you- dear God, it would have killed me if anything had happened to you." A tear slipped down her cheek.

"I'm so sorry I put you through that, Molly. I was in a very bad place. I even thought maybe I deserved to die. It wasn't until Culverton Smith was actually there, in my hospital room and about to kill me that I realized I didn't want to die. I was scared to die. I swear to you, Molly, my love, it will never happen again. I could never jeopardize my life, my future with you. I guess you're stuck with me for as long as you'll have me."

"That's forever then, Sherlock. Always and forever." Molly wiped away her tears and took his arm. "I guess we should get going."

Once they arrived at her flat, Molly announced, "I am going to fix us a quick dinner. I have Cornish pasties and sausage rolls I can pop in the oven. Any preference?"

"I'm fine with anything," responded the detective. "I eat to live rather than live to eat."

Molly put the sausage rolls in the oven and joined Sherlock at the table afterwards. "Should we keep working on our to-do list now?" The notepad she had been using was already on the table.

"By all means. I thought of a couple items to add when I was speaking with Lestrade on Thursday."

Sherlock accessed his mind palace for a few seconds to recall the conversation and his subsequent ideas for the list. "Ah yes. You should add 'invitations' and 'guest list.' He thought for another moment. "Wedding rings. You're off work tomorrow; should we do some shopping?"

"Yes, I'd like that. It will be good to check something else off the list." She added the aforementioned items to the list. She then added the word 'vows.'

Looking up at Sherlock, Molly asked, "Did Mycroft say yes to being in the wedding party?"

"Surprisingly, yes," he replied.

The oven timer went off, and Molly pulled the sausage rolls out of the oven. She made two cups of tea and set them on the table along with the sausage rolls. The couple ate, drank and talked about their respective days.

As it turned out, Sherlock had not been idle while Molly was at work. He had researched several photography businesses online which also offered video services. He had read reviews about them and narrowed down the most promising ones for Molly's perusal.
He also pulled out of his pocket a short list of people he felt merited an invitation for the wedding. It was not a big list by any means. Molly was surprised to see Anderson's name.

As the couple moved to sit on the sofa, Molly questioned, "I thought you couldn't stand Anderson, so why did you put him on your list?"

"It appears Anderson has been a big fan of a potential pairing between us for years. So I thought I'd throw him a bone," responded Sherlock dryly.

"Apparently he even thought of one of those silly 'ship' names for us - Sherlolly. All these new terms these days- I just can't keep them straight. What on earth does a ship have to do with a couple anyway?"

Molly giggled. "Sherlolly, that sounds delicious! I've heard some of the younger lab assistants talking about that word. Apparently 'ship' is short for relationship, so 'shipping' someone means you think they belong together."

"I suppose we'll be seeing this funny name in the papers soon, then."

"I would not discount that probability," agreed Molly, smiling.

The engaged couple relaxed for some time in front of the television. After some time of companionable silence Molly said, "You know, Sherlock, you haven't told me too much about what happened at that place - Sherringford?"

"Sherrinford actually," corrected her fiancé. "I do want to tell you about it. What my sister put me through was the catalyst for my emotional breakthrough. You have been consuming my thoughts so completely this past week that it has otherwise distracted me from too much reflection about what happened. Those events will undoubtedly come to the forefront of my thoughts at some point in the near future; I'm just not there yet."

"That's fine," assured Molly. "I just want you to know I am here for you when that time comes."

"Thank you, sweetheart," said Sherlock as Molly smiled at the endearment that had unintentionally slipped out of his mouth. "It's getting late. I presume I may stay here tonight? I am growing accustomed to having you close by at night."

"Me too," admitted Molly. "Of course you can stay. I'll sleep in the spare room again."

"I really don't like turning you out of your own bedroom," frowned the detective. "I think we should reevaluate our sleeping arrangements very soon."

"Yes, Sherlock," placated the pathologist, "but not tonight."

Having said this, she disappeared into the smaller bedroom to get ready for bed, reappearing only briefly in her rose chemise and short dressing gown over it to offer her fiancé a tender goodnight kiss.

Soon all was quiet in the little flat as Sherlock too retired to bed.
Did you like the way I integrated “Sherlolly” into the conversation, and the way Sherlock was clueless about what “shipping” meant? I myself had no idea what it meant until a couple years ago.

I am also going with the assumption that Molly did not know about Mary’s past history. I just don’t think Mary would have divulged that to anyone else.

I know most people don’t bother commenting, but it is nice to get feedback. I respond to every comment.
Emotional Context - Sherlock

Chapter Summary

Sherlock revisits his time at Sherrinford with a far worse outcome.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sherlock was back at Sherrinford.

This time there was no Mycroft or John in the room with him, and the lights had been dimmed. The only thing in the room was an identical coffin to the one he had seen last time. A single spotlight illuminated it from above. The lid was on the coffin, and he had a horrible feeling it wouldn't be empty.

As he moved towards it with trepidation, a voice came out of the semi-darkness.

"Did you miss me?" asked James Moriarty. He stepped into the glow cast by the spotlight and leered at Sherlock. "You should have killed yourself when you had the chance. Now it's too late."

He held out a box towards the detective. "An early Christmas present for you."

Sherlock took the package from Moriarty and looked at it numbly. It was identical to the one he had received from Molly a few years ago, the one he had teased her about.

How could this be? His brain could not comprehend it. That box and wrapping had been discarded years ago, but there it was in his hands. He looked at the label which read "Dearest Sherlock, Love Molly xxx" in exactly the same fashion as the original gift.

His mind palace still could not process this impossible scenario. The present from long ago. In addition, Moriarty was dead, yet he was here.

"Well, Sherlock, aren't you going to open your present?" sneered the consulting criminal.

With fingers that shook slightly, Sherlock unwrapped the red present. His eyes widened in horror at what was inside.

It was a burned, shriveled heart.

The box slipped from his nerveless fingers and fell onto the floor. In what seemed like slow motion, the shrunken heart rolled out and came to rest under the stand on which the wooden coffin sat.

"Do you like it? I told you I was going to burn the heart out of you. This is much better though. I get to inflict more than mere physical pain on you." He paused.

"How does it feel, Sherlock Holmes? How do you feel? Don't you want to look in the coffin and see who else is dead because of you? First Victor, then Mary and now...." Moriarty's voice dripped with malice as he gestured at the casket.
Sherlock backed away from the coffin and the evil man standing next to it. "No, I don't want to. You can't make me." Sherlock felt as if he was reverting to the child he had been before he had suppressed his memories of Eurus.

"Of course you need to look. You WANT to look," wheedled his nemesis.

Some unknown force propelled Sherlock towards the casket. He didn't want to see what was inside it, but his hands moved of their own volition and eased off the lid.

It was his worst nightmare. Molly's lifeless body was exposed, revealing a huge hole in her chest cavity where her heart had been. Her pale skin seemed translucent, a stark contrast to the bright red lipstick that adorned her mouth. It seemed to be an homage to the lipstick she had been wearing that Christmas Day.

"Oh God, no. Not Molly…not you too Molly. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry." He could feel his heart breaking, and Moriarty was laughing wildly, tears of mirth streaming down his cheeks.

This couldn't be happening- it just couldn't.

Sherlock woke, his body in a cold sweat. Tears were trickling down his cheeks, and he opened his eyes to see Molly rushing into the room with a frightened look on her face as she turned on the bedroom lamp.

"Sherlock, what is it? What's wrong? I heard you calling my name."

"It was just a dream, a nightmare." He tried to recover his composure. It had all felt so real, and the image of Molly in the coffin remained vivid in his mind.

Molly sat on the bed and put her arms around him, stroking his face and wiping away the tears as her fiancé took a deep, shuddering breath.

The feeling of Molly's arms holding him protectively, almost like a mother comforting a child was too much for him. Burying his face against her chest, he let the floodgates burst and his tears flow the way they had when he finally realized his friend had died at Eurus's hand.

He cried once more for his childhood friend, Victor who had been an innocent victim of his unhinged sister. He cried for his friend Mary, who had taken a bullet for him and died as a result. He cried for a little boy's lost innocence that had culminated in him leading a life devoid of emotion for so many years, and he cried for the years he had spent using addictions as a substitute for feeling real emotions.

Molly was cradling his head and stroking his hair, soothing him with soft words of love. Finally the tears slowed to a stop. "I should never have taken you for granted - the years we lost. If I had been a different person we could have been married already and had a family of our own..." he whispered brokenly.

Molly held him even closer, if that was even possible. "Sherlock, our past shapes us into the people we become. I believe that God allows us to go through things for a reason. I had a crush on you in the beginning, but I always saw the man underneath that you tried to hide from the world. I thank God every day that He gave me the gift of you and your love." She kissed the top of his head.

Feeling Molly make a move as if to leave, Sherlock pleaded, "Stay with me, Molly. I don't want to be alone right now."

"Of course not," she assured him. "I was just going to turn out the light and get under the covers
with you. It's a bit chilly, and I didn't have time to put on my dressing gown."

Sherlock waited until Molly had made herself comfortable and then he gathered her in his arms. This time it was his turn to hold her, to reassure himself that she was here, and this was real. If this was the dream, he wouldn't want to wake up from it.

As Molly put her arms around him, he pulled her closer still and kissed her tenderly. Their arms were entwined as they faced each other and drifted into a peaceful sleep untroubled by dreams.

Chapter End Notes

I enjoyed writing the nightmare sequence. Did you like the shriveled heart bit? Too graphic? I could definitely see Sherlock having nightmares after Sherrinford. I also think it takes a special type of man to allow himself to be vulnerable in front of a woman.
Chapter Summary

Sherlock and Molly make a shopping expedition.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Molly's eyes opened to the spectacular view of her fiancé's handsome face mere inches from her own. His blue-green gaze met her brown one, and they both smiled. Molly could feel the warmth of his body through the thin fabric of her chemise.

"How long have you been awake?" she asked.

"Just a few minutes," responded the detective. He traced a hand lovingly across her cheek. "Thank you for staying with me."

"You needed me," she said simply.

"You've always been there when I needed you. I know that only too well." He lifted his head from the pillow and moved the few inches necessary to kiss her gently.

Drawing back to his previous position he said with a quirk to his full lips, "As you see, I can control myself with you even when we are in the same bed. Therefore, it seems logical to me that we could be sharing one already, unless of course you think you can't control yourself around me."

Molly laughed. "Blatant manipulation, that's what it is. I either have to agree, or I have to admit that I have less self control than you do."

"Essentially, yes," agreed Sherlock solemnly but with a twinkle in his eye. "So, my love, did it work?"

Molly thought for a moment. "My answer is yes, on one condition. You have to come to church with me next Sunday. Hopefully a little dose of spirituality will keep you - us - on the straight and narrow."

She wondered if she was pushing him too far on this. After all, a week ago he was denying the existence of God. He seemed to be more open to the idea since finding his beautiful Stradivarius violin intact in a miraculous fashion, but she wasn't sure if this request might be too extreme.

Sherlock didn't answer immediately. He seemed to have retreated into his mind palace. At last he said, "Molly, I've always trusted you and your judgment. Your faith in me, as well as in God gives me pause for thought. I still have my doubts as to whether I am worth saving, but apparently you think so. If it means that much to you, I will give it a try. I make no promises, though."

The pathologist, who had been holding her breath in anxious anticipation, let out a sigh of relief. "That means more to me than you will ever know, Sherlock. We have a deal." She leaned over to him and sealed it with a kiss. "And now, I think we should get up. We have a busy day ahead."

With those words she slipped out of bed and hurried to the bathroom.
“Yes, ma'am,” Sherlock called after her. “I’ll take care of breakfast and coffee.”

When Molly exited the bathroom, it was to find that Sherlock had set the table for her and made her coffee. He had already eaten. "Crumpets are in the toaster for you, and coffee is ready too," Sherlock informed Molly as he headed for his own shower. He had also put butter and honey on the table.

While Sherlock showered, Molly ate her breakfast and mused about how thoughtful he had become.

A short time later, having decided their best option would be to go to Westfield London, the couple set out on their shopping expedition. Sherlock had suggested the huge shopping mall in order to preserve his anonymity, offering the explanation to Molly that people in a hurry would be less likely to notice them in a crowd.

Fortunately this turned out to be true except inside the stores themselves where most clerks recognized Sherlock. Molly felt very shy being the object of scrutiny. After all, it wasn't every day one had the opportunity to meet London's most famous detective.

It was definitely a nerve-wracking situation for the pathologist, who felt that every eye was on her, judging whether she was good enough for the sleuth. Sherlock held firmly to her hand however, and it gave Molly more confidence.

The couple browsed some jewellery stores and selected wedding bands. Molly's choice was gold with tiny diamond set into half of the band. Sherlock opted for a plain ring. They arranged to have the bands engraved on the inside with their initials and wedding date. The shop assistant said the rings would most likely be ready by the following Thursday, but to call and make sure before returning.

After this was accomplished, Molly suggested they visit some department stores.

"Sherlock," she said, "I really need a new wardrobe. I can't go everywhere with you looking frumpy in my usual attire. I need to have clothes that I won't be ashamed to wear in public with you. Besides, if I am to be spending more time over at your flat it would be a good idea to have some changes of clothes there."

"I think you look beautiful in whatever you wear, but I do agree extra clothes would be useful for you to have," responded her fiancé.

Grinning cheekily, he added, "Of course, I think you should also start bringing over the rest of your stuff to Baker Street as soon as possible. Maintaining two residences is simply not practical when we shall be married in a few weeks."

Molly looked up at him and grinned back. "We have plenty of time. I suggest you purchase some more clothes to keep at my place for now."

A few hours later, the pair returned to Molly's flat with two new suits for Sherlock and one ensemble for Molly. She had not found much that appealed to her. The pair had already eaten dinner at one of the mall restaurants and were ready to relax after their busy day.

Molly placed her clothing bag on the table along with her phone.

"I'm going to put your new clothes into the wardrobe for now," she announced.

When Molly returned to the living room area of her flat, she noticed Sherlock replacing her phone
on the table.

"Why were you looking at my phone?" She asked with a touch of suspicion in her voice.

"I, uh, thought I heard a text alert, so I was checking to see whether it was so," answered Sherlock, not quite meeting her eyes.

Molly put her hands on her hips. "You are not a very good liar," she stated tartly. "It's password-protected anyway."

"Of course it is," agreed the detective.

"So, did you find what you were looking for then?" She questioned, eyebrow raised.

Left flat-footed Sherlock could only say, "Er, yes. I'll tell you about it tomorrow."

Molly rolled her eyes at him and plopped onto the sofa. She wasn't really angry at him. She was more embarrassed that he could have seen her display screen which showed his image.

She didn't have anything to hide anyway. She had long since deleted her old conversations with Tom, as well as his contact information. If her fiancé said he'd tell her tomorrow, she would be satisfied with that.

Sherlock came over to the sofa to sit with her. "I'm sorry, love," he said. "There's something I have planned for tomorrow that I can't tell you about. You will find out then, and I hope it will please you." He brushed his lips against hers.

"Oh!" exclaimed Molly. "I had completely forgotten that you asked me last week about Tuesday."

"Much as I hate to say it," said Sherlock, consulting his watch, "I need to go home and make some phone calls tonight in regards to your surprise."

Molly couldn't hide the note of disappointment in her voice as she reacted to his statement with a "So soon?" It was only eight-thirty, and the thought of spending the rest of the evening alone saddened her. It was ridiculous, really. She had spent years by herself with only the occasional twinge of loneliness.

"I'm sorry, love. I'll make it up to you tomorrow, I promise." With that, the handsome detective rose from the couch. "I'll take your new outfit along with me to Baker Street if you like."

"Okay," Molly agreed. "Let me just grab a body wash for you to take over there too." She went to her linen cupboard and selected a black currant vanilla body wash from her small collection of bottles. Then she took a jasmine vanilla one for good measure and presented both to Sherlock.

"Two?"

"Hey, I like variety," grinned Molly.

The detective dutifully added the body washes to the bag. Curiously he asked, "How did you get these? I see they have an American label. I presume someone you know got them for you?"

"They were from Kaitlyn. She goes to the States each year to see her grandparents. Her mum is American. She bought me some for Christmas a couple years ago, and I liked the scent so much that she buys another for me each year. She's a great friend."

"I have to agree on that delightful smell, at least the one you used the other day. I look forward to
discovering what the other scent is like on your lovely skin." Having said this, Sherlock demonstrated his appreciation of Molly's skin by kissing her neck before pressing his lips firmly to hers.

Molly lost herself in his embrace until he reluctantly pulled away.

"I'd better go, or it will be too late for me to do what I need to prepare for tomorrow. I'll be here at noon. You might want to eat an early lunch because we have a bit of a drive ahead of us."

After Sherlock had left, Molly pondered the words "a bit of a drive." What was this mysterious surprise of his? It took some time before she fell asleep that night; her thoughts kept whirring in anticipation of what was to come the next day. Finally, she slept.

Chapter End Notes

When I researched I was surprised to see there was a London Westfield. Australia, my native country has Westfield malls as well. Are you looking forward to reading about Molly trying on wedding dresses?

Please read and comment.
As soon as Sherlock arrived home, he put his plan into action.

Molly had caught him with her phone when he had been looking up Kaitlyn's number. He berated himself for not being quicker to obtain the information he needed and for having to make Molly wait for an explanation.

He dialed Kaitlyn's number and was relieved when the phone was answered, rather than sending him to voicemail.

"Hello?" came the voice.

"Kaitlyn. It's Sherlock here. I'm sorry to call so late."

"No worries, it's not that late. How did you get my number, though?" she asked.

"Molly's phone," answered the detective truthfully. "I presume you have the day off tomorrow because you and Molly worked this past weekend. I also happened to overhear a conversation between the two of you some time ago. You are both fans of a show called 'Say Yes to the Dress,' right?"

"Right on both counts," affirmed the blonde.

"Well, as it happens, I have arranged for Molly to be seen at the boutique where the show is filmed. It is to be a surprise for her tomorrow. If you are free, I am sure she would love to have her best friend there for her."

"Oh Sherlock, that is so romantic," gushed Kaitlyn. "I don't have anything planned for tomorrow and I would absolutely LOVE to be there for Molly!"

"The store is located in Essex, so it is about ninety minutes away. Can I arrange a taxi for you? I will be happy to pay the fare, of course."

"Oh, I live a little outside of the city, and I have my own car. I'd be happy to just drive myself there. It will be so exciting to see 'Confetti and Lace' in person. What time is her appointment?"

"It is for two o'clock, but I suppose it would be best if you arrive a few minutes early so that it will be a surprise for Molly. I have already arranged for her mother to be there."

"OMG, how did you manage to do that? Molly hasn't seen or heard from her mum in years! You have definitely made me reconsider the kind of person you are..." Kaitlyn trailed off, embarrassed.
"I'm so sorry, that was a very rude thing to say," she apologized.

"No need to apologize," assured the detective, "I'm well aware of how self-important and superior I have acted in the past. Love changes a person. Being with Molly has taught me that intellect alone is not a substitute for a happy life."

Even as Sherlock said these words, he recognized them to be true. He had just never spoken them aloud before.

"Well, I think that's just awesome," said Kaitlyn. "I'll put the address into my GPS and make sure I'm there early tomorrow. Thank you for thinking of me. It's going to be so exciting!"

"Thank you, Kaitlyn. Oh, by the way, thank you also for offering us those opera tickets. It should be an interesting experience."

"You're welcome. I will bring the tickets along tomorrow for you. I'm not sure if Molly told you, but my sister Madison is in the opera chorus. I hope you enjoy it."

"I'm sure I shall. I will see you tomorrow, then. Goodbye, Kaitlyn."

After ending his phone call with the bubbly blonde, the detective proceeded to confirm the arrangements for the taxi to pick up Molly's mother the next day. He also confirmed the limousine for himself and Molly.

Finally, he called Mrs. Hooper to inform her of the time she was to be picked up on the morrow. The older woman was very excited about seeing her daughter again, and the detective hoped Molly would be receptive to a reconciliation.

Thus satisfied that everything was in order for the next day, Sherlock unpacked Molly's purchases from that day and put them into his bedroom. He noted she had opted to put in a chemise to use as nightwear.

He grinned to himself at that. His sweet little pathologist was certainly going to test his self control if she wore that in front of him.

Finding the body washes in one of the bags, he took those into the bathroom and then prepared for bed.

Before putting his phone on the charger, the detective sent a text to his beloved. "I miss you already. Sleep well, my love."

As he slipped under the covers, the sleuth reflected that the bed felt big and empty now in a way he had never noticed before. He wished Molly was beside him. Oh well, she would be soon.

With a smile on his face, Sherlock fell into an untroubled sleep. He was very much looking forward to the following day.

Chapter End Notes

This is a short chapter, I realize, but it is also a relatively short period of time I am covering, and the readers needed to see what Sherlock was up to, as well as what he had been doing with Molly’s phone.
Molly awoke to see sunshine coming through her window. It promised to be a beautiful spring day. She saw the text that Sherlock had sent and smiled. Apparently he had missed her presence as much as she had missed his. A few more hours and they would be together again.

She followed her usual morning regimen and ate breakfast while sipping coffee. With nothing else planned for the morning, Molly turned on her television and watched a couple episodes of her favourite American sit-com, "Big Bang Theory."

One of the main characters was a brilliant physicist named Sheldon Cooper. He always reminded her of Sherlock. Sheldon too was very aware of his intellectual superiority, although he seemed to have trouble dealing with the simplest of social interactions.

Sherlock, on the other hand, could be very charming when he wanted to be and dealt with publicity confidently when it came to his detective work.

At eleven-thirty, the pathologist checked that she had everything ready to go. She was wearing a pretty blue blouse with a light grey linen skirt. As it was not a work day, Molly let her hair hang loose around her shoulders.

A touch of makeup completed the ensemble, and she looked with satisfaction at her reflection in the full-length mirror on the back of her bedroom door. Molly hoped Sherlock would approve.

The doorbell rang at five minutes before the hour. Opening the door to the tall, striking figure of her fiancé, Molly couldn't help the quickening of her heartbeat. Sherlock looked so dashing, so incredibly handsome. His Belstaff was unbuttoned, showing the neat suit jacket and button-down shirt he wore beneath. As usual, he wore no tie, preferring to leave the top button of his shirt open.

He leaned down to greet her with a smouldering kiss. Then he asked, "Are you ready to go?"

Molly nodded, grabbed her bag and locked the flat behind her as she exited. She handed Sherlock an extra key she had taken from her kitchen cutlery drawer. "I thought you should have this, in case you need to be here when I'm not."

“That seems like a prudent idea,” Sherlock said as he took the key from her and put it in a pocket of his trousers.

Molly gasped when she saw the limousine at the side of the road. "Is that for me?"

"Nothing but the best for my lady," responded the detective as a chauffeur opened a door for them to enter the luxurious vehicle.
Once inside, as the car began to move off slowly from the kerb into the flow of traffic, Sherlock said. "We have about ninety minutes before we reach our destination. Any ideas on what we should do to pass the time?"

He gave Molly an exaggerated wink and leer. Then, in complete contradiction of how he had just looked at his fiancée, the detective cupped her face in his hands and kissed her gently. At her immediate response in opening her mouth to his, Sherlock kissed her more deeply.

"I love you, Molly Hooper," he whispered in between kisses, and Molly felt herself tingle at his words, his touch. He kissed the side of her face, moving his lips to nibble her earlobe and back down to trace her jawline.

Molly giggled as his caress tickled her and gave her goosebumps. Her giggle broke the spell that was transfixing them, and Sherlock drew away a little.

"I'm sorry, Molly," he apologized. "You drive me to distraction, and I know I could so easily lose myself in you. More and more, I am coming to realize how love is such an overwhelming emotion and how it drives men to do crazy things. I respect you, and I don't want to ever hurt you. I did enough of that before I knew what you meant to me."

"I know you'd never intentionally hurt me, Sherlock," Molly replied. "At the same time, I do agree it would be very easy to get carried away in the heat of the moment. So, why don't we spend the rest of this time talking? Do you feel like you are ready to tell me everything that happened at Sherrinford?"

Sherlock hesitated for a moment and slowly nodded. "Yes, I want you to know everything so you can understand."

Molly took Sherlock's hand and listened patiently as he retold the events of that fateful night that had changed him forever.

He told her about Eurus's capacity to "enslave" her captors which had enabled her to slip in and out of the prison at will. He shared the details of the test that had resulted in the prison director ending his own life and how Eurus had coldly murdered the man's wife because the conditions of the test had not been met. He explained the riddle of the three brothers in which he had correctly deduced which man was a murderer, only to see the innocent men being dropped, bound and gagged, into the ocean.

When John had protested the taking of innocent life, Eurus had pressed a button that sent the guilty party hurtling to the ocean floor as well. Next came the test Molly was already all too familiar with, having been the subject of it. When Sherlock came to the final problem, the one where he was told to kill either his brother or best friend, Molly was openly crying at the vivisection her beloved had endured.

"I couldn't do it, Molly," he said brokenly. "I turned the gun on myself and started counting down. If Eurus hadn't tranquilized me with a dart that came from the wall, I wouldn't be here right now."

Tears ran down Molly's face even faster as she thought of how differently things could have turned out. Her life would have been shattered. She couldn't imagine a world without Sherlock in it. He had been willing to sacrifice himself for his brother and best friend.

How could he have ever thought he didn't have the capacity for love? He had it in spades, and it was evident in his choices.
Sherlock finished his recounting of that night and of ending up at his childhood home in Musgrave and how Eurus had restored long buried memories of his friend Victor's disappearance. He had replaced the memory of Victor with a false one of a family dog named Redbeard instead.

It turned out that his close friend Victor and he had played pirates together, calling themselves Redbeard and Yellowbeard. Victor's disappearance had remained a mystery all these years until the other night.

Eurus had had John put into the same well where she had left Sherlock's childhood friend to drown—the friend she had been insanely jealous of because she herself had no friends. Sherlock had eventually solved a final riddle and found his sister at Musgrave, and then he rescued John before it was too late.

After the tale was told, Sherlock looked at Molly, tears glistening in his own eyes. "Why am I still here, Molly? What have I done to deserve your love when so many people, better people than me, have had that chance taken away from them?"

Molly took both of his hands in hers, staring into his liquid gaze with complete faith in what she was about to say. "It's because God has a plan for you. Look at how many times your life has been spared. It is no coincidence- no random roll of the dice. You have survived a fall that could have killed you if our plan had not gone off without a hitch. You've almost died from a bullet wound. You've nearly killed yourself with drugs, and believe me, I know how close to death you really were. Then, of course, Culverton Smith himself almost made you another of his victims. There is not a shadow of a doubt in my mind that you are still here for a reason. But you have to be the one to see it, to understand it, and to move on from there."

"I don't deserve to be saved. I killed a man in cold blood- Magnussen."

Molly was chilled by the agony in Sherlock's voice. "I'm not excusing what you did, but he was an evil man, and the world is a better place without him. It is not for me to judge what you have done in the past- that is up to God. But there IS such thing as forgiveness and redemption. You just have to ask for it."

"Do you really believe that?" asked Sherlock, looking back at Molly with hope in his eyes.

"Of course I do," she responded, willing him to understand.

Their conversation was halted when the chauffeur's voice came from an intercom into the back of the vehicle. "Mr. Holmes, we will be arriving at our destination in about ten minutes."

Molly was a little disappointed that her deep conversation with Sherlock had been cut short, but she knew they had a lifetime together for her to help him understand what having faith was all about.

With a visible effort, Molly dried her tears and said, "Well, I guess I should be thinking about where you are taking me now."

“And we need to open this complimentary bottle of champagne so I can get some of my money’s worth from this journey.”

Molly giggled, the former serious mood dispelled for now. The detective managed to open the bottle without making a mess. He poured a little of the bubbly liquid into two waiting champagne flutes, handing one to his fiancée.

Sherlock raised his glass and smiled at her. "You are an amazing woman, Molly Hooper. I look forward to many more discussions with you."
They clinked their glasses and drank.

Once their glasses were empty, the detective remarked, “Now I want to just think about what your reaction is going to be when you find out what lies at our journey’s end.” He took Molly’s hand and they sat together silently until the limousine slowed, then stopped.

A thrill of anticipation ran through the pathologist. They had reached their destination.

Chapter End Notes

Molly’s words to Sherlock obviously reflect my personal beliefs. God does offer us forgiveness and redemption, but we need to ask for it. Nobody is beyond redemption.

I hope you enjoyed this chapter as Sherlock finally recounted everything about Sherrinford to Molly. It was definitely time for him to explain everything, and the limo ride seemed a perfect opportunity for it. I’d love to hear your thoughts about this.

Stay tuned for the next chapter when Molly gets to choose the perfect dress (not to mention the upcoming reunion with her mother).
Say Yes - Molly (Tuesday)

Chapter Summary

Molly searches for her dream wedding dress and has an emotional reunion with her mother.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The chauffeur opened the limousine door. Sherlock climbed out and then helped his fiancée exit the vehicle.

Molly put her hands to her mouth and gasped when she saw where she was.

"It's the boutique from 'Say Yes to the Dress!'" she exclaimed in wonder, her eyes shining.

"Indeed it is," affirmed Sherlock.

"I can't believe you planned this!" she said, clasping his hand and looking at him in open adoration as they entered "Confetti and Lace."

Immediately, they were accosted by several people who had obviously been informed that the famous detective would be bringing his fiancée there. Molly heard several whispers of "Isn't he handsome?" and "Look at that hair, he's so hot!" as they made their way to the front desk.

David Emmanuel himself approached and greeted Sherlock. "Welcome, Mr. Holmes." Turning to Molly, he extended his hand. "It's very nice to meet you Dr. Hooper. We will be delighted to serve you today and to find you your perfect dress."

Molly shook the fashion designer's hand, almost giddy at meeting the man who had designed the late Princess Diana's wedding dress. "Thank you, Mr. Emmanuel. I'm a big fan of your show - and apparently my fiancé was somehow apprised of that fact."

At Molly's glance, Sherlock merely gave her an enigmatic smile. She decided to grill him later about how he could have known she was hooked on the show about brides looking for their perfect dress.

"Let me show you to your seats. A consultant will be with you momentarily."

Molly felt a twinge of disappointment that she wasn't to be dressed by the great designer himself, but she completely forgot about that when she caught sight of her friend.

"Kaitlyn!" She gasped. "What are you doing here?"

"Sherlock called me last night and invited me to come," responded the blonde, as she hugged her friend.

Molly looked at Sherlock again, comprehension dawning in her eyes. "That's why you had my phone last night, wasn't it? To find Kaitlyn's number? And that's why you left so early?"
"Guilty as charged," admitted the detective.

Then the pathologist caught sight of another person sitting at the other end of the sofa she and Sherlock had been ushered to. She stared in utter shock.

"Mum? What are you...how on earth...?"

Mrs. Hooper walked up to her daughter. "My darling girl, I'm so sorry for everything I put you through. I've been wanting to get in touch for a long time to tell you I've cleaned up my act and found Jesus again. Well, Jesus found me when I was most in need. Can you ever forgive me?"

Tears came into Molly's eyes as she read the truth of her mother's words in her voice and expression. "Why didn't you call me? I thought you wanted to cut me out of your life."

"I have so much to tell you - to explain. Perhaps we can meet for lunch to talk about it soon? I know you have an appointment, and I'd like nothing more than to see my baby girl find her wedding dress."

"I'd like that," Molly said, and the tearful mother and daughter embraced. Despite the years of separation, Molly could not hold a grudge. If there was one thing she had learned over the years, it was that holding a grudge, or allowing offense to take hold of one's life, hurt the offended person more than anyone else. This was her mother, the one who had birthed her, and she would not be in this world without her. "Can you tell me how you ended up here today, though?"

Sherlock's deep baritone answered her question. "I called her last week. I hope I was not overstepping my bounds, but I thought you needed her."

"Apparently I need to change my phone passcode," commented Molly without rancour. "Thank you, Sherlock; this means a great deal to me." She kissed his cheek.

Just then, a consultant made her way toward the group.

"Hi there, I'm Jennifer," she announced. "You must be the bride." She shook Molly's hand. She looked at the devastatingly handsome man beside Molly afterwards and spoke. "And of course I recognize you, Mr. Holmes, even without your deerstalker hat."

Sherlock smiled politely at the consultant.

"Let's begin, shall we? Do you have a budget we need to be respectful of?"


"So, with her budget and mine, that makes £4000," said Sherlock without missing a beat.

Molly gaped at him. "Sherlock, you do not need to pay anything towards my dress."

The detective merely shrugged. "If it is under £2000, you can pay. I will make up any difference if it is up to £4000. Fair enough?"

"Okay." Molly agreed reluctantly. She didn't want to argue about it, and it was a very sweet gesture on her fiancé's part.

"As your wedding is only a few weeks away, we will need to look at sample dresses that you can purchase today. Therefore, we should easily be able to find one well within your budget," assured Jennifer. "Do you have any ideas about the type of dress you are looking for?"
"White," stated Sherlock immediately.

Molly glanced at him and smiled. "Yes, white. I am thinking maybe a sweetheart neckline, A-line or full skirt. I do not really care for mermaid or tight fitting. I'm not a big fan of lace, either." It was apparent to all listening that Molly had obviously done her research on bridal gown styles or at least had watched a lot of episodes of "Say Yes to the Dress."

"Uh, I think that's my cue to leave you alone with your mum and Kaitlyn," said Sherlock. "I want to be surprised when you walk down the aisle to me."

He gave Molly a quick kiss and asked, "Is there some kind of waiting area for fiancés?"

"There certainly is." Jennifer answered. "There's a waiting room where you can have coffee, tea and biscuits while you wait just down the hall. You'll see a door marked 'waiting room.'" She pointed to a hallway, and Sherlock left the ladies to their bridal chatter.

"Okay, is there anything else you are looking for in a dress?" asked the consultant.

Molly's mum piped up, "I do hope you will try a princess gown."

Kaitlyn echoed Mrs. Hooper's sentiment adding, "With lots of beading."

Molly grinned. "You know me too well."

"Wonderful," enthused Jennifer. She led the pathologist to a dressing room and said, "I'll be right back with some dresses."

Molly waited patiently for the consultant to return. While she waited, she thought about her mother and how Sherlock had arranged this surprise for her. She was blown away by his thoughtfulness.

She couldn't be mad at him for hacking into her phone. It was obvious now he had only done it to obtain her mother's number. Her passcode, after all couldn't have been hard to crack. She was a bit embarrassed though that her fiancé knew it to be his own birthdate.

She was also truly glad to see her mother. It had been a constant ache in her heart to have not been able to confide in her for so many years. So many times she had longed for her mummy to wipe away her tears when she had despaired of ever finding happiness - the times Sherlock had hurt her with careless words and she needed a mother's encouragement.

She couldn't get those years back, but thanks to Sherlock, she might just have a chance for a normal mother-daughter relationship once again.

Jennifer returned to the room with six dresses in tow.

Molly was astounded. Each was more beautiful than the next. "These are really in my budget?" she questioned, hardly daring to believe that the gowns with such elaborate beading on the bodices and exquisite full skirts could be in her price range.

"Yes, indeed," smiled the bridal consultant. "Most of these would be double the price if you had to order them, but because they are sample dresses which have been tried on before, the cost is much lower. Which one would you like to try on first?"

Molly selected one of the simpler gowns first just to have a point of reference for any others she would try on. After stepping into a full crinoline, Jennifer helped her slip into the gown. It had a sweetheart neckline, and the bodice had beading just around the top of the bodice. The skirt was
chiffon and flowed from her waist.

Molly went to show her mother and best friend.

"You do look beautiful," said Kaitlyn, "but I'm not sure about it. The chiffon makes it look a bit too much like a cake topper."

"I agree with Kaitlyn," said Mrs. Hooper.

Molly laughed. "Oh, Kaitlyn, that's what all the brides' friends say on the show, 'You like like a cake topper' when they wear this sort if dress."

Kaitlyn grinned, "Well, it's true, so I had to say it."

Molly realized that her mother and best friend must have introduced themselves while she was waiting in the dressing room. It pleased her that they seemed to be getting along well with each other.

"What are your thoughts?" asked Jennifer.

"I agree that the chiffon is a bit much, too. I think also I'd like a dress which has a train. The cut of the bodice is beautiful, but I'd prefer a bit more bling."

Kaitlyn nodded enthusiastically. "Oh yes, you can never have too much bling!"

"Let's get this dress off then and move to the next," said the consultant cheerfully.

In the dressing room once again, Molly put on an A-line dress. The skirt was not quite as full and it had a slight drop-waist. The textured skirt had a handkerchief hemline. Molly wasn't too enthused about it, but she went to show her small entourage the gown anyway.

"What's with all the handkerchiefs? Are you going to be doing a lot of crying?" snorted Kaitlyn.

"Didn't you say you'd like something with a train?" asked Molly's mum.

"Tough crowd," joked Molly to Jennifer. "It is pretty, but this is not what I envisioned for my wedding day."

"No problem. Let's see if dress number three is the one for you."

Dress number three was most definitely not the one for Molly. There were rosettes along the bodice and on the skirt. The whole effect seemed too flowery for her. However, she dutifully trotted back out to the waiting area.

This time it was Molly's mother who spoke first. "Well dear, it has a train, but I think you are getting lost among all the flowers. It's like the dress is wearing you rather than the other way around."

"My thoughts exactly," agreed Molly's friend.

Once again, Molly retired to the little fitting room. Dress number four was too tight and Molly didn't feel good in it, so she refused to even show her small entourage. Dress five had a very low neckline and revealed a lot of cleavage. The beading on the bodice was gorgeous, though, and the skirt had a long train.

Even as Molly turned to show her mother and friend, she said, "Yeah, I know. Way too much
Kaitlyn laughed. "Va-va-voom, girl. You might give Sherlock heart palpitations if you walk down the aisle looking like that."

Molly's mum merely shook her head.

Molly was beginning to despair of finding the right gown. Was she being too picky?

The one remaining gown did not look promising, and it wasn't pure white either. She sighed.

Jennifer came bustling into the room, holding another dress. "I just remembered this one. It was a cancellation. This gown was originally £7000, but because it was ordered and subsequently cancelled, it has been marked down to £2800."

Molly's eyes widened. This dress was more elaborate than the others she had tried on.

There was intricate beading of pearls and tiny Swarovski crystals on the bodice. The same crystals glittered on the full satin skirt which had a long train. Molly felt a little shiver of anticipation. As the consultant helped her into the beautiful gown, it slipped down Molly's body, fitting as if it had been made exactly to her measurements.

As soon as she glanced in the mirror, she knew this was it. This was her dream dress, the one she could imagine wearing as she walked down the aisle to the man she adored. Tears sprang into her eyes, and she blinked them away. The dress still had to pass inspection.

Walking towards her mum and Kaitlyn, Molly couldn't help smiling.

As soon as Mrs. Hooper saw her daughter in the gorgeous gown, she started to cry. "Molly, my darling girl. You look beautiful. This dress is so lovely; it just enhances your inner beauty. You look radiant."

At these words, Molly felt the tears come to her eyes again.

Kaitlyn was also blinking back tears. "It's stunning, Molly. You look incredible. Sherlock is going to be weak at the knees when he sees you."

David Emmanuel, who had been in another part of the store, approached. "How are things going, darling? I think you look absolutely stunning."

"I feel stunning," said Molly, smiling beatifically.

"Well, then," said the famous designer. "I think we have a question to ask you." He and Jennifer said together, "Are you saying yes to the dress?"

Without hesitation, Molly replied, "I'm saying yes to this dress!"

Kaitlyn and Mrs. Hooper both hugged her.

"Just a moment," said David, hurrying away. He returned quickly, holding a veil which had crystals scattered throughout it. "Let's try this on."

He helped Molly settle the fingertip length veil onto her head. It completed the ensemble as if it had been designed specifically for the dress.

"It's perfect," breathed Kaitlyn.
Mrs. Hooper said, "I want to buy this for you, Molly. Please consider it an engagement present."

Molly gave her mother another hug. "Thanks, Mum; I love it!"

Very satisfied with the conclusion of her appointment, Molly headed back to the dressing room and changed back into her regular clothes. "Thank you, Lord," she whispered. She wasn't thanking the Lord for just the dress but also for the reunion with her mother and for Sherlock, who had made this day possible.

The little group made its way to the counter to pay for the dress and veil. The dress was put in a black garment bag and the veil in another one.

Sherlock was summoned, and he strode back to Molly with an anxious look on his handsome face. "Is everything okay? Did you find a dress?"

Molly smiled sweetly at him. "As a matter of fact, I did," she answered. "Unfortunately, it was a little over my budget."

"So do you need me to put £2000 on my credit card?"

"Actually, just £800."

"Sounds like you got a bargain," he commented, producing his visa.

"I most certainly did," grinned Molly. "I hope you like it."

"I'd like you in a potato sack...as long as it's white," joked her fiancé.

Having completed the purchase, Sherlock insisted on carrying the garment bags.

“No peeking now,” admonished Molly. “No deducing either by trying to feel the fabric through the bag.”

The detective grinned. “I won’t, I promise.” He turned to Mrs. Hooper. "Let me call you a taxi."

"That won't be necessary. Kaitlyn has very kindly offered to drive me home."

Molly stared at her friend in surprise. "That's so sweet of you Kaitlyn," she said, marvelling at the way the two women had bonded.

"Mum," she said, "meet me for lunch tomorrow. I work at St. Bart's hospital. We can eat together in the canteen and talk."

Producing her phone, she found her mother's number in her contact list and sent a text that said "Hi Mum." A ping sounded from Mrs. Hooper's phone.

"Now you have my number, too, so you can add me to your contact list. I'll text you in the morning with my lunch time. Does that sound okay?"

"Yes, darling," responded her mother, giving Molly a hug goodbye. "Thank you, Sherlock, for inviting me today. Like I said, you are an answer to prayer. I am so glad my daughter found a man like you to share her life with."

"Oh, I almost forgot. I brought your opera tickets for Saturday," said Kaitlyn, taking them from her bag and handing them to Molly before she left the boutique with Mrs. Hooper.
When the couple was alone, Sherlock remarked, "It's just as well your mother only met me now. She might not have liked me a few weeks ago before I realized I was in love with you."

“I don’t know about that, but she did say you were an answer to prayer, so this was God’s timing.” Molly smiled sweetly at her beloved, squeezing his hand.

After saying farewell to the staff, Sherlock and Molly walked to the limousine, where the chauffeur was patiently waiting. He opened the door for them, and Sherlock helped Molly enter the vehicle before entering himself with the precious garment bags still in hand.

Then, the limousine made its way back to London.

Chapter End Notes

I had this chapter planned weeks before I wrote it, and I was so excited to finally do it!

Can you imagine Molly walking down the aisle in her dream dress? I hope you found this chapter worth waiting for. I hope you also found the mother/daughter reunion believable.
Sherlock was by no means idle during Molly's bridal appointment.

He helped himself to a coffee and some of his favourite ginger nuts and then texted John, who responded quickly and the following conversation ensued.

**SH:** How's my goddaughter today?
**JW:** Fine. Taking her afternoon nap. How are you doing?
**SH:** Sitting in a waiting room at a bridal boutique.
**JW:** ????
**SH:** Booked an appointment for Molly at that place where they film one of her favourite shows.
**JW:** You mean "Say Yes to the Dress?"
**SH:** You've heard of it then?
**JW:** Mary made me watch it with her a few times. Surprised you would have any idea about the show, though.
**SH:** Overheard a conversation between her and her friend a few months ago. Figured it would be a nice gesture.
**JW:** Wow, my best friend has done a complete turn around.
**SH:** Guess Molly brings out the best in me.
**JW:** Pity it took you so long to realize it.
**SH:** So anyway, how does eleven tomorrow morning sound for you to come to Baker Street? Need to review some cases I guess, keep my hand in the game as it were.
**JW:** Sounds good. I'll see if Mrs. H. is available to watch Rosie if we decide to go out on a case.
**SH:** Looking forward to seeing my goddaughter and you, too, of course. What do you have for me? A puzzle? A conundrum to solve?
**JW:** Nope, something else. I'm sure you'll find it useful. I'll show you tomorrow.
**SH:** Intriguing. See you tomorrow then.
**JW:** Yup. Enjoy the rest of your day.

After ending the text conversation, the sleuth called his brother. "Have you gotten any leads on who might have planted those cameras in Molly's flat?" he asked as soon as Mycroft answered the phone.

"Hello to you as well, brother mine," responded the elder Holmes brother dryly. "No luck so far, I'm afraid. With Eurus safely back in Sherrinford under extra guard, and in a state of catatonia, I doubt she'll be issuing further orders."

"I can't help but be worried for Molly. What if some henchman takes it upon himself to harm her, especially now that the world knows we are engaged?"
"Well then, get her the hell out of her flat and into Baker Street if you are so worried," stated Mycroft sensibly.

"Believe me Mycroft, I'm working on it. I don't want to worry her, though, so I am approaching it from a practical standpoint. You know, saying it makes more sense for us to not have to commute back and forth, that kind of thing."

"Keep working at it. By the way, I have something for you. When can I bring it by?"

"You too? John said he has something for me as well. Must be Christmas."

"How ironic with your unfavourable disposition towards that particular holiday that you should reference it so often."

"Well, big brother, maybe I've been a bit too judgmental in the past about things I didn't understand. Anyway, I have plans with John tomorrow and some pre-marital thing at Molly's church on Thursday night, so it will have to be Friday unless you have time in the afternoon on Thursday."

Sherlock could hear the laughter in his brother's voice as Mycroft said, "Too judgmental? Pre-marital stuff? Did I just take a trip into the twilight zone?"

"Very funny, Mycroft. I would hope that you could support me in my efforts to become a better person instead of making fun of me," said Sherlock a little petulantly.

"Apologies, Sherlock. I didn't mean to offend you. I'm just surprised, that's all. If Molly is the reason for this turn-around, I have to commend her. I am perfectly happy to relinquish my filial responsibilities to her tender care. I can stop by Thursday afternoon at two o'clock if that suits?"

"That would be fine. I'll see you then." Sherlock pressed 'end' on his phone and sat for some moments, staring into space. How strange that John and Mycroft both had something to give him. His curiosity was certainly piqued.

He consulted his watch and saw it had been over an hour since he had left Molly. He wondered how much longer he would be waiting as he helped himself to another biscuit.

It wasn’t long after that when he was asked to come to the front of the store.

*%*%*%*%*%*%*%*

Now Sherlock and Molly were comfortably situated back in the limo on their way back to London. The sleuth glanced at the garment bags he had carefully laid across one long seat of the limousine.

"Did you have fun?" He inquired, already knowing her answer. He could see how her eyes were shining and the contented smile on her face.

"You know I did. It was a lovely surprise. I don't know how to thank you enough for everything - for the day, my mum, Kaitlyn."

"Oh, I can think of a way you can thank me," chuckled Sherlock as he took his lovely fiancée in his arms and kissed her thoroughly. He cupped her chin in his hand and looked deeply into her warm brown eyes. "I would do anything for you, my love. The way you look at me gives me a euphoria I could never attain through the use of drugs or my other bad habits. I think I am addicted to you,
Molly Hooper.

Molly leaned back slightly and said seriously, "I don't want to be your addiction. I want to be your companion, your partner, your equal. Don't put me on a pedestal because I don't belong there. I'm a flawed human just like anyone else. What you can count on, though, is my commitment to you and to our future together. I love you, Sherlock Holmes, now and forever."

The detective was moved by Molly's words. "Now and forever," he echoed.

The couple sat in silence for some time, arms around each other while Molly laid her head against her fiancé's chest, and he, in turn, rested his chin on her hair.

Sherlock thought about how much he'd like to compose a piece of music on his violin that represented this love he had found. It was a feeling so profound, and he wondered if any tune could do it justice. Of course, he had composed a piece for John and Mary, but this would have to be extra special.

"What are you thinking about so hard? I can practically hear the wheels turning in your head?" questioned Molly at last, looking at him.

"I was thinking that I want to compose something for you on my violin," replied the sleuth truthfully. "Apparently my sister taught me to play. She told me so, although I cannot remember it. Mycroft gave her a Stradivarius violin one year for Christmas. She was playing it when I saw her for the first time at Sherrinford."

"Really? That is very interesting. Music is a wonderful tool for communication."

"Mycroft seems to think she is past communication now after what happened. She was in a catatonic state when she was returned to the prison."

"I'm sorry to hear that," said Molly. "She has done some terrible things, but perhaps, in her own way, she was trying to set things right with you. Maybe all those tests were designed to draw an emotional response from you, to force you to acknowledge emotions you have suppressed for so many years. Of course, that's just my opinion. From my standpoint, it seems to have been the catalyst for what has happened since then. If it wasn't for Eurus, you may never have acknowledged your feelings for me. In a weird way, I guess I'm grateful to her for that."

"Indeed, there may be some truth in what you say. I once said that sentiment was a chemical defect found in the losing side. After I told you I loved you during that phone call, I told my sister I had won because I had saved you. She told me I hadn't won and that I'd lost due to all the complicated emotions that had been drawn to the surface for both of us. She was wrong, though, as I had been wrong in what I'd said. I can recognize now that sentiment and love are necessary in order to live a healthy life - to give it meaning."

As Sherlock spoke, he absently twirled the engagement ring on Molly's hand; then, he raised her hand to his lips. He felt Molly's hand quiver at his touch, and it thrilled him to know he could elicit such a response from her, the woman he adored.

"Sherlock, you said that your sister has been catatonic since the other night. Have you considered playing the violin for her? Music is such a powerful tool for bringing people together. It may draw her out of her shell."

"That definitely sounds like something worth trying. When I visit her, I will take my violin with me."
"Good," smiled Molly.

A short while later, the limousine slowed, then stopped.

"Hungry?" asked Sherlock. "I booked us a table at Angelo's for dinner."

"I could eat," nodded Molly. "I completely forgot to eat anything after breakfast, and my stomach has been rumbling for the last few minutes. I'm surprised you didn't notice."

"Probably because I thought it was my own stomach," chuckled the sleuth. "Although I did get to eat some ginger nuts at the boutique. They were store bought though, not as good as those my mum makes."

"Your mum likes to bake?"

"Bake, cook fancy dinners. When I lived at home, there were always home-made biscuits to eat. I think that is why Mycroft is always obsessive about working out. I do like my sweets, but my brother is even worse than I am when it comes to eating sweet things. I have to give him credit though, he does spend time on the treadmill to work off those extra calories."

Molly gave him an admiring look. "Well there are certainly no calories you need to burn off. You have an extremely toned physique."

"Why thank you Dr. Hooper. I would have to say you are perfectly proportioned in all the right places as well." He gave her a seductive glance that made her blush. Then he kissed her once more, and didn't stop until he felt the limousine drawing to a stop. It was really too bad the journey wasn't a little longer, he thought, pulling away from his fiancée reluctantly.

"I agree," she said, and he was left to wonder whether he had said the words aloud, or she had just guessed his thoughts. Not that it mattered.

The chauffeur opened the door once more, and the couple strolled into the restaurant for a nice, quiet dinner.

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Chapter End Notes

I had to include the addiction conversation. I do feel Sherlock has an addictive personality, as evidenced by his substance abuse and other methods of getting high during the show. I also wanted to point out that, even when you love someone, you have to recognize they are not perfect either. If you elevate someone, eventually they will disappoint you, and Molly is human too, and she will get angry about things, and make mistakes because that is our nature.

I hope you enjoyed the conversation between Mycroft and Sherlock, especially Mycroft’s Twilight Zone comment. That was fun to write!

Anyway, hope you like this latest chapter. Comments welcome
Molly watched Sherlock as they ate a delicious dinner at "Angelo's." For some reason, since they had entered the restaurant, he had withdrawn into himself.

After giving the waiter their order, the detective descended into silence. There was a pensive expression on his face which worried her.

Molly sipped her water, watching her fiancé anxiously. Finally she couldn't stand it a moment longer.

"Sherlock, what's wrong?" She questioned.

He gazed at her, and the slight frown on his face disappeared. "I'm sorry," he apologized, "I spoke with my brother earlier today when I was waiting for you. I don't want to alarm you, but he and I have not had any luck in finding out who planted those cameras in your flat. It didn't really strike me until now that someone, undoubtedly a person who had ties with Moriarty, knows where you live."

"Should that matter now that your sister is no longer able to contact any of these people?"

"I thought not, but I'll admit that when it comes to Moriarty, nothing can be taken for granted. He has reached beyond the grave before, and obviously he has people who are loyal to his evil intentions even now. With our relationship in the open, what is to stop someone from trying to get at me by using you, or God forbid, hurting you in some way? We need to consider carefully a suitable plan of action. I..." he hesitated, then said, "I need something from you."

Molly could hear a genuine note of fear in his voice as he spoke. "What do you need?"

As Molly spoke those words, she had a sudden flashback to a time years before when she had asked the same question of Sherlock. At that time he had been asking for her help in faking his death.

She still recalled the way her heart had fluttered when she had asked those words, and he had said, "You." He had bent his head towards her then and brushed her lips with his. It was nothing more than the touch of a butterfly, but it had still left her weak kneed, stammering and trying to regain control.

Sherlock had been all business after that as they discussed his plan and what needed to be done. That was also the day she realized she truly loved him and would walk to the ends of the earth for him.

At the time, Molly acknowledged her love to be futile. Even if he reciprocated her affections, he would be going into hiding, perhaps forever. There was no guarantee the sleuth's name would ever
be cleared. So she had let the flame he had lit within her become just an ember after he was gone.

Molly thought the flame had been reduced to ashes when she started dating Tom and accepted his marriage proposal. Of course, the moment the handsome detective had strolled back into her life, the fire had been rekindled inside her, and poor Tom had been the casualty. She still felt a little guilty about it.

Now, however, the situation was completely different, and Molly waited anxiously for Sherlock's answer.

"I need you to be okay with moving to Baker Street as soon as possible. I don't want you to spend another night alone. I can't take a chance on losing you when I've just found you. Will you do this for me?"

Molly made a mental list in her head.

1. Cohabiting with Sherlock made practical sense. Going back and forth from one flat to another used up a lot of time and money in taxi fares.

2. Many engaged couples lived together before the wedding day to save on rent.

3. Bringing her furniture to Baker Street would eliminate the necessity for replacement furniture from the recent explosion.

4. Sherlock was concerned for her safety.

5. Waking up every day with the knowledge that Sherlock was close by would be comforting.

It was the last point that really decided her. She had missed Sherlock's presence the previous night.

"Yes, Sherlock," she said, reaching over to squeeze his hand where it rested on the table. "I guess we'll need to contact a furniture removal company. I'll let my landlord know that I will not be renewing my lease, too."

"Thank you, my love," said the detective softly, his expression now clear of the worry lines it had shown earlier. "I'll make the arrangements tomorrow. If I can get furniture movers for this Saturday afternoon, would that work for you?"

"It would mean a lot of packing things up over the next few days. I'll see if Kaitlyn can help me. She probably has a few boxes lying around her place, and she has a car, so might be willing to transport some smaller items. I'll ask her tomorrow at work."

"I'll see if Mrs. Hudson and John have boxes, too. Maybe I can persuade John to help us as well if Mrs. H. can babysit."

Once the couple had finished dinner, Sherlock called the chauffeur to return and pick them up, then take them back to Baker Street.

Mrs. Hudson popped her head out of the door to her ground floor flat. "Hello, dears. Did you have a good time today?"

Molly held up the garment bags containing her wedding dress and veil. "Sherlock surprised me with a visit to the bridal boutique from 'Say Yes to the Dress.'"

Mrs. Hudson looked at the detective in surprise. "I wouldn't have expected you to have even heard
of the show. What a lovely gesture!"

Turning her attention to Molly, she asked, "Would you like me to take those bags and hang them somewhere safe? We wouldn't want our Sherlock getting nosy and peeking before the wedding, would we?"

"That would be lovely," responded Molly gratefully. She hadn't thought about where to store the dress. "Do you happen to have any empty boxes lying around that I can use to pack some things from my flat?"

"I'm sure I can find some," stated the landlady. "When would you be needing them?"

"As soon as possible," Sherlock answered her question. "I have persuaded my fiancée to move in earlier than planned so I can keep her safe."

Mrs. Hudson gave an approving nod. "It will be a nice change to have a woman around the place. Perhaps she can make sure you don't leave all your experiments lying around in the future." She shuddered and muttered, "Heads, thumbs, eyeballs, good gracious!"

"I'll do my best," promised Molly with a chuckle. She handed the older woman the garment bags.

Bidding the landlady farewell, Sherlock and Molly headed upstairs.

Sherlock closed the door behind them and asked, "What time do you have work tomorrow?"

"Early - seven o'clock." answered his fiancée. "Maybe I should go home and start packing tonight to get a head start on it."

"Nope," stated Sherlock flatly. "It can wait until tomorrow. John will be here in the morning, so I need to stay here. I'm not letting you spend another night without me, so that means you are staying with me. In any case, it has been a long, emotional day for both of us."

Molly smothered a yawn. "You're right. I am feeling rather tired. An early night would probably do me good."

"You're not going to go to sleep already, are you?" complained Sherlock. "Can't we sit and cuddle for a while first?"

"Remember your lack of furniture," Molly reminded him. "One chair does not make for very comfortable cuddling."

"Are you saying it isn't comfortable sitting on my lap?" Sherlock asked in mock indignation.

Molly stuck out her tongue at him. "Sherlock Holmes, behave yourself!"

"Okay, compromise then. You stay in my room and cuddle with me. Remember our bargain." He winked.

"You are too much, Sherlock," giggled the pathologist. "I accept your terms on one condition. We can cuddle, but any kissing stays strictly to the neck and above."

"No kissing your shoulders?"

"Sheesh, I give you an inch, and you want to take a mile. We can negotiate shoulders another time. I'm not gonna let you tempt me too much. We still have over nine weeks to go before we are married."
Sherlock looked like a little boy who had been given a lollipop and then had it taken away from him. "You drive a hard bargain, woman," he growled before putting his hands on both sides of Molly's face and kissing her. "Why don't you go get ready for bed while I make us a cup of tea?"

Molly nodded and left the room. She searched Sherlock's bedroom for the chemise she had bought the previous day, a blue satin one. It was nestled in a drawer beside Sherlock's pyjamas. After discarding her clothes and putting on the chemise, Molly decided it might be a bit too revealing to wear in front of Sherlock outside of the bed. Taking a look in the detective's wardrobe, she found a dressing gown and put it on over the satin nightie substitute, tying the belt into a bow at her waist. The dressing gown almost reached the floor due to the pathologist's 5'3" height. This accomplished, she returned to the kitchen where Sherlock was leaning nonchalantly against a wall. He was already sipping his tea and motioned toward the cup waiting for her.

"You fill out that dressing gown much better than I do," he observed. "My modest Molly."

"Just doing my part to make sure we keep things under control," she said tartly, before taking the tea cup and sipping from it.

"I do hope there are no floating objects in here," she joked, remembering John telling her and Mary about the eyeball incident months before. Apparently the sleuth had been doing some weird experiment looking at the effects of fire on an eyeball and had inadvertently dropped it into his tea.

Having been asked to be John's best man, Sherlock had been so bemused that he took a sip of said tea. Still now, the thought of it made Molly shudder even as she had to laugh about it.

"I assure you, I am resolved to no longer do experiments in my home. I will keep that type of thing limited to the laboratory at St. Bart's. Does that meet with your approval, my darling?"

Molly smiled at the endearment. "Most definitely."

Having finished their tea, Sherlock went to his bedroom to don his night attire while Molly used the bathroom to brush her teeth. She noted with satisfaction the body wash placed on the ledge of the tub. Sherlock had certainly gone to great lengths to make sure she had everything she needed.

The couple passed each other in the hallway as Sherlock, wearing his pyjamas and another of his dressing gowns, went to do his evening bathroom routine, and Molly headed for the bedroom.

Molly took off the dressing gown and placed it back on the hanger, slipping under the covers. A few minutes later, Sherlock entered the bedroom. Discarding his own dressing gown, he got into the other side of the bed.

The pair stared at one another for a few moments. This was the first time they had knowingly gotten into bed together. Molly felt a little shy and was tempted to turn her back on the man she loved.

"You look like a deer caught in the headlights," commented Sherlock.

"I.... well this is not a situation I am familiar with. It was one thing to hold you in the middle of the night to comfort you when you needed me, but to be here now and looking at you, I just..." She gulped. "I don't know...it's different, that's all."

"Sweetheart, I'm not going to hurt you or do anything that would compromise your beliefs. Don't forget, I am, uh, relatively inexperienced as well. Yes, Janine stayed over a couple of times, but I never so much as touched her when she slept here."
Molly felt a twinge of jealousy as she thought about the beautiful brunette who had been Mary's maid of honour. She disliked the woman intensely because of the rumours she had spread about Sherlock. "Well, you did kiss her, didn't you?"

"I had to keep up the pretense of being a devoted boyfriend. I never kissed her the way I kiss you, though. Not even close."

“So, last week, when you told me you’ve waited all these years...you mean literally? You’ve never been intimate with a woman, not even when you were at university?”

She could have sworn he blushed. “I thought that was pretty evident by what I said, but if you need me to say it, I shall. Your first time...” he paused then finished, “will also be mine.”

“So God saved us for each other,” said the pathologist wonderingly. In her wildest dreams she would not have really thought it to be so, if he hadn’t confirmed it.

“I guess that’s true, because I most certainly haven’t felt this way before. Until you came along, my life consisted of solving crimes and suppressing my emotions as much as possible.” He smiled at her then, moved towards the centre of the bed and propped himself up sideways on his right elbow, resting the side of his face on his hand. With his left hand he patted the empty space in front of him and invited coaxingly,"Come a little closer to me, my love."

Molly looked at his devastatingly handsome face and muttered, "As the spider said to the fly." She obeyed however, moving to just inches away from the man she loved.

Using his left arm, Sherlock pulled her the rest of the way towards him so her body was against his. "Now, that wasn't so hard, was it?" he asked, sliding his right arm under Molly's neck so her head rested against his shoulder. Looking into her soft brown gaze the detective kissed her gently.

Molly allowed her body to relax against his warm one. "I love you so much, Sherlock," she breathed.

"As I love you, my sweet little Molly," he responded, kissing her once more and then holding her close. "Now, let's get some sleep."

As Molly drifted off into slumber she knew she had never felt more loved or more protected than she did right now.

Chapter End Notes

So Molly is moving to Baker Street. It was inevitable wasn’t it? Being in such close proximity is going to make for a lot of complicated situations.

I know I am approaching my story in a different way than most people. Other stories portray Sherlock as having been with other women in the past, but I feel it is quite conceivable he was never with a woman due to his closed-off nature after the death of his friend. So yeah, I am probably the first person to write this love story in a way that portrays both of them as virgins. Virgin is NOT a dirty word, contrary to popular belief these days.
The Widower - John (Wednesday)

Chapter Summary

John is amazed as usual by Sherlock’s sleuthing capabilities, but more-so by his choice of case.

Chapter Notes

I thought I’d do a chapter from John’s perspective for a change of pace. I had no idea it was my longest one yet. I hope you enjoy it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

John Watson awoke to the sounds of crying coming from the other room. His daughter Rosamund could always be counted on to wake him early.

Extricating himself from his tangled sheets with some difficulty, the doctor looked at the digital display on his alarm clock.

It was six-fifteen, a whole fifteen minutes later than he was usually awoken by Rosie. He hoped she hadn't been crying for those minutes. Each morning was a struggle for him to get out of bed.

Besides the nightmares which occurred regularly and led to the constant state of twisted bedclothes from his tossing and turning, he felt a distinct lack of motivation. If it wasn't for his sweet baby, he would probably wallow a lot more and spend endless hours just laying in bed.

Rosamund was John's primary reason for going on with life. Of course, there was Sherlock, his best friend. However, Sherlock had been indirectly responsible for Mary's death. While the doctor no longer blamed his friend, he didn't know if their relationship could ever return to the way it used to be.

He had gotten a little bit of the anger out of his system the night he beat the crap out of the detective, kicking and punching him until the blood ran from his nose. When orderlies had rushed into the hospital room to restrain John, Sherlock had looked up, his blood dripping onto the floor and said, "It's okay. Let him do what he wants. He's entitled. I killed his wife."

John saved Sherlock from death at Culverton Smith's hands in the end but only because he had seen a DVD from Mary to Sherlock which she had recorded in the event of her death and given to a friend for safekeeping. In it, Mary had told the detective he would need to save John by putting himself in danger so that the doctor could then save him.

Sherlock went to great lengths to accomplish this, using drugs and almost killing himself as a result. According to Molly who examined Sherlock in his drug-addled state, he was dying. She had predicted if he continued the way he was going, he'd be dead in a month.

Thank God everything had worked out in the end. The serial killer was caught, and Sherlock was
clean again. Now, he had Molly as well as a chance at happiness. John was genuinely glad for his friend, but seeing Sherlock in love and truly happy for the first time made John feel his own pain and loss that much more acutely.

Sighing and wishing for the hundredth time that Mary was there to comfort their daughter, John headed into the small bedroom and picked up the baby. He took her to her high chair in the kitchen and settled her in the seat before fixing her a bottle.

Rosamund had had baby cereal for the first time the previous week, but John felt woefully inadequate when it came to feeding her actual food. She spit out more than she consumed. He had been assured by various people that this was completely normal and that Rosie would soon get used to the texture of food and being fed with a spoon. He was attempting to feed her the cereal at lunchtime and again at dinner. In a month or so, he would have to start giving her jars of baby food.

Being a single parent was a constant struggle. John's sister, Harry, had been a godsend. Sober now for several months, she recently came up to London to be near him and the baby, offering frequent babysitting services. Molly babysat Rosie several times previously, but he knew with the wedding planning she would not have much time for it now.

In a pinch, John could leave the child with Mrs. Hudson for a few hours too. He had already called the older lady a couple days earlier to ask if she could watch Rosie in the event that he and Sherlock decided to tackle a case today. His former landlady had been only too pleased to accept his request.

When Rosamund finished her bottle, John picked her up and sang nursery rhymes to her until her head drooped, and she fell asleep. He placed her gently in her cot and returned to the kitchen for some breakfast and a cup of tea.

Then, John searched for the notebook he wanted to give Sherlock. Mary had faithfully recorded names and places of several businesses for each aspect of their wedding planning. He located it among some papers on the desk in his sitting room.

Mary had printed on the front in large letters "Our Wedding Planner." There were names of photographers, bakeries specializing in wedding cakes, stationery stores that did wedding invitations and florists. Each entry in the notebook showed a price range. Mary also highlighted each place they had eventually selected for their various wedding needs.

John leafed through the pages, remembering how sick of tasting wedding cake he had been by the time they chose a cake.

The last entry in the planner just had one line, "serviettes - opera house (Sherlock)." The doctor recalled how easily Mary had called Sherlock out on his fibbing about where he learned to fold the serviettes into such an intricate design. He had eventually admitted to learning it on YouTube. John smiled at the memory. He knew this notebook would be an invaluable resource for Sherlock and Molly with their wedding date being so close.

Satisfied with his find, John relaxed in his chair until he heard a text alert at about eight. It was from Sherlock, of course.

SH: John, do you have any empty boxes lying around from when you moved to your new place? JW: A few, I think. Why? SH: Molly's moving to Baker Street this weekend. Just arranged for a furniture removals company to be at her flat on Saturday at one o'clock. JW: You sure do move fast, mate.
SH: Strictly practical reasons, for her safety.
JW: Keep telling yourself that.
SH: Very funny. Anyway, if you have some boxes, could you bring them by the flat when you come over in a couple hours? Want to start packing tonight.
JW: If Mrs. Hudson can watch Rosie tonight, I can bring them to Molly's flat and help.
SH: Sounds good. Looking forward to seeing my goddaughter. See you soon.

John walked into Rosamund's bedroom quietly. The baby was still sleeping soundly. In a corner of the room, several cardboard boxes were stacked. Most were empty but a couple of them had miscellaneous items like books and other knickknacks. He left those alone, figuring he could always dump out the contents later if Molly needed more for her move.

Still moving as silently as possible, John carried the empty cartons out to his car. Fortunately, he had found a close spot to the flat last time he used it. Mary had already owned the car when they moved in together, so John finally had a use for his driver's license. Having a baby made it much more convenient to travel by car, though traffic was always very congested and he sometimes had to park a few minutes away from Baker Street when he visited Sherlock to work on cases.

He gently placed the wedding planner into the topmost box to give to Sherlock later.

As the doctor filled a changing bag with nappies, baby milk powder, bibs and extra clothing for Rosie, he heard her stirring and picked her up out of her cot. Her timing was just right, he thought as he settled his daughter in her car seat. Picking up the changing bag, he headed towards the car and his former dwelling.

Upon arrival at 221B Baker Street, Mrs. Hudson was the one who greeted him at the door as usual. She cooed over the baby and took the changing bag from John.

"I'm just going to take Rosie upstairs to say hi to her godfather, then I'll be back downstairs to give you your chance at spoiling her," said the doctor.

As he walked upstairs, he heard the beautiful strains of Sherlock's violin playing an unfamiliar tune. It was exquisite, evoking a feeling of joy from the listener.

Sherlock opened the door, violin in hand. "Hi John, good timing," he greeted his best friend.

"That piece you were just playing. It's beautiful, very uplifting."

"Thank you," responded Sherlock. "I'm composing a piece to play for Molly at our wedding reception." He gestured to a sheet of manuscript paper on which he had annotated several lines of music.

To John's surprise, Sherlock laid his violin down and took Rosamund out of her father's arms. The detective gave his little goddaughter a kiss on the cheek and swung her around above his head, eliciting a delighted baby giggle from the infant.

Sherlock looked happy in a way John had only seen before when they were on a particularly intense case. His best friend had always been in his element when in the midst of an investigation.

This, however, seemed to be a more carefree happiness showing in Sherlock's expression. For the first time, the doctor thought his friend might actually have the potential to be a father himself one day, and a good one at that.

A few minutes later, Sherlock reluctantly handed off Rosie to her father. "I guess we should take a look at your blog to see if there are any interesting cases we can work on."
John dutifully took Rosamund downstairs to Mrs. Hudson. Upon consultation with the landlady, she said she would be only too happy to watch the baby that evening as well so he could help Molly with her packing. He then returned upstairs to find Sherlock with his laptop open on his knees.

"Sorry about the lack of furniture," the sleuth apologized. "That situation will be rectified on Saturday at least, once Molly's furniture arrives." He grinned up at the doctor.

"See anything interesting?" asked John.

"Several potential cases," responded the detective. "I'm inclined to investigate this one. We could head over to the house in question immediately and be done by dinnertime."

Sherlock presented his laptop to John, indicating the case in question. It was an email from a young lad which had come in that morning.

"Dear Mr. Holmes," it read. "I am very worried about my cat Fluffy who went missing three days ago. I know you are a big, famous detective, but I have £5 in my piggy bank which I can give you if you find my cat. Fluffy is a house cat who only goes outside to use the toilet. When my cat didn't come back after about half an hour I was worried. I checked the streets around here to see if Fluffy got run over but there was no dead cat at the side of the road. Please help me find my cat. I would be ever so grateful. I will be home all day today because I have a cold and mummy said I could stay home from school. Yours sincerely, Tommy Fisher." The boy had listed his address after writing his name.

John looked at Sherlock in astonishment. "This seems a little, uh, tame for you. Are you sure you can't find something more exciting like one with unexplained murders or cheating spouses?"

The detective shrugged. "Maybe I just want to make a little boy's day brighter."

"The cat could just be dead and then he won't be feeling any better."

"Well, first we will have to determine if Fluffy is a boy or girl. That could have a bearing on this case. Come, John, let's take the Tube to the address. The game is on!"

The men took the Tube to the station that was closest to the boy's house.

"Thank God for Google Maps," remarked the detective as he used it to find their way to the house.

"I was wondering something. How do you know the boy is little?" asked John as they walked.

"Well, I can't be exactly sure of his age. I would deduce he is younger than ten, due to some grammatical and spelling errors. The fact that he has only £5 in his piggy bank would seem to indicate he doesn't receive a large allowance, probably just a few coins here and there. Ah, here we are." Sherlock stopped walking, and they gazed at the rambling Victorian house.

The detective rang the doorbell, and it was opened almost immediately by a boy who looked to be around eight or nine years old. Excitedly, he turned around and yelled back into the house, "Mummy, it's Mr. Holmes! He's come to find Fluffy!"

A woman's voice came from the other room. "Tommy, you shouldn't tell stories. Mr. Holmes is much too important a detective to be bothering with us."

"But it is him, Mummy," insisted the boy. "Come and look."
A lady walked towards the front door, wiping her hands on her apron. She had obviously been in the midst of baking. When she saw who was standing there, she gasped and tried to smooth back her hair which was in an untidy ponytail.

"Oh my goodness," she exclaimed. Please come in, Mr. Holmes. Tommy just loves your blog."

John cleared his throat, a little annoyed at the way everyone seemed to miss the fact that he, not Sherlock, was the one who wrote it. "Actually, I'm the one who writes the blog. My name is Dr. John Watson. I am Detective Holmes's associate."

"Well, both of you please come in," invited the woman, showing them to a little sitting room. "Tommy can talk to you about Fluffy while I get back to the kitchen. I still can't believe you are actually here!"

Sherlock sniffed the air and asked, "Do you happen to be baking ginger nuts? I love ginger nuts."

Mrs. Fisher nodded. "They most certainly are. I'll be happy to give you some when they are out of the oven." She then left the room.

"So, Master Fisher, please tell me some more information about your cat. Is Fluffy a boy or girl cat?"

"You can call me Tommy," said the boy, sniffing a little. His nose showed evidence that he was indeed suffering from a cold. "Fluffy is a girl cat."

"Good, good, as I suspected," muttered the detective to himself. John looked at his friend, completely bewildered. What on earth did gender have to do with a cat's disappearance?

"Now, I want you to think very carefully Tommy, and try to remember. Was there a time when your cat spent a lot of time meowing and making a general nuisance of herself?"

"Why, yes," said the lad. "It was some time ago, maybe a couple of months. She would walk around the house making so much noise. Mummy and Daddy were quite upset by it. They told me I should keep Fluffy inside and make her use the litter box. But I was a bit naughty. She wanted to go outside so bad, and I let her out one day to use the toilet. When she came back in, she wasn't yowling anymore, so I figured she just missed being outside."

"Interesting," murmured the detective, "it all fits."

"What fits, Sherlock?" asked the doctor in exasperation. "What does this all have to do with a cat disappearing?" He was constantly confounded by the leaps of logic his friend made during cases.

"Patience, my friend," said Sherlock. "Tommy, would you mind showing me the front of your house? I'd like to take a look around."

The boy nodded and took them on a tour outside the house.

"Did Fluffy happen to be making loud meows again when she disappeared three days ago?" asked the detective.

"Yes, she was making funny noises. She kind of sounded like she was in pain, but she hadn't been outside in a few days. I thought I'd let her out again because it worked to make her quiet last time."
Sherlock nodded thoughtfully. He made his way to a rusted grating at the front of the house, close to the ground. It had been dislodged from its usual place over a hole. He peered into the darkness beyond the hole.

"Tommy," he said, "Do you know what a coal scuttle is?"

"Yes, sir," said Tommy proudly. "My mummy told me that many years ago, when they used coal to heat the houses, people would come and put coal through an opening into your house."

"That's very good," approved the sleuth. "Do you know how to get to the room where they used to put the coal?"

"It's below stairs," said the young lad, "Mummy doesn't really use it. I think she might keep some worn out old sheets down there to use as rags when she needs them."

John still could not see what this conversation had to do with Fluffy. Sherlock seemed to be following a random line of questioning, but the doctor supposed the detective had his reasons.

"Can you show me the room?" asked Sherlock as they returned to the sitting room.

"Come with me," said Tommy. The trio headed toward the kitchen where Mrs. Fisher was just taking the biscuits out of the oven. They looked and smelled delicious. "Did you figure out what happened to Fluffy?" she asked.

"I believe so," said Sherlock.

John wondered if he'd missed something. How could Sherlock possibly know what had happened to the cat? Perhaps he was just humouring the lady.

"I was asking Tommy if I could see the room where they used to put the coal. I have a fascination with old Victorian houses."

Mrs. Fisher looked at him, a little perplexed. "Well, certainly I'd be glad to show you. You'll have to excuse the mess though. It has a lot of old clothes and other junk down there."

Mrs. Fisher preceded the group down the stairs until they came to a small door. She opened it and reached for an overhead string that turned on a dim light bulb.

Sherlock made his way into the room and stopped after a few feet. "Just as I suspected," he said, turning around and smiling. "Will you please come here?"

The trio followed him into the room to see what the detective was looking at. There, resting on some old towels, was a cat. She was not alone. Four bundles of fur were nestled close to her, and she was licking one of them.

"It's Fluffy," exclaimed Tommy in delight, "and she's had kittens!"

John looked at the cat and kittens, then Sherlock. As usual, he was dumbfounded. "How did you know?" he asked.

"Elementary," said Sherlock. "My immediate thought after reading Tommy's email was that if his cat was still alive, it had either been snatched or gone somewhere to have kittens. The gestation period for a pregnant cat is about two months. When Tommy told me she had been meowing around the house for days, I surmised the cat was in heat at the time. The yowling attracts male cats. After Tommy let her out and she returned, no longer yowling, I surmised she had become
pregnant. The final clue was when the lad told me she seemed to be meowing in pain when he let her out a few days ago. I concluded she had gone into labour. A cat in labour will usually look for a cozy, dry place in which to give birth. As soon as I spied the coal scuttle and the open grate, I guessed she had gone through it.

He paused for breath and then said to Tommy's mother, "Were you aware that Fluffy was in heat and that this was why she was yowling constantly around the house?"

"Well, yes," said Mrs. Fisher. "That's why Tommy's dad and I told him to not let her go outside. I didn't know he had done so." She frowned at her son, then continued. "When Fluffy stopped making those noises, I just assumed she was no longer in heat. She's a fairly large cat as you can see, so I was not aware she was even pregnant!"

"A nursing cat will not leave her kittens either unless she is desperately in need of food, which is why you haven't heard her make any noise. In a day or two, she probably would have gone as close to the grate as possible to start meowing. The drop is too far for her to climb back up."

"Thank you so much Mr. Holmes," said the boy exuberantly, throwing his arms around the detective's waist.

Yet again, John was surprised when he saw Sherlock kneel down and hug the boy back. The old Sherlock would have probably patted his head awkwardly and tried to extricate himself as quickly as possible. Actually, the old Sherlock would have deemed this case to be beneath his notice.

The experience at Sherrinford had wrought a huge change in his friend. It had humanized him in a way John hadn't believed possible. The potential had always been there, and Sherlock had definitely grown and softened as a person in the years John had known him, but this new Sherlock was a sight to behold. A welcome sight.

"Mr. Holmes, I'm going to go and get my money for you now."

"That is not necessary," said Sherlock. "Although I would be happy to accept a few ginger nuts as payment."

Mrs. Fisher smiled at both men. "Thank you so much for coming. I suppose we will need to figure out what to do with five cats now! Let's go back upstairs so I can give you those biscuits."

Back in the kitchen, Tommy's mother put the whole tray of still warm biscuits into a plastic container. "Please accept these as a token of our appreciation," she said, thrusting the container into Sherlock's hand. Don't worry about returning the container, I have loads of them."

Mrs. Fisher and Tommy waved goodbye to the two men as they left the house to return home. As the pair rode the Tube back to Baker Street, Sherlock and John munched contentedly on fresh biscuits.

"I'll take fresh baked ginger nuts over money any day," commented the detective, eliciting a laugh from John.

"You'd better hope Molly can support you both then with her income," he said.

They rode in silence for some time. Sherlock had received a text from Molly and was busily texting back and forth with her. No doubt they were discussing their day. By the time the friends arrived back at Baker Street, it was close to three o'clock.

John went first to check on Rosie, who apparently was being "a little angel" according to Mrs.
Hudson. She insisted that she could continue watching the baby for the rest of the day so he would be free to go straight to Molly's from Baker Street.

"I've made us a cup of tea," announced Sherlock as John entered the flat. "Did you want anything to eat?"

"I'm fine," replied John. "Too many biscuits. They will tide me over until dinner time." He took the tea from Sherlock and sipped it. "Mrs. Hudson is going to watch Rosie for the rest of the day. I'm free to drive us to Molly's when you are ready."

"Great," said Sherlock with a smile. "Molly gave me a spare key so we can get there before she arrives home from work. It appears she has enlisted the help of her friends Kaitlyn and a girl from her church named Kayla as well. I haven't met her yet, but she is to be Molly's other bridesmaid."

Having finished their tea, John and Sherlock went downstairs once again, stopping to see Mrs. Hudson and Rosie. The infant was sleeping. Sherlock asked his landlady if she could spare any boxes to use for Molly's move to Baker Street. The men left the residence carrying two large boxes each which they deposited in the boot of John's car. Then, they proceeded to Molly's flat.

As they were on their way, John suddenly realized that he had been effectively distracted from thinking of Mary for several hours. It was the first day since Mary's death where he had actually felt more like his old self. Perhaps there was hope for him yet to make a good life for himself and Rosamund.

Sherlock's voice broke into his thoughts. "John, didn't you say you had something for me when we were texting yesterday?"

John groaned. He had completely forgotten to grab the notebook from the box earlier. Oh well, no matter, it would probably be better to give it to the engaged couple together at Molly's flat.

"I'll give it to you and Molly together at her flat later. It's for both of you anyway. Remind me if I forget. My memory isn't what it used to be." He gave a self-deprecating laugh.

"Will do," replied the detective with a laugh of his own.

I miss you Mary, the doctor thought to himself, but I know you would have wanted our friends to have that wedding planner. You would have been so happy that they got together.

This time, his smile at Sherlock was genuine.

Chapter End Notes

The “case” for this chapter was inspired by my experience with our own cat when I was a teenager. I let our cat out when she was in heat because I wanted her to have kittens and she did, three of them. Gestation time is indeed approximately two months, I researched it. Fast, huh?

Did you enjoy watching Sherlock do his sleuthing through John’s eyes? What do you think of my “wedding planner” idea? Will John ever find happiness again? Stay tuned.

Please read and comment to let me know your thoughts on this chapter. Again, I
apologize for its length!
All Work and No Play - Molly (Wednesday)

Chapter Summary

Molly and her mother have a long overdue conversation.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

As soon as Molly woke up, she knew she had a very busy day ahead of her. She needed to meet her mother for lunch and ask Kaitlyn if she was available to help her pack things from her flat.

She also thought it would be a good idea to talk to Kayla. They usually spoke at church, but with Molly working over the past weekend, they hadn't talked since Molly had asked her to be a bridesmaid. Maybe, if she was lucky, Kayla would be available as well to help with the move.

Molly gently disengaged herself from Sherlock's embrace. They had apparently slept in the same position all night. He was still fast asleep and looked so adorable with his curly hair falling over his forehead and his full lips slightly parted. She was tempted to kiss him but decided he needed his rest.

Deciding to skip a shower after remembering it had woken her fiancé on the last occasion, Molly quietly selected her clothes for the day and headed to the kitchen for her morning coffee. She noticed some crumpets and popped one in the toaster to eat for breakfast.

After eating, Molly went to the bathroom and brushed her teeth. Then, she brushed her hair and pulled it into its usual ponytail.

Consulting her watch, she saw it was time to leave for work. Hastily she scribbled a note to Sherlock which read, " Didn't want to wake you. Love you." She left it by the kettle in the kitchen.

On the way to catch the Tube, she sent her beloved a text as well. "Miss you already. xx"

Arriving at work a few minutes before seven, Molly had time to dash off a quick text to her mother, "I have lunch at noon, can meet you in hospital foyer if that's okay. Let me know."

Kaitlyn had the same shift and was scheduled to help Molly in the lab. This was a good opportunity for them to talk as they worked. As usual, Kaitlyn was first to get onto the topic of Molly and the wedding.

"So how was the rest of your day yesterday?"

"It was lovely. Sherlock took me to dinner afterwards and then we went back to his flat. He convinced me to move into Baker Street immediately. I think he's a bit paranoid, but he seems to think my life could be in danger if I continue to live at my place alone. " She rolled her eyes.

"Well, in his defense, I'm sure there are plenty of criminals out there with vendettas against him. What better way to get at someone than hurt the person they love?" pointed out her friend.

"I guess so. Anyway, he's going to call a removals company this morning to take my furniture over
to his flat. That reminds me, I need to let the landlord know. I don't suppose you have any empty boxes at your house I can have? I want to start packing things tonight."

"My mum always has boxes stored for every occasion. I'm free tonight if you'd like some help. I can take the Tube home and put boxes in my car. Then, I can drive them to your place."

Molly hugged her friend. "You are the best! I would really appreciate whatever help I can get. I think I might call my friend Kayla as well. She's going to be in the wedding, and Sherlock hasn't met her yet."

"Cool," said the blonde. "Who is Kayla?"

"She's a good friend from my church."

"If you need to make some phone calls, I can cover for you. Things are pretty slow right now."

"Thanks, Kaitlyn, I might just do that. I'll wait a bit, though. It's still too early to make any calls."

The women worked together for an hour. When Molly's phone pinged, she checked her messages. Her mother had just sent a text saying she would be there at noon.

A few minutes later, Molly heard Sherlock's customized text alert.

Kaitlyn looked over at her. "That's Sherlock, isn't it?" At Molly's nod, she continued, "I thought that was his text alert. Why don't you get back to him and make those phone calls now while I hold the fort?"

"Okay, thanks," Molly agreed.

The pathologist walked to the locker room for some privacy and sat down.

When she checked the text from her fiancé, she had to raise her eyebrows at its tone, and they texted back and forth.

SH: I am cross with you.

MH: Why? What did I do?

SH: You left without saying goodbye.

MH: I didn't want to wake you.

SH: I shall have to punish you for that.

MH: What sort of punishment?

SH: I'll think of something. Extra kisses at the very least.

MH: I like the sound of that. Maybe I'll have to leave you without saying goodbye more often.

SH: Oh, no you won't. That was the only time you leave me without a good morning kiss.

MH: Yes, sir.

SH: Now onto less serious matters, love. I've arranged a removals company to transport your stuff to Baker Street on Saturday at 1 PM. John is bringing over some boxes shortly too from his flat.
MH: Oh, good. Kaitlyn is bringing some boxes to my flat and helping with packing stuff tonight as well. I'm going to call Kayla too. Also, I need to let the landlord know I'm moving out.

SH: I'll leave you to it, then. Talk to you later. Love you.

MH: Love you too xx.

After finishing her conversation with Sherlock, Molly called her landlord's number.

Fortunately, he answered the phone. When Molly explained the situation, he was very understanding. He even told her he would list the flat for rent the following week. If he found replacement tenants (and he assured her this would almost certainly be the case, due to her central London location), he would not require her to keep paying rent until her lease expired. As soon as new tenants moved in, the contract would be terminated, and she would get her bond money back.

Molly was very pleased after she ended the call. If moving in with Sherlock early saved her some money, that was a bonus.

Next, the pathologist called Kayla on her mobile. Her friend answered the phone, and Molly was in luck once again. Kayla was free that evening and only too happy to help with packing. She was also excited at the prospect of meeting the famous detective. Interestingly, she asked if John Watson would be there as well.

"I'm not sure if he is staying after he brings some empty boxes for me," said Molly. "Why?"

"I'm a big fan of his blog," responded Kayla. "I don't suppose he'll be partnering me in the wedding, will he?"

"No. He's the best man. Sherlock's brother, Mycroft will be your partner."

Molly detected a note of disappointment in her friend's tone as she said, "Oh, okay. Well, I'll see you tonight. What time should I be there?"

"How does six sound? I thought I'd order pizza for us. You will get to meet Kaitlyn, my maid of honour, tonight, too. We can also see if we can find an evening next week to look for bridesmaid dresses."

"What about your wedding dress?"

"Actually, I already have it. I'll tell you all about it tonight. It was Sherlock's doing."

"I look forward to hearing the story," said Kayla. "See you tonight."

Once she had rung off, Molly hurried back to the lab to get back to work.

Just before noon, she took the lift down to the lobby to meet her mother for lunch. When she arrived, she saw that Mrs. Hooper was already there, looking a little lost.

"Hi, Mum," she greeted, showing the way to the canteen.

Lunch in hand, they selected a table in a quiet corner of the canteen then began a long, overdue conversation.

Mrs. Hooper told Molly about her struggle with alcoholism, the car accident she had been in and the time spent in jail. Then, she told her daughter how she had resolved to change her life and started going back to church.
"I was in a dark place, and unfortunately you were hurt by it. Last year, I recommitted my life to Christ, and I haven't looked back. I've been praying for you, too."

"But Mum, why didn't you contact me?" questioned Molly.

"At first, I felt too guilty to speak with you, and I felt that I didn't deserve your forgiveness. Then, I started attending a Bible study and prayer group. I learned we are called as Christians to forgive one another and to accept forgiveness as well. I know you hold those same beliefs, and I wanted to contact you, but I had lost the letter you wrote me that had your address and phone number."

She paused for a moment, and her eyes shimmered with tears.

"I have been praying for months to find you. The other night I happened to see the news on television, and they were talking about the famous detective Sherlock Holmes getting engaged. Then, I saw my beautiful daughter with him. I was so happy to see you were okay." Some teardrops made their way down Mrs. Hooper's face.

"When your fiancé called me the next day out of the blue, I told him he was an answer to prayer."

"I'm glad," said Molly. "Sherlock has always had the viewpoint that God does not exist. There have been several things over the past week that are causing him to question the veracity of those beliefs. I believe that God is showing him in a very real way that He does indeed exist, and I'm hopeful for a breakthrough."

"Oh, my dear, how could your fiancé not see your faith in the way you live your life, your integrity and trustworthiness? I'll be praying for you both. Now, tell me more about your man and how you met."

Molly explained her long-standing friendship with the sleuth and how he had come to her on many occasions for help with cases, as well as when he had faked his suicide.

"Oh, I remember when that happened. I was so sad. I never believed those stories on the news or in the papers. I was very glad to hear when his reputation was restored, and even more so when he returned to London. I did wonder how he did it, just like everyone else, but the main thing is that an innocent man was cleared and reinstated to his former profession. I still can't get over the fact that you, my precious daughter, are engaged to him!"

"Well, I am," laughed Molly. "Sometimes I can't believe it myself. I was carrying a torch for him for so long. While he was gone, I actually met someone else and tried to move on. I even got engaged. Then, Sherlock returned, and I knew I had never stopped loving him. I was just using poor Tom as a substitute. I made a mistake, but that's all behind me. None of us are perfect, Mum."

"You do forgive me then?" asked Mrs. Hooper.

"Of course I do. You should forgive me, too, for not trying to reconnect with you. Thank God Sherlock made that call! Mum, I have a question to ask you."

"Yes, darling?"

"Would you walk me down the aisle on my wedding day in nine and a half weeks' time?"

"Oh my dear, I would be honoured."

The two women finished their lunch and hugged goodbye, planning to talk again soon.
Molly returned upstairs to resume her work day. She realized she had forgotten to tell her mother that she was moving to Baker Street but figured it wasn't a big deal as her mobile would be moving with her so they would be able to talk no matter where she was living. She decided she'd inform her mother next time they talked. She would also stress the living situation before being married was strictly a safety issue. She didn't want her mum to think she was going against her own beliefs.

Molly had a post-mortem to perform after lunch. It was a fairly routine one on an elderly man. The family just wanted to confirm the cause of death.

Molly examined the body, analyzed tissue samples and determined his body had shut down due to stage four cancer which riddled his body in several areas, including his lungs and lymph nodes. She and Kaitlyn prepared the lab report then took a break.

Molly saw it was after two o’clock. Only two more hours of work. She decided to let Sherlock know about her day. He texted back immediately because he happened be on his way home from a case, so they were able to have a quick texting conversation.

MH: Spoke to my friend Kayla, and she is coming over to help tonight. Also spoke to my landlord. He said if he can find new tenants, I can get my bond back and not have to keep paying rent. He seemed quite confident about it.

SH: That's good news. How did lunch with your mum go? Everything sorted?

MH: It's all good. I asked her to walk me down the aisle.

SH: That's my clever Molly. I'm sure she was thrilled.

MH: She was. Thank you again for making all of this possible - the reconciliation with my mum, everything you've done.

SH: I'd do anything for you. Besides, I have a lot of catching up to do with everything you've done for me over the years.

MH: It's not a contest LOL. So, how has your day been going?

SH: Just solved a case for a little boy whose cat had disappeared. John and I took the Tube to his place, and we are back on it to go home now.

MH: Did you find the cat?

SH: Yes. I deduced she had had kittens. She was in the coal cellar beneath the house.

MH: Not your usual type of case. No murders or bodies.

SH: Just wanted to brighten a little boy's day. Besides, I got a reward - a batch of fresh baked ginger nuts. I love those.

MH: I'll have to remember that. Oh, I thought we could order pizza tonight while we work.

SH: Sounds like a plan. John is coming, too. Mrs. H. will keep babysitting Rosie for the rest of the day. He has the car and boxes. We are going to head over to your place once we are back at Baker Street. We can get a head start on some packing before you get home. Want us to start on a particular room?

MH: How about the bookcase in the sitting room? Kayla will be really happy to find out John will
be there.

SH: Why would that be?

MH: Apparently she's quite the fan of his blog. I think she will be more excited about meeting him than you.

SH: I can live with that. There’s only one person who needs to prefer me - you.

MH: You know I do. Gotta get back to work. See you tonight. Love you xx

SH: Love you too.

Molly and Kaitlyn finished their work day together at four o'clock. They rode on the same train, but Kaitlyn's stop was quite some distance beyond Molly's so they said goodbye when Molly got up to exit. Kaitlyn promised to be at her place before six.

Molly walked the few blocks to her flat with a spring in her step. She couldn't wait to spend time with Sherlock, even if it was mainly to do more work. This would be work with a purpose. 221B Baker Street would soon be her home.

Chapter End Notes

So Molly and her mother finally talked!

I believe that we should forgive others and also allow ourselves to be forgiven by others. We are all worthy of redemption.

I hope you are enjoying my OC Kaitlyn. You will be getting to know Kayla better as well in future chapters. As always, I love to hear from my readers of my labour of love. Share your story too!
Packing Up - Sherlock (Wednesday)

Chapter Summary

Molly and Sherlock, along with their friends, get ready for her big move to Baker Street.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sherlock and John arrived at Molly's flat and immediately got busy, carrying the empty boxes inside.

The detective put on the kettle and made tea for himself and his friend.

John had brought in one of the cardboard cartons and set it on the table, directing Sherlock not to look inside because it contained his surprise for the engaged couple.

Before pulling the books out of the bookcase, Sherlock took a closer look at them. There was some classic novels, the complete Harry Potter collection and a Bible as well as miscellaneous paperbacks, mostly historical romance novels. Sherlock was quite amused by those novels, apparently Molly was even more of a romantic than he had previously thought. He glanced at the back cover of some of the Barbara Cartland novels. They all seemed to be stories of rich Dukes or Lords or other noblemen who fell in love with beautiful, penniless orphans. Perhaps he should have accepted the knighthood he had been offered on a couple occasions for services to the Crown.

He reflected further that Molly’s inner romantic nature may have been the reason she had never given up on him. Didn't those romance stories have a dark hero who saved the beautiful heroine from a dangerous situation? It certainly seemed that way, just by reading those synopses and looking at the front covers of the books.

Yikes, he was the hero of his own romance novel. Hadn't it taken a dangerous situation for him to realize he was in love with Molly?

On another shelf of the bookcase were several Agatha Christie novels. He actually owned several of the author’s books back at his parents’ home in Sussex. One day he’d have to show Molly his room with his collection of books. The most surprising thing he found though was a slew of books by the prolific author of children's books, Enid Blyton.

He vaguely remembered reading those books as well as a child and having them read to him by his mother. A memory struggled to reach the surface of his mind.

Eurus had been reading one of them aloud to him. Something had happened, she had frightened him by saying something that made him scream. He tried to delve deeper into the memory, but it eluded him.

There was still so much of his childhood that was cloudy. It was as if a mist had covered the memories, and try as he might, he could not retrieve them. It was extremely frustrating. The sleuth decided he should ask his mother if she remembered the incident. If Mummy Holmes could
enlighten him, perhaps the memory would return.

"What are you thinking about?" asked John. "I could feel the wheels turning in your head. You had that faraway look in your eyes like you were deep in thought."

"I was trying to recall a memory with Eurus," said the detective, frustration evident in his voice. "I saw those Enid Blyton books on the shelf and was reminded that I read those stories as a child. There is some trauma associated with those books that has to do with Eurus, but I just can't remember it. It's like my mind palace has a short circuit in the area of my stored Eurus memories. They are fragmented and intangible for the most part."

"I'm sorry, Sherlock. I'm guessing the trauma of Victor's disappearance triggered a fail-safe in your brain to protect you. I would guess that is the reason you have had such a hard time dealing with normal human emotions over the years. I hate to say it, but I think Eurus's methods to give you emotional context succeeded. It was a high cost to pay, but my observations of you since then reassure me that you have embraced your true self, the one that was overshadowed for so long by your intellect."

"I do feel different," conceded Sherlock. "I know I am not the man I was before Sherrinford. Acknowledging my love for Molly was like pulling a cork out of a bottle of champagne that had been shaken beforehand. The emotions exploded from me, and it manifested itself in the way I destroyed that coffin."

"Yes, that was truly a sight to behold," agreed John.

"Well, I guess I should stop cogitating those things for now, or Molly will get home to find nothing done." As he finished speaking, Sherlock started pulling books off shelves and depositing them into a box.

John started working too, and before long the bookcase was empty save for the leather-bound Bible, which was worn at the edges and seemed to have been frequently read.

Sherlock took the Bible and curiously leafed through some of the pages. This was, in essence, the cornerstone of Molly's faith. He resolved to read some of it for her sake. Perhaps she could recommend a place to start.

The large volume was divided into two sections, something called the Old Testament and the New Testament. Then each testament was subdivided into different titles. He vaguely recalled his mother telling him there were books in the Bible and dismissing the notion. How could there be books inside a book? He didn't understand it.

The sleuth did notice that the New Testament contained a lot of red text, which piqued his interest. He would ask Molly about that as well. He supposed he would learn more about that stuff tomorrow with the pre-marital counselling session and at church on Sunday. The thought of church did not seem as intimidating to him as it once had, although he still felt nervous about making a fool of himself.

John was watching him with interest. "Now I've really seen everything," the doctor joked. "I never thought I'd see you within ten feet of a Bible. You were so uninterested in all things Christian that you were using your phone during Rosie's baptism."

Sherlock flushed with embarrassment and set the Bible on the table. "I apologize for the disrespect I showed. Thanks in large part to Molly, I am trying to be more open to new things. I have always been close-minded when it came to religion of any kind, I admit it. It has been perhaps my greatest
failing as a person. I am attempting to broaden my horizons and acknowledge that I make mistakes like anyone else. You have certainly been privy to a number of them."

"Yeah, I remember," said John dryly, "a certain incident where you deliberately added sugar to my tea because you assumed it was drugged and wanted to check your hypothesis."

"Yes, one of my rare miscalculations." As he spoke, he heard the front door being opened.

"Molly," he breathed, striding towards her. "I missed you." He proceeded to demonstrate how much he had missed her by putting his hands on either side of her face and kissing her deeply.

Molly responded by putting her arms around his neck and continuing the embrace.

John cleared his throat. "Ahem, when the two of you are finished snogging, I have something for you."

Sherlock pulled away from Molly. "I hate that word," he complained. "Makes me think of children doing things when their parents aren't around."

"Well, if the shoe fits..." said the doctor, grinning. He was holding a notebook in his hands.

"What's this?" queried the detective.

John turned the front cover of the book towards the couple. "Mary made this when we were planning our wedding." He offered it to Sherlock.

Sherlock took the wedding planner from his friend and opened it, leafing through the pages while Molly peered at it from beside him. He saw multiple entries for all sorts of different businesses which catered to people getting married. He had to grin at the last page where Mary had written his own name next to "serviettes."

"This is wonderful," exclaimed Molly. "We haven't had time to look into much regarding wedding preparations."

"I thought you could make use of it, and I know Mary would have wanted you to have it."

"Thank you, John," said Sherlock, giving his friend a big smile. "This will be an invaluable resource for us." Having said this, he put the planner on the table and said to Molly, "I guess we should get on with the packing."

"Yes," said the pathologist. "Once Kaitlyn and Kayla arrive, I'll order the pizza for us." Turning to John, she asked, "Would you mind packing up the things from the linen cupboard? Sherlock and I will start packing the clothes from my bedroom."

John raised an eyebrow. "You had better keep the door open or you might not get too much done," he joked.

Molly laughed, and Sherlock said reprovingly, "We will behave ourselves of course, Dad." Then he stalked off to the bedroom with his fiancée in tow.

Fifteen seconds later, he returned to the sitting room and grabbed two boxes, then made his way back to the bedroom as John laughed at him.

Sherlock started with the chest of drawers while Molly began taking clothes from her wardrobe off their coat hangers, depositing them neatly into another box.
"Need more boxes," muttered the sleuth as he finished with one.

"Me too," said Molly as she went to get more from the sitting room.

When she deposited another carton in front of Sherlock, he grabbed her and pulled her in for another kiss. "I'm still making up those kisses you didn't give me this morning," he whispered in her ear.

Molly giggled. "Sherlock Holmes, you are too much," she said as she kissed him back.

John's voice came from the other room, "More work, less play."

The couple laughed and got back to work.

The doorbell rang several minutes later, and Molly answered it. Kaitlyn was at the door with an armload of boxes.

"There are more in my car," she said, indicating down the street.

The two men went back to Kaitlyn's car with her and were able to take the rest of the cartons between them.

Kayla turned up a few minutes later. Molly introduced her to Sherlock, then John and Kaitlyn.

Sherlock observed that the brunette kept glancing at John. She was a pretty girl, in some ways similar to Molly in appearance, although perhaps a year or two older.

Her slim silhouette deemed her to be a person who enjoyed being on the go. Her nails were cut very short, with no nail polish, and she wore the neat attire of skirt and blouse with sensible shoes. Her hair was in a loose bun. He was almost certain she was a school teacher.

Instead of showing off his powers of observation in his formerly characteristic superior manner however, the detective merely said. "It's a pleasure to meet you, Kayla."

Molly called the closest pizza delivery place and ordered two pizzas. The five agreed on ham and pineapple for one and then ham and mushroom for the toppings on the other.

Molly invited everyone to sit down and relax. "We can eat before getting to work," she said. "Besides, this will be a good opportunity for everyone to get to know each other."

Sherlock noticed that Kayla chose a seat on the sofa next to John and immediately engaged him in conversation. Her body language as she crossed her legs towards the doctor and leaned into him was a clear indicator to the sleuth that the girl was interested in him.

He decided it would be a good thing if someone could be there for his friend and help him to get over the loss of his wife.

Molly and Kaitlyn were talking about bridesmaid dresses and colours of said dresses, so Sherlock decided to act the part of waiter and see what everyone wanted to drink. He checked Molly's fridge and saw some cans of Coca-Cola and Sprite, as well as orange juice and bottled water.

After the detective asked about hot or cold preference and gave the options, Kayla asked, "I don't suppose there is anything diet I can have?"

John looked at her and asked, "Why would you need a diet drink? You don't need to diet. Besides, all those chemicals in diet drinks are worse than sugar, in my opinion..."
Kayla blushed and said she would have water. John asked for the same. Kaitlyn wanted a Sprite. Sherlock realized he had no idea what Molly's favourite cold drink was. He had only ever seen her drinking tea or coffee.

"I'm going to have a Coke," he announced. "Molly?"

She smiled at him. "I'll take a Coke as well."

Once all the drinks were organized, Sherlock let the conversations wash over and around him, not feeling the need to talk himself. The pizza arrived and everyone settled down to eat, using some paper plates Molly had brought out from a cupboard.

"Less clean up that way," she said practically.

After dinner, everyone got to work. Molly instructed her friends to work on packing the breakable kitchen items like the crockery and glasses. She gave them some rolls of paper towels to wrap around the items.

John finished the linen cupboard and then worked with the girls in the kitchen.

Sherlock and Molly continued packing clothes and other bedroom items. As they worked, Sherlock saw a little book in Molly's bedside top drawer called "Our Daily Bread." He opened it and saw it had three months of readings with Bible verse references and a story followed by a prayer at the bottom of each page. That reminded him of a question he wanted to ask of Molly.

"Molly, I saw you had a Bible in your bookshelf. I left it on the table."

"I noticed it there and added it to the top of a box of books," said Molly. "I need to make sure I know where it is. It is one of my most treasured possessions, although I have to admit it has been neglected of late because you have been a bit, well a lot, of a distraction."

She gave a wry smile. "Was there some reason you are telling me this now?"

"I saw that little 'Our Daily Bread' book in your drawer, and it reminded me of a question I wanted to ask about your Bible."

"You actually opened it? I'm surprised, but I think that's great," Molly said, coming over to her fiancé and standing on tiptoes to kiss his cheek. "What was your question?"

"What is the purpose of the red text in sections of the..." he searched for the name, "New Testament?"

"Those words are red to show they were spoken by Jesus."

"Ah, interesting," murmured Sherlock. "He had a lot to say, didn't he?"

"Of course he did," responded the pathologist. "He is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. He's the reason we have Christmas and Easter. Even our yearly calendar is based on dates before and after Christ. He was - is - the most important historical figure in human history, and he was a human as well as God."

"I don't understand," said Sherlock, feeling very confused. "How could he be a man and God at the same time?"

Molly shrugged. "It's not an easy concept to understand. In fact, it is only faith that allows us to"
accept what seems impossible as possible. Christians believe in a triune God, a God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit all at once."

Despite himself, Sherlock was interested in what Molly was saying. It all seemed so contradictory, yet she had no problem in believing it. He was forty years old and had never bothered to read anything about religions in general, having decided all religion was man-made and a waste of time.

But millions, perhaps billions of people all over the world ascribed to these beliefs. Even now, people in foreign countries were dying for those beliefs. He wanted to learn more, understand more about this.

"I..." he said hesitantly, "I think I'd like to know more about this God of yours."

Molly's eyes shone as she took his hands in hers. "I would like nothing better than to introduce you to Jesus and share my faith with you, if you are truly open to listening. I guess this is not exactly the opportune time for it, but let's discuss it more soon, okay?"

"I'd like that," said Sherlock, squeezing her hands in return. "I look forward to discovering more about you, Molly Hooper." He kissed her gently on the lips and they got back to work.

At around nine o'clock, Molly called a halt to the work. Substantial progress had been made with the packing. In fact, most of it was done, save for miscellaneous objects lying here and there.

"Thank you so much, everyone," she said. "I can't believe we made so much progress so quickly."

"Teamwork," said John and Kayla together. They both then laughed, a little embarrassed.

Kaitlyn offered to drive Kayla home. Molly made arrangements with her friends to go out looking at dresses the following Tuesday evening.

After the girls had left, John offered to drive Sherlock and Molly back to Baker Street. "Did you want to take any of these boxes along?" he queried, gesturing to the stack of cartons that was ready to go. "Molly, why don't we take some of your clothes. They are the most likely thing you would make use of."

Molly nodded in agreement. The boxes of clothes were put into the boot of John's car.

Before leaving the flat, Molly grabbed the wedding planner from the table and retrieved her Bible from the top of the pile of books in the one carton. She locked the flat, and they were on their way.

All in all, it had been a good night's work, reflected Sherlock to himself. He had met someone new, learned some new things about Molly and watched his best friend come out of the shell he had enclosed himself in since Mary's death.

Of course, the best part was that Molly was now under his protection, and he would make sure she stayed safe.

Chapter End Notes

Here begins the heavy duty Christian content as Sherlock becomes more interested in learning about Molly’s faith.
I hope I am writing this in a way that makes it easy to understand what Christianity is about.

So, Sherlock has some childhood trauma associated with Eurus - what could it be? And John has made a new friend. Will he find happiness again? What do you think?

Have you heard of Enid Blyton? She is a very famous English author of children’s stories.
Late Night - Molly (Wednesday)

Chapter Summary

Molly shares more about her faith.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The trio arrived at Baker Street shortly before ten o'clock.

Sherlock unlocked the front door to let Molly in while he and John went to get the cartons of clothes from the car's boot.

Molly immediately went to Mrs. Hudson's flat and knocked on her door.

"I'm sorry we're so late," she apologized to the landlady. "Thank you for the boxes. We got a lot of packing done. Is Rosie asleep?"

Mrs. Hudson showed Molly to the bedroom, where the infant lay fast asleep on the bed surrounded by pillows on each side to make sure she didn't move too far.

"She's so precious," breathed Molly, drifting into a daydream about having a bundle of joy of her own. She longed for a baby and had never realized before how much. She definitely wanted more than one child as well. As an only child herself, she remembered being lonely at times without having a sibling with whom to share her thoughts and dreams. Giving herself a mental shake, Molly caressed the baby's cheek, then picked her up gently.

"I'll take her to John," she told the landlady. Rosie cuddled against Molly, and she breathed in the sweet baby smell.

"I'll get the changing bag," said Mrs. Hudson. The two women exited the ground floor flat just as the men walked in, laden with the cartons of Molly's clothes. The wedding planner and Molly's Bible were balanced precariously on top of Sherlock's stack.

The two men walked upstairs, followed by the ladies. After they had set the boxes down, Molly handed John his sleeping daughter while Mrs. Hudson turned over the changing bag to him.

"Thanks for watching her," said John.

"Oh, she's no trouble at all. In fact, she's less trouble than Sherlock is sometimes."

The trio laughed at Mrs. Hudson's comment.

"Well, Sherlock's my responsibility now," said Molly, giving him a friendly punch on the arm.

Sherlock pretended to be hurt by her words. "Does that mean you are going to just be my babysitter now?"

"I'll be anything you need me to be," promised the pathologist with a wink.
Mrs. Hudson went back to her flat as John said his goodbyes, and Rosamund's godparents kissed her goodnight.

After John had left, Sherlock took the boxes to his bedroom, commenting, "We will have to make room for your furniture between this and the spare room."

"We don't have to worry about the beds at least," Molly informed him. "Both of the beds, the wardrobe and drawers in the spare room came with the flat. It was partially furnished."

"That is fortunate," responded Sherlock. "I had been puzzling over where we were going to fit everything. There is some room for extra furniture upstairs in the second bedroom, but the bed issue was my greatest concern."

"No need to worry any more, then," assured the pathologist. "The rest of the furniture we will make good use of, seeing as you lost most of yours in the explosion." She shuddered, thinking Sherlock could have so easily been killed. It was another miracle that he had survived yet again.

"I think I'm going to go take a shower now," Molly told her fiancé. "I didn't want to wake you this morning, so I skipped my shower. It also made sense, seeing as we were going to be packing things this evening."

"Okay, I'll make us a cup of tea in the meantime. I think I'll take a shower as well after you are finished."

Molly went into the bathroom and disrobed, then stepped into the bathtub once the water was hot enough for her shower. She decided to use her vanilla black currant body wash, telling herself it was for variety but acknowledging she was hoping Sherlock would comment on the new scent. His reaction to the jasmine vanilla had certainly been a satisfying one. She wondered if he would find this scent intoxicating as well.

With body and hair all freshly clean, Molly stepped out of the shower and realized to her chagrin she had forgotten to bring in any night attire. Wrapping a towel around herself, she tried to dash to the bedroom without being seen, only to find Sherlock in there, holding her chemise and some clean knickers.

"Is this what you're looking for?" he asked in mock-innocence.

"I thought you were making tea," she admonished while she felt a blush creep up her cheeks. It was not a comfortable feeling to be practically naked in front of him. It didn't help that he always looked so darn hot in his suit, and she didn't mean hot in the traditional sense of the word.

"Oh, the tea is ready," said her man. "So did you want these or not?" He cheekily twirled her pants around his finger.

"What has gotten into you?" asked Molly in an irritated tone as she tried unsuccessfully to snatch her knickers from his hand which he dangled out of her reach. That nine inch height difference put her at a distinct disadvantage.

Sherlock backed down then. "I'm sorry, Molly, I was just having a bit of fun. It has been a long day, after all. You know what they say about all work and no play. I thought we were due a little playtime."

At Molly's look of consternation, he added, "Not THAT kind of playtime. Get your mind out of the gutter, Dr. Hooper."
"I wasn't, I didn't think..." stammered Molly.

"Take it easy, my love," Sherlock said. "I was just looking up how to flirt on YouTube while I waited for you to get out of the bathroom."

Molly laughed. "You are too much! I think you've been doing perfectly fine so far. But this is a bit um..."

"Too soon?" He questioned mildly.

"Yes, too soon. I mean we've been engaged for a little over a week, and we still have to get through another nine and a half weeks until our wedding day. If I'm to keep my and your virtue intact, we should probably keep the flirting to times when I am not standing in front of you in a towel and nothing else."

Sherlock pouted. He looked so adorable that she was tempted to throw caution to the winds and throw her arms around him and kiss that pout away. Bad idea, her inner voice of reason told her.

Her fiancé held out her pants and chemise. "Okay, so we leave this flirting to closer to the wedding?" His lips curved in a smile, and she knew he was not in any way annoyed by her hesitation.

"Something like that," she told him, taking her nightwear and disappearing back into the bathroom to dress. When she came out she walked to the kitchen a little shyly. Sherlock was leaning against the counter. She should have put on a dressing gown, but oh well, at least her knickers were on, and she had after all snuggled with the detective in bed while wearing this same nightie substitute.

Sherlock glanced at Molly and said, "By the way, that new body wash smells like heaven on your skin. I would have told you that when I was attempting to flirt with you, but you might have run away or dropped your towel as you raised your hands in consternation at my words. Then, I might have had a hard time controlling my desire for you and ended up compromising your beliefs. So I am telling you this calmly now, in a matter-of-fact manner." He laced his fingers through hers.

"I appreciate that," Molly gave him a loving smile.

They drank their tea, and Sherlock left the kitchen for his own shower while Molly retrieved her Bible and went to what was now their bedroom, rather than just Sherlock's. That was going to take a little getting used to, thinking of it that way.

She made herself comfortable, sitting cross-legged on the bed with a pillow propped up behind her for support.

Molly wanted to look through some Bible passages that could be used for the wedding service, as Pastor Briggs had suggested the previous week. She located her favourite one that was usually used for weddings. It was from 1 Corinthians 13. Then, she found a second passage in Mark, which she decided to read to Sherlock to make sure he was okay with using them during the wedding ceremony.

As she waited for her fiancé, Molly closed her eyes and silently prayed for him. She prayed that God would reveal Himself to Sherlock in a very real manner and that the Holy Spirit would work in his life to draw him to a new life of faith. She opened her eyes only when she heard the connecting door to the bathroom open, then closed them again as the detective entered the room.

He moved to his side of the bed and sat next to Molly. "What are you doing?"
"I was just looking at Bible readings for the wedding ceremony," Molly explained. "Pastor Briggs told me on the phone last week that we could choose two for the service. I was just looking them up."

"Whatever you choose is fine with me," Sherlock informed her. "It's not as if I have any reference to go by. I wouldn't know where to start."

"Would you mind if I read out to you the two passages I found in the New Testament?"

"Of course you can, if you'd like. One question, though. Why is the Bible separated into the Old Testament and the New Testament?"

"The Old Testament is a collection of books written by various prophets and other people before Jesus was born. There were many prophecies predicting Jesus' birth, the birth of a Saviour, hundreds of years before he was born. Those prophecies were fulfilled, down to Jesus' birthplace, Bethlehem. It is actually quite incredible how accurate these prophets were. The New Testament contains books written after the birth of Christ. First are the four Gospels, which chronicle events in Jesus's life. The Christmas story, which you probably heard as a child, is in the book of Luke. Matthew also has a shorter account, which shows Joseph's side of the story before Jesus is born. That is also where you read about the visit from the Magi, or wise men, as people usually refer to them. That visit did not actually occur when Jesus had just been born, contrary to popular renderings of the story. It occurred sometime later, closer to two years."

"How interesting. I've heard the Christmas story, of course," agreed Sherlock. "My parents took me to church when I was little. I even believed it until...actually, I don't really know when I started to think it was just a fairytale. Maybe it was because of all the Eurus stuff. I am really unclear about it."

Molly reached over and took Sherlock's hand. "I can understand how that trauma could have caused a disconnect from all things spiritual. I think anyone would question God if they had to deal with a situation like yours. One thing I believe with all my heart, though, is that you can run away from God, but He will never run from you. In your darkest times, He is there. Having that belief has helped me deal with the things in my life, like my dad's death."

She continued, "God is as real to me as you are, even though I can't see Him. I see the result of His work in my life. When I need to be comforted, I can always find words that speak to me personally, whether it's from reading my Bible, or a devotional from 'Our Daily Bread.' I don't want to preach to you, but I hope you will read the Bible and make your own choice. As a detective, you are aware you need the facts of a case in order to make an informed deduction. How can you know the Bible is true or not true unless you read it for yourself?"

"Valid points, my love. I never really considered before how my attitude towards Christianity was coming from a place of ignorance. I merely looked at the generally accepted theories of most scientists rather than considering the opposite viewpoint and making my own choice about it. I can start by listening to those Bible...passages you called them?"

Molly nodded. "Okay. Well, the first reading is from the Gospel of Mark, and it talks about marriage."

She released her fiancé's hand and began to read. "This is from Mark, chapter 10, verses 6 through 9."

"'(6) But at the beginning of creation God made them male and female. (7) For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, (8) and the two will become one flesh."
So they are no longer two, but one flesh. (9) Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

"I like that," remarked the detective. "It's actually quite poetic, romantic even."

"I think so, too." Molly turned the pages of her Bible until she found the passage in 1 Corinthians. "This one talks about love. It's how I feel about you. It's a bit longer, a whole chapter in fact. It is 1 Corinthians, chapter 13."

"'(1) If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. (2) If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. (3) If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.'"

"'(4) Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. (5) It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. (6) Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. (7) It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.'"

"'(8) Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. (9) For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, (10) but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. (11) When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. (12) For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.'"

"'(13) And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.'" As Molly finished speaking, she turned her head to look at the man whom she loved.

Sherlock's eyes were wide in astonishment, and she knew he had been listening intently. There was silence for a few seconds, and then he spoke, slowly, as if he was trying to find the right words.

"That was...extraordinary. I can understand it in a way now that I could never have understood before. If I had listened to those words a few weeks ago, I would have dismissed them. I regarded love as a failing, a weakness of humanity. I've spent so much of my life being proud of my intellect, feeling myself superior to others. By labelling myself as a high-functioning sociopath, I was knowingly inconsiderate of others. I spoke out of turn. I hurt people, especially those I cared for, who forgave me time after time. You forgave me more times than I can count."

Molly leaned her head against his shoulder. "The Bible says you should forgive 'seventy times seven,' so I think you are still eligible for a lot more forgiveness from me." She looked up at him and was quite surprised when her man put his hand gently on her cheek and gave her the sweetest, most tender kiss they had ever shared.

"You are so beautiful, Molly," he choked out hoarsely, with tears in his eyes, "inside and out. I want to have the faith that you have. I think I am beginning to understand. Don't give up on me, my love."

"You know I won't," promised his fiancée as tears gathered in her eyes and slid down her cheeks. "My love for you is unconditional, as is God's love for us. I will never turn my back on you. I will be there for you when you need me and even when you don't. You are my soulmate."

"I feel the same way," said the detective, putting his arm around Molly and pulling her close. "You
are my soulmate, the woman I was meant to be with. I guess that means I must believe in God after all. Obviously someone had to have made you for me. It couldn't have been a happy accident."

"I'm so proud of you," said Molly as she slid her arms around him as well. "It's like you are a new man. Your eyes have been opened to new possibilities and you are not running away from them. I can't tell you how much that means to me."

"I guess I will be going to that counselling session tomorrow with a more open mind," said Sherlock. He turned his head to glance at the clock. "Make that today, it's after midnight. Aren't you on early shift again tomorrow, I mean today?"

"Yes," said Molly. "This conversation was definitely worth a late night, though, my beloved."

She withdrew from Sherlock and reached into her lap to retrieve her Bible which she set on the floor beside the bed. "I guess I had better get some sleep."

The couple got off the bed and pulled the covers down. Then, as one, they got into their respective sides of the bed and pulled up the covers. Without thinking about it, they gravitated to the middle of the bed, and Sherlock held her to him as he had done the previous night. He kissed her softly.

"Goodnight, my sweet love," he told her tenderly.

Molly snuggled as close to his warmth as possible, feeling as if she had never been happier. Her Sherlock was changing in front of her eyes. She could see the Holy Spirit working to change his heart, to soften it. "Goodnight, my love," she whispered, while her heart silently said, "Thank you Jesus."

Chapter End Notes

There’s a heavy dose of Christian content in this chapter. One of the things I want to point out to you, dear reader, is that you can run away from God, but He will never run from you. God is always there, waiting, and He wants to be a part of your life. As Molly explains her faith to Sherlock, her words echo mine.

Sherlock has finally acknowledged that God exists, can I hear an “Amen?”

Read, but above all, pray.

Comments welcome and appreciated. I want this story to be a dialogue, rather than a monologue!
A Morning of Reading - Sherlock (Thursday)

Chapter Summary

Sherlock begins to read the Bible.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sherlock’s turquoise eyes snapped open. By the pale light filtering into the room, he estimated it to be around six-fifteen.

Something was wrong. He realized Molly was still fast asleep in his arms.

"Molly," he whispered urgently. "You need to get up or you'll be late for work."

"Hm, what?" She asked drowsily, before sitting up suddenly as his words sank in. "What time is it?"

"It's a quarter past six," her fiancé informed her, glancing at the clock. His deduction had been correct.

"Oh no!" She gasped. "I forgot to set my alarm. Thank goodness I don't need to shower this morning."

She jumped out of bed and dashed to her pile of clothes from the night before, grabbing her bra and jeans, then opening the wardrobe and taking a clean blouse off the coat hanger. Keeping her back turned, she removed the chemise and quickly donned her bra, then the rest of her clothes.

The detective couldn't help but catch sight of the lovely pale skin on her naked back and a very cute bum beneath her lacy knickers. He sucked in his breath and closed his eyes. She was a temptress even when she wasn't intending to be one.

Molly then ran to the bathroom to pull a brush through her hair and brush her teeth.

Sherlock got out of bed and waited for her to exit the bathroom. When she did so, he calmly stood in front of her.

"Sherlock," she huffed, "if you don't move out of my way, I am going to miss the train!"

"You have time," he assured her. "I am not going without a good morning kiss two mornings in a row."

She frowned, then relented and proffered her lips for a short but sweet kiss. "I'm sorry," she apologized. "I tend to be grumpy when I don't get enough sleep, and I hate being late. Plus, I don't like to miss my morning coffee."

"Just get your coffee in the staff room. They usually have a few biscuits in there too, don't they?"

"Yeah, I hate the hospital's coffee, but better than no coffee I guess." She yawned. "Especially
when I'm half asleep."

"Okay, love. I'll let you go now. Later I'll text you about what we are going to do about this evening."

"Sounds like a plan," said Molly. "By the way, I should probably have my own key for the flat too."

"I'll take care of it," responded the detective. He gave her another quick kiss before she left for work.

Once Molly was gone, Sherlock felt restless. He could go back to bed and try to get more sleep, but he didn't think he would be successful. His mind was already turning, thinking about the day ahead. Mycroft was coming over at two o'clock. He wanted to look through the wedding planner John had given him and Molly. He still needed to research more honeymoon destinations too. Finally, he wanted to take a closer look at Molly's Bible.

After a breakfast consisting of coffee and leftover ginger nuts, the detective picked up the wedding planner. He leafed through several pages, then decided to do more later. It was too early to make any phone calls to businesses.

Instead, Sherlock wandered back to the bedroom, not bothering to get dressed. He reached down to retrieve the Bible from the floor next to Molly's side of the bed. Once her furniture arrived, he would move the bed to make room for her little bedside table and lamp. Fortunately, the bedroom was big enough that moving the bed over to accommodate another table would not be a problem.

Flopping onto his stomach on the bed, he opened the Bible and realized he had no idea where to start. Should he start with the Old Testament? Or should he look at the New Testament? Making a decision, he decided to start at the beginning.

The book was Genesis.

Sherlock read the first chapter with interest. It described how God created the world in six days, adding various elements each day. It was fascinating.

He went on to read chapter two. This one started with God resting on the seventh day and making it holy. Sherlock supposed that was the reason for the seven day week and why people usually went to church on Sunday - to keep one day sacred.

Chapter two went on to describe how God made Adam and how Eve was made as a helper for Adam. They lived in the garden of Eden. The end of the chapter explained how a man leaves a father and mother to be united to his wife. The detective recalled the verses from Mark that Molly had read to him. So that was where the thought had come from, apparently.

He read on, unable to put the large book down. The title of the third chapter was "The Fall." It talked about how Adam and Eve were deceived by a serpent and ate the one forbidden fruit. Thus, sin entered the world through them.

One thing Sherlock found very interesting was in verse 24, where it read "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil." So it seemed to corroborate what Molly had said about God being more than one person or form. Yet, it was still not a plural term, saying gods, only God.

The following chapter talked about the brothers Cain and Abel and the first murder, when Cain killed his brother.
Chapter five described the lineage from Adam to Noah. Sherlock was amazed with the longevity of the people listed. They lived many hundreds of years. The detective vaguely recalled hearing stories about Noah's Ark and the flood as a child, perhaps in Sunday School?

He continued to read and with each chapter became more astounded by the events of history which had been chronicled. He felt invested in the stories, as he continued the journey through Genesis. Sherlock felt himself thirsting for knowledge.

By the time he had completed the fifty chapters of Genesis, he felt his brain was bursting with this new information. What startled him was the fact that the stories had become so real to him that he believed them.

No man on earth could have had such an imagination that he could make up all those accounts of history.

He got up from the bed and stretched, a little sore. When he looked at the clock, he was floored. He had been reading for almost three and a half hours. The sleuth had not done his usual speed reading, because he wanted to fully understand what he was reading instead of just the major points.

He dressed slowly, putting on trousers, blue shirt and his usual suit jacket. His mind was whirling with the new information he had just learned. He needed to text Molly and let her know what he had been doing. He was sure she would be pleased.

He sent off a text:

SH: Guess what I did?

As he waited for her response, the detective walked to where he had put Mary's planner. He opened it, then closed it again almost immediately. He really didn't feel like making important wedding decisions without Molly's input. It could wait until the following week when they had more time.

Molly’s text alert came in and Sherlock picked up his phone. Fortunately, they were able to have an uninterrupted text conversation. Slow day at the hospital, he supposed.

MH: Do I want to know this? Is it good or bad?
SH: Guess I should have used a smiley emoji. You are going to be amazed, I assure you.
MH: Well, don't keep me in suspense. Some people have to work for a living you know LOL
SH: I wish you didn't. I'd be happy to have you with me around the clock.
MH: Now you are just being silly.
SH: What can I say? I'm a man in love with a beautiful woman.
MH: Stop flirting and tell me what you did.
SH: Okay. I just spent the past three hours reading the whole book of Genesis.
MH: You did? Darn it, texting is so inadequate. I am standing here with my mouth open in shock. Well, what did you think of it?
SH: It made sense to me, actually. To tell you the truth, I have never really been comfortable with the idea of evolution. You know, man coming from monkeys and all that. It's just ludicrous. It is much easier to believe we were created as human from the beginning. It was truly enlightening.
MH: That's amazing, Sherlock. I'm so proud of you - I wish you could see the smile on my face right now.
SH: I knew you would be. So anyway, I wanted to ask you something. What should I read next?
MH: I would suggest you read the book of John in the New Testament. It is the fourth Gospel. If you really want to know about what I believe and why, you need to read about the life of Jesus Christ and his sacrifice of dying on a cross to save the world.
SH: Sounds like some heavy-duty reading.
MH: It is, but what He did changed the world forever. He gave us hope for a new life.
SH: I'm intrigued. Okay, I'll read that next.
MH: By the way, you can actually download the Holy Bible app. You can even compare different versions of the Bible if you really want to. It's fantastic. The whole Bible in a permanent portable format.
SH: I'll do that. I'll see how much I can get through before Mycroft comes at two.
MH: Your brother is coming over? Why?
SH: I don't know, he told me on the phone the other day that he had something to give me. You know Mycroft. Always prefers to talk to me in person when possible. By the way, I'll come by the hospital for you when you finish work. We can get something to eat and head over to your church for that scary meeting.
MH: You, scared of anything? The man who jumps off a building and free falls to possible death?
SH: I'm trembling in my boots. Different situation entirely.
MH: You'll do fine. You have already made great strides in understanding what I believe. I need to get back to work before Mike comes in and tells me off for texting during working hours.
SH: He'd really do that?
MH: No, I'm kidding. He's really a great boss. Even congratulated me today. The only time I've seen him since you and I got engaged was last week when he had to tell me I'd be doing a post-mortem on that poor boy. Obviously that was not the right time to be offering his congratulations.
SH: We must make sure he is on the guest list. It was a shame he was out of town at a conference and had to miss John's wedding.
MH: Definitely. I'll see you at four, then. Love you xx
SH: Love you too.

Sherlock plugged his phone into the charger and searched for the Holy Bible app. As soon as he saw the icon for it, he knew he had seen it before. Closing his eyes, he searched his mind palace. Ah yes, that was it. He had seen the app on Molly's phone, although he had not really paid attention to it because he was too busy looking for her contact list. He recalled seeing another app as well. It was "Our Daily Bread," the same name as that little devotional booklet in Molly's drawer.

He typed in his password to download both apps and returned to his bedroom to get Molly's Bible. Taking it to his favourite chair in the sitting room, the detective opened it and found John, then began to read.

Sherlock read the first verse, which said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

He saw Molly had made a note in the margin which read "Jesus is the Word."

As the sleuth continued to read, he learned about the many miracles Jesus performed during his life on earth. He healed the blind, the lame, fed thousands of people with a few loaves of bread and fish. He even brought a friend named Lazarus back to life after the man had been dead already for several days.

Sherlock wanted to continue reading, but a loud rumble from his stomach made him realize it must be lunchtime. He placed the Bible on his chair.

After a quick lunch and cup of tea, Sherlock checked his phone to make sure the apps had downloaded. He decided to check the Bible one and selected NIV as his version of choice, as it was the one Molly used. He searched to find John and noticed there was a preface which he had missed in Molly's Bible. The beginning of the preface read,
"John closes his book by revealing his purpose in writing Jesus' story: These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

Sherlock mulled over those words for a few moments. So the whole meaning of Christianity was to believe in Jesus and that he was the Messiah. What did the term "Messiah" mean, though?

The detective was prepared to believe the account of John was factual. He would need to read more and see if the stories corroborated each other. He needed to learn also what was meant by "Messiah."

Unfortunately, he had to pause in his reading at that point. Mycroft was due to arrive soon, and he needed to prepare himself for the chat that was to come. He thought about what he wanted to say to his brother, not certain if he could convince Mycroft it was something he needed to do. But he could try.

Molly had made him think about a possible way to communicate with Eurus - by using his violin. He would ask to see her on Sunday afternoon.

The doorbell rang downstairs, and Mrs. Hudson answered the door.

"The game is on," said Sherlock to himself as he heard the footsteps of his brother ascending the stairs.

Chapter End Notes

A scripture heavy chapter, I know. For those of my readers who are not so familiar with the Bible, I wanted to put some explanation in, to help them/you understand what Sherlock is learning for the first time.

Personally, I think it is a great disservice to the children of today that evolution is now taught in schools as “fact,” and the opposing view of creation is ignored. Kids should be allowed to make up their own mind. Intelligent Design or random happenstance. Seems pretty obvious to me.

What do you think?
Mycroft was in his office, staring down in satisfaction at the important slip of paper in front of him.

This cheque was the culmination of almost two years of lobbying for his brother to receive just compensation for service to the Crown and to the Government.

Years earlier, before Sherlock was forced into hiding after being falsely discredited by James Moriarty, the younger Holmes had prevented a potential Royal scandal and major embarrassment for the Royal family.

The infamous Irene Adler had temporarily captivated Sherlock, and a long-running government plan aimed at deceiving some terrorist cells in London was exposed due to the detective’s eagerness to show off his intellectual prowess in front of the lady. Unbeknownst to Sherlock, the dominatrix had been secretly working for the consulting criminal, Moriarty.

She fed him the information the detective had revealed, and the terrorists were alerted to the plan. Sherlock had more than redeemed himself, though. He had discovered the password to Irene Adler's phone, and all of her blackmail demands came to naught once she no longer had the photos and other sensitive documents she had procured as "insurance" for her wellbeing.

Had the sleuth not discovered the passcode, the evil woman would have solicited a blackmail payment from the Crown that severely dented the Royal coffers.

Then, when Sherlock's name had been cleared and he was able to return in triumph to London to resume his consulting detective duties, he had single-handedly prevented another terrorist plot. That nefarious scheme would have resulted in a massive loss of life, with the bombing of the Palace of Westminster when Parliament was in session to vote on an anti-terrorism Bill.

Sherlock had received no compensation for his success in preventing the bomb from going off. Mycroft had felt this was a severe oversight on the part of the government and had petitioned for a just reward for his little brother. He had also appealed to the Crown for recompense in regards to the Irene Adler situation.

The older Holmes was glad he could finally present to Sherlock the fruits of his labours. With the detective's marriage looming only a few weeks away, the news of the reward would most certainly be a welcome one.

This news might be tempered however, by the other news Mycroft had for his brother. He was not sure if Sherlock would be pleased about it or upset. He was sure that Molly would not be disappointed by the decision he had made, considering Sherlock had to now think of someone besides himself who would be affected by any sleuthing or dangerous activities undertaken in the
The phone rang on his desk, and Mycroft answered it. "Mycroft here."

It was his mother.

"Oh, Mycroft dear, I am so glad you are there."

"Mummy, I do wish you wouldn't call me at work." He regretted the impulse that had led him to give her his private office number in case of an emergency. She used it much too often, and it was never an emergency.

"Well, this is important. Your father and I are coming up to London on Saturday. We have tickets for the final night of the opera 'Turandot.' I was wondering if you might accompany us to dinner beforehand and to see the opera as well. We can purchase another ticket for you."

Mycroft groaned inwardly. He had been forced to take his parents to see "Les Misérables" two years earlier and had been "miserable" the whole evening. Mrs. Holmes persisted in pestering him about "finding a good woman to settle down with and have children."

Thank goodness he could now pass that torch onto Sherlock, whom Mrs. Holmes had at one time decreed "unlikely to wed." 'Take that, mother,' he thought. 'You are not always right.'

"I'm very busy this weekend. I will see what Sherlock is up to. Maybe you can visit with him and Molly. I believe she has just moved into Baker Street with him."

"Really? That boy never tells me anything. Do you know I haven't heard a peep from him since the night he called me to say he was engaged? I still can't get over it. He always seemed so emotionless. Ever since his friend disappeared when we were living at Musgrave Hall, he seemed to shut himself off from any real emotion. Before that he was such an affectionate little boy. If only you had..."

Mycroft cut her off. "Yes Mummy, we've been through this many times. You disapprove of the way I handled the situation and encouraged Sherlock to forget. I did what I thought was best at the time. In hindsight, I regret my actions. If he had been able to grieve the loss of his friend, perhaps he would not have created the fantasy about having a dog who disappeared instead."

He continued, "However, it appears that the recent events at Sherrinford have restored some of his memories and all of his emotions in the bargain."

"Well, I am very glad about that," retorted his mother. "Perhaps Sherlock will finally give me some grandchildren to spoil."

"I'm sure he will, Mummy," returned the older Holmes brother. "So now you can leave me to live my life in peace." He thought briefly of his sometime companion, Lady Elizabeth Smallwood. That was a relationship he had no intention of divulging to his mother, at least not yet, especially since she was past child-bearing age. He would never hear the end of it.

"Hmph," grumbled Mrs. Holmes. "Well, please let me know about Saturday so your father and I know which son to visit."

"Very well, Mummy. Goodbye for now." Before he could hang up the phone, Mrs. Holmes spoke again.

"Oh, and tell Sherlock to call his mother more often."
"Why don't you just call him yourself?" he asked, annoyed.

"I don't like to bother him. He's a very busy man you know, with all that detective work."

'And I'm not?' thought Mycroft sourly. I'm just the one who has to keep things running smoothly in our government, as well as keep an eye on my little brother when he runs off the rails.' But aloud he said, "I will pass on the message when I see him this afternoon. Goodbye." He hung up the phone before his mother could make any more requests of him.

Mycroft consulted his watch. It was almost time for lunch. He picked up his phone again and punched in Lady Elizabeth's extension.

"Care to join me for lunch?" He enquired politely when she answered.

"I'd be delighted," said the uncommonly fine lady.

The couple, although Mycroft would not have considered themselves to be a couple, enjoyed a fine luncheon in a nearby restaurant. He did enjoy Lady Elizabeth's company. She was classy and clever, and she never made any demands of him. He was quite content with the status quo between them and had no desire for anything more permanent. Well, he conceded, at least not now.

Having escorted the lady back to their place of work, Mycroft called for the limousine to which he had unlimited access. He then made his way to Baker Street, the precious cheque safely tucked into the breast pocket of his suit jacket.

When he reached 221B Baker Street and rang the doorbell, he absently straightened the knocker before Mrs. Hudson let him in. She was a sour one, that lady. He supposed she didn't like him much.

She had called him a reptile on one occasion, when John had discovered Sherlock's DVD from Mary, sent posthumously by a friend. Mrs. Hudson had ordered everyone out of the flat, which Mycroft was having searched at the time because his brother was killing himself with drugs, and he couldn't understand the reason why. Mycroft did not want to leave the flat, but Mrs. Hudson insisted.

It transpired that Mary had been the one to urge Sherlock to put himself in harm's way so that John could save him, thereby saving John himself. Sherlock had admitted this to him, and Mycroft still felt a measure of anger towards the dead woman for almost being the cause of his little brother's death.

Yes, she had taken a bullet for the detective and saved him, but to what end if he had ended up dead himself later as a result of her stupid idea to help her husband get over her death. Ludicrous really. Losing Sherlock would truly have broken his heart, as he had admitted to the sleuth this past Christmas.

He did not want to dwell on those matters however, and he forced himself to think of the good news he had to impart to his brother.

When Mycroft reached the top of the landing, Sherlock opened the door immediately.

"How are you, Mycroft?" he asked cheerily. "Well, I hope."

Sherlock being cheerful? This was most certainly an anomaly. "Have you been up to no good, brother mine?" He asked suspiciously. "Are you high?"
"Of course not," assured the younger Holmes. "Unless you consider being high on life a bad thing."

Mycroft narrowed his eyes at his brother. "I certainly hope you are telling the truth. I have no desire to drag you out of yet another opium den."

"You can rest assured my dear brother. Those days are behind me. I've promised Molly I will never intentionally place myself in that kind of danger again, even for a case."

"Well, I am certainly glad to hear that," rejoined the oldest Holmes sibling. He walked into the sitting room and spied something on Sherlock's chair. "What have you been reading?" he inquired curiously.

Sherlock picked it up and showed him. "Molly's Bible," stated the detective simply.

Mycroft felt his mouth opening in shock. "Since when do you touch a Bible, let alone read one? Haven't you proclaimed on many occasions that God is nothing but a myth?"

"Mycroft, it appears this is yet another example of my former arrogance and belief in my own superiority. Things have changed for me since Sherrinford."

Mycroft, to his surprise, could see this was true. The way Sherlock had embraced the idea of having emotions after so many years of trying to run away from them - the way he was committed to Molly spoke volumes about the change in his younger brother.

"I see that," said Mycroft. "I hope this improvement will continue. I would love to be able to discontinue your surveillance."

"Oh, Mycroft, I am not a child anymore," huffed Sherlock.

"Maybe not, but I have seen you act like one on many occasions."

"That won't happen again," said the detective with so much conviction that Mycroft was inclined to believe him. "I really have changed, you know. Molly even convinced me to go to church with her this Sunday," he confided to the older Holmes.

Mycroft felt his jaw about to drop in surprise once more and clamped it shut. Instead, he nodded then said, "I have to commend the girl. She is most certainly a good influence on you."

"That she is," agreed the detective with a look on his face Mycroft hadn't ever seen before. Oh yes, Sherlock was definitely head-over-heels in love with the pathologist who had once been instrumental in helping the man fake his death successfully.

"I am very happy for you," he said sincerely. "I have something here that I hope will increase your happiness as well." Mycroft put his hand into his breast pocket, pulled out the cheque and offered it to his younger brother. "This is for you."

Sherlock took the proffered piece of paper, glanced at it and then looked at it again in astonishment. "What is this?" he sputtered incredulously.

"Exactly what it looks like, brother mine," responded the older Holmes dryly, "a cheque for £100,000."

"But why?" questioned the sleuth.

"My dear brother, can't you figure it out? You are a master of deduction, after all."
He watched as Sherlock retreated into his mind palace to puzzle things out.

After a few moments the detective said, "This cheque is drawn on the Government Banking Service. Therefore, I deduce that I am receiving this payment as some sort of reward for services rendered, although I am not sure why I am receiving anything now. If I merited some sort of payment, why would I be receiving it now? The last governmental help I provided was when I found the bomb on the train car and prevented an explosion that would have blown up everyone in the Palace of Westminster."

"Exactly," said Mycroft. "It has taken me almost this whole time calling in favours and campaigning for you to receive your just rewards. In my opinion, this is not even close to the kind of compensation you deserve for being instrumental in saving hundreds of lives."

"I'm touched, Mycroft." said Sherlock with sincerity.

His brother shrugged. "Only fighting for what is just. I also have more good news. For services to the Crown in the Irene Adler case from several years ago, you are to be issued compensation from the Crown Estate to the order of £10,000 per month for the rest of your life."

Sherlock gaped at him. "How could you arrange that?"

"I merely put a word in the ear of several well-placed Royals about the scandal you averted. I informed them that this would be a small price to pay as gratitude for preventing that woman, Adler, from bleeding them dry."

"So, in other words, you bullied them into coughing up."

"Perhaps, but once again, you provided an invaluable service for which I perceived you were entitled to just recompense. By the way, your monthly payment will be deposited automatically on the first of each month to your savings account. I have already taken care of the details."

"I don't know what to say, Mycroft."

"A simple thank you will suffice. Never let it be said that I don't try to look after my little brother."

"Thank you. How can I repay you for doing this for me?" asked Sherlock.

"Actually, there IS something you can do for me. You can entertain our parents on Saturday night when they come to London. Our dear mother informed me only this morning."

"That might be difficult. We are having Molly's furniture moved here in the afternoon. In the evening, we have tickets to see some opera. Her friend gave her the tickets."

Mycroft was pleased. This would work out better than he had hoped. "Well, that is rather fortuitous. Apparently our parents also have tickets for the opera that night. 'Turandot,' I believe."

"Yes, that's the one. Well, I obviously owe you, big brother. I suppose I can call Mummy and invite her and Daddy to dinner first with Molly and myself. They should probably get to know their future daughter-in-law better."

Mycroft observed that Sherlock had that same expression on his face that had been there earlier - of a man deeply in love. "That would work nicely. Our dear mother wanted me to tell you she wished to hear from you more often, so a phone call would be a good way to show her I spoke with you about it."
Mycroft noticed Sherlock glancing at his watch. "Do you have somewhere you need to be?"

"I probably need to leave in about thirty minutes to catch a taxi to the hospital and meet Molly when she finishes work at four."

"I won't keep you too much longer," promised the older Holmes. "There is just one more matter for us to discuss."

At his brother's raised eyebrow he continued, "It has been decided that you will no longer be asked to participate in any dangerous missions, either overseas or locally."

"How would you define dangerous?" questioned the detective, furrowing his brow.

"Missions in which the probability of loss of life is higher than that of routine investigations. You will not be asked to go undercover on assignments that pose significant risk. I do not want you to be angry about this. I hope you will understand that I have your best interests at heart. You are no longer a single man. Soon you will have a wife and perhaps, one day, children of your own. Your primary responsibility must be for their welfare. I would never forgive myself if I sent you on an assignment which killed you and left your wife a widow and your children fatherless."

"I understand," said Sherlock unexpectedly, and Mycroft gave a sigh of relief. "I have come to value the life I've been given, and I have also realized that I have escaped death too many times for there not to be a reason for it. As Molly would say, 'God has a plan for me,' and I intend to walk the path to see where it leads instead of jumping off it, as I have done in the past."

"I would never have expected to hear those words from your lips," said Mycroft in amazement. "Things have changed." Sherlock shrugged. "On a completely different subject, I have a request for you."

"If it is within my power, I will do it," replied the older sibling, still relieved he hadn't gotten into an argument over dangerous assignments with his brother.

"I would like to see Eurus on Sunday afternoon. I want to play my violin for her. It may be of some comfort to her."

Mycroft thought for a moment, then nodded. "I agree. She does play the violin beautifully as you do. I don't think it could hurt. Mummy and Daddy have expressed an interest in seeing her too, as you know. I will get them to Sherrinford, then I will have a car sent for you to take you to my office building. You can go to the roof, and I will have a helicopter waiting for you. Shall we say four o'clock?"

Sherlock nodded.

"Well, I must be going. I would be happy to have my driver make a detour to the hospital so you can get there on time for when your fiancée finishes work. Would that be acceptable?"

"How can I turn down a free limousine ride? I accept, and thank you again."

As the detective put on his coat and scarf, Mycroft called the limo service to say he was ready to be picked up. He couldn't help but think he would derive great enjoyment in watching this new chapter unfold in his brother's life. The men walked to the waiting limo in amiable silence.

Once inside the limousine, Sherlock immediately pulled out his phone and sent a text. When he received a response, he glanced at it but didn't text back.
Mycroft took the opportunity to speak once again to the detective. "Brother mine, I have been thinking about what to get you for a wedding present. I would like to pay for your honeymoon, within reason of course: no two week trips to Australia or anything so extravagant. If you plan to stay within England, I can offer the services of a private charter plane and limousine service, however."

"What, no helicopter?" joked the detective, before saying seriously, "That's very kind of you, but I couldn't accept any more from you. You've already arranged a permanent income for me and enough money for me to pay for the most expensive honeymoon in the world. I am not planning on leaving the country, though. I want to spend as much quality time with my bride as possible."

Mycroft noticed that lovestruck expression once again. He was sure Sherlock would be embarrassed if he knew how clearly his feelings were written across his face. "Nevertheless, this is something I want to do for you. Don't forget, I'm the smart one, therefore, what I say goes."

"I suppose I will be chaperoning our parents anytime they are in London from now on, just to repay your kindness."

Mycroft smiled. "That, dear brother, sounds like a very good idea."

The limo pulled to a stop in front of the hospital. As Sherlock went to exit the vehicle, the elder Holmes brother said, "Don't forget to call Mummy about the opera, and have fun."

He grinned at the dirty look he received from his brother and the sound of the door being closed none too gently a moment later.

It had been a good day. He might even call Lady Smallwood and invite her to dinner or perhaps an after dinner nightcap.

Yes indeed, a very good day.

Chapter End Notes

I had a lot of fun writing this chapter from Mycroft’s perspective. I thought it would be interesting for people to see love-struck Sherlock from a perspective besides Molly’s or John’s. Who better than the older brother who so often torments him, yet still, deep down, loves him.

Did you like the conversation between Mycroft and his mother? I loved writing that scene. I feel that poor Mycroft is just not the favourite son.

What did you think about Sherlock finally being rewarded? The show never specified any such thing, and I think he deserved compensation! The income will also make it easier for him to live without needing to do those dangerous missions.
Molly was humming as she worked. She was alone in the lab today because Kaitlyn was assisting elsewhere. There had been one post-mortem to perform in the morning, and Molly had recorded the results.

It had been an eighty year old woman, so it was not a traumatic experience for her. The Specialist Registrar had been performing autopsies for so long that she was immune to being overwhelmed by her task except in the rare cases of having to determine the cause of death on those who had not had a chance to reach adulthood.

When Sherlock's text had come in earlier, she had just been finishing up the post-mortem, and it had been a few minutes before she could get back to him. What she had read made her heart sing. He was asking questions; he was genuinely making the effort to understand what she believed. She could feel that the Holy Spirit was working on him, softening his heart.

When Sherlock had asked her what he should read next, she had suggested the book of John. She figured he needed to start learning about Jesus, the Son of God. After all, that was the basis for Christianity.

As Molly listened to the Paramore album she had downloaded from iTunes, she wondered how Sherlock's visit with his brother was going. Hopefully there was nothing amiss. She knew Mycroft had solicited his younger brother's help on many occasions and that Sherlock's life had been in danger at times.

She couldn't help feeling a little anxious about the possibility that the purpose for Mycroft's visit was to once again enlist his brother's help.

When another text came in from Sherlock at around half past three, she turned off her music and checked the message.

The message read, "Getting a ride to the hospital with Mycroft. See you soon."

Obviously, being with Mycroft made it impractical for the detective to tell her what he had been doing, therefore she contented herself with the knowledge that she would find out everything in person very soon. So she just sent a brief text back to her fiancé. "Can't wait."

Before long, Molly saw the tall, handsome figure of her man standing in the doorway to the lab. He was earlier than she had expected, and she still had to straighten things up in the lab before heading to the locker room to hang up her white lab coat.

"Need some assistance?" he asked. This was unexpected - Sherlock had never offered to help her in the past. She had always been the one to volunteer her help to him. This was yet another sign that
her Sherlock was a changed man.

"Sure," she said. "I need to clean some of the equipment. Kaitlyn usually does it, but today it's just me."

"I'll take care of it," said Sherlock, "You can go take off your coat and get ready to go."

"Thank you," said Molly, giving him a peck on the cheek as she passed him to get ready.

A few minutes later, Molly returned to see the lab was in pristine condition and Sherlock was casually leaning with his back to the counter, waiting for her and looking as gorgeous and unruffled as ever.

"Wow," she remarked. "Nice job."

The detective shrugged. "Didn't want to delay our evening together. Now come and kiss me," he commanded.

"Demanding, aren't you?" grinned Molly, walking towards him.

His arms enveloped her, and he gave her a breath-stealing kiss that made her heart race. "Wow, what was that?" she asked dazedly, when the kiss ended.

"A celebration kiss," responded the detective. "Mycroft gave me some great news; in fact, I have a lot to tell you about his visit. I didn't want to elaborate when I was in his limo."

"I figured as much," said the pathologist. "So what are we celebrating?"

"I'll tell you over dinner," promised Sherlock. "We don't want to be late for our counselling session."

There was no sarcasm in the detective's tone as she might have expected when she had first told him about it. Instead, he seemed genuinely concerned with being on time for their appointment. "Carluccio's is only a couple minutes walk from here, are you okay with Italian food? I'd suggest Ribon, but it only opens for the evening at six o'clock."

"Ah, yes," said Sherlock. "I've been to that Japanese restaurant. I do like their chicken teriyaki. Their sukiyaki is good as well. Of course, you need two people for that meal."

"I like both of those too. Kaitlyn and I had the sukiyaki there once after work," explained Molly.

"Then we shall save that for a day when you finish work at six. There are several restaurants nearby to choose from. Carluccio's would be fine for this evening; let's go."

As they exited the hospital, Sherlock took Molly's hand, and they walked the short distance to the Italian restaurant. They were able to get a nice table immediately because it was still early.

After giving their orders to the waiter, Molly asked, "So what happened with Mycroft today?"

"A lot, actually. I have so much to tell you; it's hard to know where to begin. By the way, did I tell you how beautiful you look this evening?"

Sherlock was smiling at Molly in a way that threatened to distract her from the topic at hand. "Sherlock, I look the same way I always do. You are merely procrastinating."

"Just putting my thoughts in order," the curly-haired detective replied, lifting Molly's hand to his
"No more distractions," said the pathologist. "Tell me what happened."

"Very well. My brother presented me with this." Pulling a cheque from his pocket, he laid it in front of his fiancée.

She looked at it in astonishment. "Oh my gosh, Sherlock, that is a cheque with a lot of zeros! What is it for?"

"Indeed it is, my love. Do you remember how you were helping me with the case involving the disappearing Tube compartment?"

"Of course I do. I had such a lovely day with you."

"As did I. Anyway, the cheque is compensation for solving the case and preventing the explosion that would have blown up the Palace of Westminster. Mycroft spent many months trying to ensure I received something for my work on the case."

"Well, you certainly deserve it," said Molly warmly.

"There's more," the detective said enigmatically, as he returned the cheque to his pocket.

"More what?" asked his fiancée.

"It is in relation to another case from a few years ago. I prevented a royal scandal involving a woman who had compromising photos of herself with a person in the Royal Family. Most shocking of all was the fact that those photos were of her and another woman. I was able to retrieve the phone with the incriminating pictures, unlock the password and prevent that woman from receiving her huge blackmail demand."

"Was that the phone I saw you examining in the lab one day?"

"Indeed it was." Sherlock looked into Molly's eyes. "My brother has seen to it that I am to receive the sum of £10,000 on the first of each month for the rest of my life. This is my reward for protecting the Royal Family from embarrassment and for also saving them a vast sum of blackmail money."

Molly's mouth had dropped open at Sherlock's words. "That's...incredible," she managed to say at last.

The couple's dinner was served right then so further conversation was limited until they had finished eating.

Once Sherlock had finished his meal, he continued the tale of Mycroft's visit.

"It may please you, my love, to know that Mycroft also informed me he will no longer be soliciting my help for dangerous cases that could prove life-threatening. My days of infiltrating foreign terrorist cells are over."

Molly looked closely at his expression to see if he was disappointed. She knew he had always thrived on excitement and danger. It seemed to have given him a high. The detective's eyes, however, held no regret. His gaze was steadfast and clear as he smiled slightly.

"I know how much you loved those types of cases. Why do you seem so calm and accepting of this
"Because I love you. Because Mycroft was right. You are now my priority, and one day, our children. I want to be around for you and our future family, to grow old with you. I don't feel the same need for excitement the way I once did. Thoughts of you consume me daily. I used to get bored easily; I have not had one moment of boredom since I realized I truly loved you. I have no regrets."

The pathologist could hear the conviction in his voice. When he had mentioned children, she knew he wanted his own as much as she did. "If we weren't in a public restaurant right now, I would kiss you for those words."

"By all means, let us get out of here. You can kiss me in the taxi on our way to your church." He flashed Molly a sexy smile.

Sherlock paid the bill, and the couple walked out of the restaurant. He hailed a taxi, and Molly gave the driver the address for her church.

As soon as they were settled into the rear of the cab, Sherlock took Molly into his arms and kissed her deeply and possessively. Molly knew she should be embarrassed that they were smooching like a pair of teenagers, but she didn't care. She could never get enough of the touch of his lips on hers. Her whole being vibrated to his every touch, every caress.

The cabbie pulled over in front of the church, and the couple reluctantly pulled apart. Sherlock was obviously affected by their kissing as well. There was a flush on his cheeks, and he seemed a little short of breath, just as she was.

The detective paid the taxi driver and then they stood outside the church for a few minutes, trying to compose themselves. Fortunately, it was not quite six o'clock. When the engaged couple had regained their self-control, Molly led Sherlock to the pastor's office around the back of the church.

Pastor Briggs was already there, sitting behind his office desk. He rose and extended a hand to Sherlock, after giving a friendly nod to Molly.

"Hello, Mr. Holmes," he said. "It is a pleasure to meet you. I hear you are the man who has been fortunate enough to capture the heart of this delightful woman."

"I certainly agree with that statement," responded the sleuth, eliciting a blush from Molly. "And please do call me Sherlock."

"Thank you both for being available so quickly for our session," said the pastor. "I normally conduct two to three sessions for engaged couples over the period of several weeks. As your wedding is only a couple of months away, I think we can manage with just the one session with a follow-up just to discuss final preparations for the wedding service programme. Of course, there will be the wedding rehearsal as well on the evening before your special day. At that time, we will make sure you know what to say and when to say it."

Molly looked over at Sherlock. He seemed to be completely relaxed. She, on the other hand, was feeling nervous at the thought of all they needed to do before the wedding.

"Please sit," invited Pastor Briggs, indicating two chairs across from the desk. The couple sat and Sherlock reached over to hold Molly's hand.

"Let's talk a little about you as a couple. What do you feel are the qualities you see in one another that make you certain you were meant to be together? For example, do you share common
interests?"

Molly looked over at her fiancé and ventured to speak first. "Sherlock and I have known each other for several years. I guess I always felt an attraction to him, to his intellect. I admired the way he had a single-minded focus on his work. He is a graduate chemist himself, so has a great deal of scientific knowledge. In fact, there have been a few occasions on which we worked together when he needed help with one of his cases."

Molly blushed slightly as she added, "Of course, I have always felt a strong physical attraction to Sherlock as well."

The pastor nodded solemnly and said, "Physical attraction is certainly important, but I am glad it was not the first thing you mentioned. You certainly see qualities beyond that, ones which speak to your heart. That provides a good basis for a marriage."

He addressed the detective, "And you, Sherlock, what qualities do you find attractive in your fiancée?"

"I was unfortunately not so quick to recognize what a truly unique woman Molly is. I am ashamed to admit it, but for some time at the beginning of our friendship, I was rather insensitive to her. I took advantage of her and used our friendly relationship to further my own ends when solving cases. In the beginning, I always considered myself superior to others. I enjoyed the attention I received in showing off my deductive skills."

"So, what changed?" prompted Pastor Briggs.

"Well, I think the first time I realized how moronic my behaviour to her was, was when I made fun of a Christmas present she had carefully wrapped. I was showing off as usual, and I embarrassed her. The present incidentally was for me, and Molly had gone to a lot of trouble wrapping it. I felt so ashamed. I tried to be more respectful of her after that. She was always so kind, so willing to help me. Molly is a treasure. She has a gentle spirit and is beautiful both inside and out."

Molly looked over at Sherlock, blinking back tears as he squeezed her hand.

"The fact that you recognize these qualities in Molly is a good sign that you understand the kind of person she is. I'm very glad you were able to recognize those special things that I have seen in her during the years I have been her pastor. Your acknowledgment of your own failings in the past is also good. If we cannot do that, we cannot be open to change that would better us as human beings."

Next came the question Molly had been dreading, although she was not quite as worried now that the detective had confessed to believing in God after all.

"The best marriages stem from having the same principles and beliefs. Have you discussed those beliefs with each other?"

Molly answered first. "I have been talking to Sherlock about my faith and how important it is in my life. He understands and respects the values I hold most dear. He is even learning more about what I believe."

Sherlock nodded. "Molly has been very forthcoming about what she believes. Until recently, I was an acknowledged atheist. I was too arrogant to believe in anything beyond myself and my abilities. Molly's faith and some inexplicable miracles have caused me to reconsider my position. I'm still working my way through this whole Christianity thing. I have much to learn, but Molly has
encouraged me to start reading the Bible. Just this morning I read Genesis, and I have started reading John."

"John is an excellent Gospel to read first in the New Testament. He was an eyewitness to the miracles of Jesus and the fact that Christ came into the world to be our Saviour."

"I don't really understand all of that," said Sherlock honestly. "Once I have finished reading the book of John, I will have a better understanding."

"You certainly will. If you have any questions at all, I'm sure Molly will be able to help you. If you need further clarification, I am only too happy to help you as well. I think you have made a fine start. It is not an easy task to forge a path that is different than the one you have always followed. I will be keeping you, and Molly too, in my prayers as you take this journey together."

Molly spoke for both of them as she said, "We really appreciate it."

"Before we move on to discussing the wedding service itself, I have one more question to ask of you, said the pastor. "Have the two of you discussed your expectations for each other as you begin your life together? For example, have you talked about having children?"

This time the detective spoke first, looking over at his fiancée with a tender smile. "We definitely want children. We also don't wish to wait too long. I'm not a very young man, and I'd like to enjoy seeing my child or children grow up while I am still fit enough to enjoy the experience. I believe my fiancée will be a wonderful mother. Any child we have will be lucky to have her as their mum."

"Any child will be lucky to have you as their father as well, Sherlock," said Molly as her eyes glowed with the love she felt for the handsome sleuth.

"Well, you have passed the test," said Pastor Briggs. He laughed at the couple's expressions of relief. "I'm just kidding, you know," he said, chuckling. "This session was not intended to be a test, just a chance for me to make sure you are completely committed to your union. I can see both of you love each other very much and want what is best for the other. That is one of the most important aspects of a successful marriage, unconditional love. The other is having God as the centre of your life together. I feel certain that you will both come to understand that and live your lives accordingly."

He continued, "Now it is time to discuss the wedding ceremony and order of service. Molly, I spoke with you last week about this. Do you have any Bible readings in mind, or would you like to choose something this booklet suggests?" He passed a service order booklet to the prospective bride and groom.

"Sherlock and I talked about this last night," said Molly. At his encouraging nod, she continued. "We decided to use two New Testament readings, Mark 10:6-9 and 1 Corinthians chapter 13."

The pastor nodded in approval. "Many people choose to only read through the first half of verse eight in the Corinthians passage. I feel there is merit in reading through to the end of the chapter."

"I do too," agreed the pathologist.

Pastor Briggs made a note of the chosen readings. 'Do you have any hymns in mind for the service?' He offered a list of popular hymns to the couple.

"I'll leave that question to be answered by my intended," smiled Sherlock. "I have no idea."

Molly took the proffered list and read through it. "I really like 'Love Divine, All Love Excelling',"
she said. Turning to Sherlock she said, “It was sung at Prince William and Kate's wedding, but to a different tune. Pastor, I like the one we usually use in church.”

"Let me just check the hymn book." Pastor Briggs pulled out a hymn book from a shelf behind him and searched for the correct hymn. Upon finding it, he said. "We use the Welsh tune of Hytrydol by Rowland Hugh Richard."

He offered the hymnal to Molly., tapping a finger on the hymn in question. "This is the tune, correct?"

The pathologist looked at the tune and hummed a few bars. "Yes, that's the version I would prefer."

"I'll make sure our organist knows the tune you want," said the pastor, making a note of it.

"You can check it out on YouTube if you want to hear it; just make sure you listen to the Hytrydol version and not the royal wedding one," Molly told her fiancé.

"No need. I'm fine with whatever you choose."

Molly looked again at the list and selected "O Perfect Love." "It isn't as well known perhaps as some other songs, but it was especially written as a wedding hymn, and the lyrics are beautiful," she said.

"Very good," said Pastor Briggs, making another notation. "There are two options for the vows. You can memorize and say the whole thing yourselves, or you repeat phrases after me. If you wish to also say personal vows to each other, I'd suggest the latter option."

"If Molly is okay with the phrase by phrase format, I think that would work. I believe we had a brief conversation about saying our own vows as well, isn't that right, love?" questioned the detective.

"Yes, definitely," answered Molly.

"Excellent," said her pastor, smiling at the engaged couple. "I have a pamphlet here with examples of wedding bulletin covers you can choose from. Why don't you take it home and decide on which cover you would like? Here also is the booklet with the order of service. When you get the chance, write down the members of your wedding party and their position in the wedding. Write your own full names as well for the wedding bulletin. If you have any personal note to add, write it down and it will be put on the back cover of the programme. If you prefer, you can actually email the details to Nancy Schmidt."

Molly took the booklet and pamphlet, saying, "Thanks so much, Pastor Briggs. When does Nancy need the information in order to type up the bulletin?"

"I'd suggest no later than four weeks before the wedding, so you have some time yet," responded the pastor. Standing up, he offered his hand once again to Sherlock and to Molly. "Thank you for coming and best wishes as you plan your wedding. I hope to see you on Sunday."

"We'll be here," promised the pathologist.

They walked back outside to the street and waited for a taxi to pass by.

Suddenly Molly shivered.
"Are you cold?" asked Sherlock solicitously, as he draped an arm around her shoulders.

She snuggled closer to him. "Not really, I just had this odd sensation that there was someone watching me."

"Probably just me," laughed the detective, nonetheless turning his head to look around in the gathering darkness to see if anyone was in view.

Molly slipped her hand under Sherlock's coat and around his waist. "I expect I was just imagining it," she said. She still felt a prickle of apprehension, but she didn't want her fiancé to think she was being paranoid.

A taxi halted at Sherlock's hail, and the couple got in for the ride back to 221B Baker street. As the taxi pulled away, Molly thought she glimpsed a shadow of someone standing to the side of the church building. She blinked and the shadow was gone. Definitely her imagination, she assured herself.

Chapter End Notes

Is Molly being paranoid about thinking someone is watching her?

What did you think about the counselling session? Do you think I covered all the elements sufficiently?

I love comments, especially ones with responses to my questions!
Chapter Summary

Sherlock does some more Bible reading.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Back at Baker Street Molly asked Sherlock, "Would you like a cup of tea?"

The detective was pleased that she felt comfortable enough to take the initiative in making the tea. It was a sign that his fiancée was starting to view this flat as her home.

"Thank you. I'm going to take a shower while you get the tea," said the detective, leaving the kitchen.

When he returned to the room fifteen minutes later, his black hair damp and even curlier than usual, Sherlock picked up the waiting cup of tea and wandered into the sitting room. Molly was curled up on his chair, sipping her own tea.

She made a move as if to relinquish the seat but Sherlock stopped her. "Don't get up," he said. "I'll sit on the floor."

"I have a better idea. Why don't I just let you sit here and I'll sit on your lap?" suggested Molly, as she stood.

"Works for me," chuckled the detective as he took his seat. He held his tea to the side and patted his lap with his left hand.

Molly sat sideways on Sherlock's lap, gingerly holding her tea with her left hand. "Okay, bad Idea, I don't want to spill the tea on you."

Molly got back up, gulped her tea down and put the cup in the kitchen as Sherlock continued to sip his slowly. Then she plopped back down on Sherlock's lap, nearly causing him to spill his beverage.

"Hey," he protested, "still drinking here."

Molly wriggled in his lap. "Well, hurry up and finish it then," she demanded playfully.

The detective gave a mock sigh and finished his tea, putting the cup on the floor. "Satisfied? Come here you wiggly little minx." He pulled Molly so her head was against his chest.

He really wanted to kiss his fiancée, but he remembered he still had things to discuss with her about the meeting with Mycroft earlier that day.

"So, my darling, how would you feel about going out to dinner on Saturday evening with my parents, before the opera?"
"Hmmm, what?" she responded drowsily. As his words sank in, she sat up straight and turned her face towards him. "You didn't tell me your parents were going to be in town."

"I didn't know until Mycroft told me. Apparently our mother called him this morning with the news that they have tickets to the opera. Seeing as I owed him in a big way for my new financial status, I volunteered to take them to dinner. We can go to the opera together although obviously we won't be sitting together. Just as well, in case I want to indulge in a little kissing while we are there." He winked.

"Sherlock Holmes," protested Molly in pretend indignation. "The opera is not the cinema, where you can take advantage of the dark for a bit of cuddling. You go to experience the culture."

Sherlock thrust out his lower lip. "Not even one little kiss?" he pleaded.

Molly settled her head back against the detective's chest. "Well, maybe just one," she conceded.

"Anyway, I suppose I'll call my parents tomorrow and have them come here on Saturday, but later in the afternoon, because we'll be most likely unpacking your stuff and organizing your furniture."

"It will be nice to have a proper sofa to sit on again. Much as I enjoy sitting on your lap, it's not the most practical seating arrangement," commented Molly.

"Ah, but it does provide the most convenient access for me to kiss you," said Sherlock, putting his hand under her chin and lifting her lips to meet his in a thoroughly indulgent kiss. He loved the softness of her lips, the way they opened and yielded to his caress. Kissing her made him feel as if violin music was playing around them. Violin music...violin...His mind palace whirred into action. There was something else he needed to tell Molly.

He reluctantly broke their kiss. "You are entirely too distracting, Molly Hooper. I have one other piece of news for you. I took your advice and asked Mycroft to take me to see Eurus on Sunday afternoon. He is sending a car to pick me up at four o'clock. I am going to play my violin for my sister. I'd bring you along too, but..."

"I understand," assured his fiancée. I don't think she would be in any condition to meet strangers, from what you've said. I do wonder though why she felt I should be part of her test."

"I'm not sure. Moriarty is dead, but somewhere out there are persons unknown who aided her in setting it up. I confess, I'm still baffled, and I'm no closer to discovering who rigged those cameras in your flat. Of course, I have been rather, uh, preoccupied lately."

"I'm sure things will be revealed eventually," said Molly. "I suppose I should go take a shower now and get ready for bed. Early shift again tomorrow. I'm so glad the weekend is almost here." She stood up and fetched her nightwear, then went into the bathroom.

Sherlock picked up his tea cup and put it on the kitchen counter. He then did the few dishes, as he listened to Molly sing in the shower. "That's what you get when you let your heart win," he heard, and wondered where the song came from.

He found Molly's Bible on the floor in the sitting room, where she must have placed it, before seating herself in his chair earlier. Then he proceeded to his bedroom and got into bed. He was engrossed in reading the book of John when Molly entered.

Looking up, he asked, "Why does John the Baptist call Jesus the Lamb of God? What does that mean?"
Molly got into bed beside him and answered, "It goes back to the Old Testament. You can read about it in Exodus, which talks about the ten commandments and all the guidelines the Israelites were given to follow after they escaped from Egypt."

Molly took the Bible from Sherlock and found the chapter in Exodus which talked about the final plague and how the Israelites were spared the fate of the Egyptians, which was to have every firstborn child killed by the angel of death. She read Exodus 12:1-12 aloud to him, then explained the meaning.

"The lamb's blood on the doorframe of each Israeliite house saved them from the wrath of God. Later, lambs were used as offerings to God as reparation for sin, but those offerings had to be made regularly."

She continued, as she handed the Bible back to her fiancé, "Jesus was referred to as the Lamb of God, because he took away our sin, once and for all, when he bled and died on the cross for us. As you keep reading, I'm sure you will find that things get clearer."

"I admit, I am finding this all very interesting. It makes me want to keep reading."

"Don't let me stop you," said Molly, smiling at him. "I need to get some sleep, though." She leaned over and kissed the detective softly. "Goodnight, my love." Then she turned onto her side, away from him, so his bedside lamp would not prevent her from sleeping.

Sherlock continued to read a little while longer, then decided he could finish in the morning. He placed the Bible on his bedside table and turned off the lamp. Settling under the covers, he faced his fiancée and gently drew her body to his so that they lay spooned together.

Molly made a sigh of contentment as he placed his left arm over her body. He really wanted to curve his hand inward, along the curve of her breast, but decided to not surrender to that temptation. Instead, he let his hand rest on top of Molly's where it lay in front of her.

Thus comfortably situated, he drifted into sleep.

Sherlock awoke briefly in the middle of the night. He struggled to recall what he had been dreaming. He felt a vague awareness that Molly had been in it, and she had been in danger. That brought him back to thinking about the situation with the mysterious person who had installed those cameras in Molly's flat. He didn't want to worry Molly unduly, but he felt uneasy about what had happened after their meeting at the church. He was not so quick to dismiss her comment about feeling as if someone was watching her. Sherlock had learned to trust his instincts when it came to dangerous situations. He had been involved in several cases, working undercover, where those instincts had saved him from certain death.

Drowsily, he thought he should ask Mycroft to have someone keep an eye on Molly. Perhaps he could even ask Lestrade to assign a security detail, at least until he could discover more about the outsider who had helped Eurus. After all, Eurus could not have sent the drone that caused the explosion at Baker Street. It must have been done by somebody close by. Without consciously thinking about it, Sherlock tightened his grip on Molly, holding her as close as possible before allowing himself to fall asleep again.

Chapter End Notes
Mostly an informational chapter here. But Sherlock learned about Jesus being the Lamb of God.

And who is watching Molly? Or was it her imagination? What do you think?
Chapter Summary

Sherlock does some research about Jesus. Then he searches for clues to the stalker’s identity.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Molly's alarm went off at six, Sherlock felt her moving away from him to turn it off. He felt the loss of her warmth, but it quickly returned when she pressed herself against him and whispered, "Good morning, Sherlock."

"Good morning to you as well, my Molly," he said holding her, and kissing her softly. Then he reluctantly released her so she could get ready for work.

He was somewhat disappointed when Molly selected her clothes and went into the bathroom to change. However, he used the time to get dressed himself, putting on his favourite purple Dolce and Gabbana shirt, grey trousers and wine coloured dressing gown over it. He was, after all, planning to stay at home all morning, and wanted to be comfortable.

Sherlock popped crumpets in the toaster for Molly and made coffee. “I'm becoming quite domesticated,” he thought to himself.

Before the pathologist left for work, they had a brief conversation.

"I'm going to head over to your flat this afternoon and pack some more things, so just head straight there after work," he told his fiancée.

"Okay," agreed Molly. "We should be able to get most of it done tonight. Maybe we should just stay there tonight so we can finish up in the morning?"

"Good idea. I'll see you tonight. I'll text you later, if I'm feeling lonely."

"Text me even if you aren't. Your texts always brighten my day." With these words, Molly gave him a hasty kiss goodbye and set off for the train station.

The flat felt empty without her, but the scent of jasmine vanilla lingered in the air, despite the fact Molly had showered the night before. Sherlock headed back to the bedroom. He was anxious to finish reading the book of John. It was as if he was researching a case, and had only found half of the clues he needed in order to make a deduction about it.

An hour later the detective had finished reading John's eyewitness account of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. He had so many questions about it, so he decided to use the internet as a resource. Booting up his laptop, Sherlock did a Google search about the historical evidence for Christ.

There were many articles about the evidence that Jesus Christ was an actual historical figure. After reading several articles, the sleuth was satisfied that Jesus was not some fictional character. Even non-Christian sources corroborated this fact.
Next, he researched crucifixion. This turned out to be very disturbing. Crucifixion was a gruesome, torturous method of execution.

Thirdly, Sherlock researched the resurrection. This, to him, was the crux of the matter. If Jesus really did rise from the dead, as John had said, this would seem to indicate that Jesus was everything he claimed to be. The detective read several articles supporting the evidence of Jesus' resurrection. It was very enlightening.

Sherlock felt as if he was on the cusp of a great revelation, but he felt he still needed to keep reading. He would have to go back to the Old Testament next and read about this "sacrificial lamb" Molly had talked about.

Storing all this new information in his mind palace for further cogitation later, the detective reluctantly set aside his laptop and decided it was time to make a phone call to his parents.

Mrs. Holmes picked up on the second ring.

"Hello Mummy," greeted the detective.

"Sherlock, is that you?" asked the lady.

"Of course it's me," answered Sherlock, rolling his eyes, despite the fact his mother couldn't see him.

"Well, I've almost forgotten the sound of your voice. You call so infrequently," said Mrs. Holmes tartly.

Sherlock rolled his eyes again at his mother's words. "It has barely been a week," he told her in an irritated tone.

"Even so, I would hope you would want your parents to get to know your fiancée, now that you are finally taking the plunge into wedded bliss."

"Well, that is why I am calling actually. Mycroft told me yesterday that you are coming to town this weekend to see an opera. As it so happens, Molly and I were given tickets for the same opera. So, I was wondering..." He paused, dreading the thought of making inane dinner conversation with his parents, "if you would like to have dinner with Molly and me beforehand," he finished in a rush, half hoping his mother would refuse, but knowing she wouldn't. He was right of course.

"Why Sherlock, that would be lovely. We would love to spend some time with you and Molly and get to know our future daughter-in-law better." Sherlock could hear the pleasure in his mother's voice and he felt a little guilty for his unreasonable attitude. They were his parents after all, and he loved them, despite their countrified mannerisms.

"Very well," he said, trying to sound more agreeable. "The performance is at eight o'clock, so why don't you meet me at my place at five o'clock? That should give us enough time to find a restaurant to dine at near the opera house. I can't really invite you over earlier. Molly's furniture is being moved to Baker Street in the afternoon, so we will be busy getting that situated."

"She is moving in already?" questioned his mother in a tone of surprise.

"It's for her own protection," explained the sleuth. "There are people out there who may use her as a target to get to me."

"Very sensible then, dear boy" approved Mrs. Holmes. "You were always the grown-up. Your
brother would probably have incarcerated your fiancée instead, and told the world she was dead."

Sherlock could tell his mother was still very upset with Mycroft for lying to them, and saying their daughter had died years before. Finding out about his duplicity had been a shock.

"Mummy, I told you, he did his best, what he thought was right in regards to Eurus. Mycroft said he will take you to Sherrinford on Sunday afternoon to see her. I will be coming a little later and playing my violin. Perhaps she will respond to it. I still have questions I'd like answered about everything she managed to do, despite being under lock and key. I suspect there are Moriarty henchmen out there who are still free. They are the ones who pose a threat to Molly."

"Oh my, I do hope you can catch these nasty criminals so you are both safe. You've caused me enough grief over the years with all your dangerous cases. Well my dear, I must go. Your father and I are seeing a matinee today of 'Calamity Jane' and I need to get ready. We'll see you at five tomorrow then."

After the phone call with his mother was ended, Sherlock decided to place a call to Scotland Yard. He asked to be put through to Detective Inspector Lestrade, hoping Greg might have some news about who had been working behind the scenes to help Eurus set up her test. There was also the question of who had sent the drone with the grenade to Baker Street.

Unfortunately, the inspector was not expected back into the office until late Sunday afternoon.

Sherlock felt a little frustrated with this news. He had also been hoping to get Greg to arrange a security detail for Molly, but now it would have to wait. He was missing something, but he didn't know what. The detective decided he'd do a bit of investigating of his own at Molly's flat later that afternoon. He wanted to see if anyone was keeping her place under surveillance. Hopefully the whole camera-rigging incident was not an indication that Molly was a person of interest. He still felt uneasy about her comment last night.

With nothing else to do to occupy his time, Sherlock decided to unpack the rest of the boxes that had been brought from Molly's flat on Wednesday evening. Then he could reuse them for this evening's packing.

By the time he had finished, there were half a dozen empty cartons ready to be taken over to Molly's flat. It was past lunchtime, so he ate the remaining ginger nuts and had his usual cup of tea.

He decided to text Molly before doing anything else.

SH: How's your day going?

Molly's response came through almost immediately.

MH: Another quiet one, so good I guess. Went to Mike Stamford and asked for three weeks off, starting from the week before the wedding.
SH: All approved, I hope.
MH: No problem. I haven't taken a holiday in three years, so he said I could take more time off if I wanted.
SH: Great. Now I know you have the time, I can book a honeymoon for ten days.
MH: Any ideas about where yet?
SH: If I did, I wouldn't tell you anyway.
MH: I look forward to finding out where you are taking me.
SH: I should hope so. By the way, my parents will be over at five o'clock tomorrow. We will find a
place to eat at Covent Garden before heading to the opera house.
MH: Sounds good. I'm looking forward to formally meeting my future in-laws. I hope they like me.
SH: They will love you, especially my mum, because she wants grandchildren and she might finally get them.
MH: I hope so.
SH: Heading over to your flat soon with more boxes. I'll keep working on getting things packed, so I'll see you there.
MH: Will do. I'll see you in a few hours. Love you xx
SH: Love you too, Molly Hooper.

As Sherlock prepared to leave for Molly's flat, he quickly threw in pyjamas and clothes for the next day in a box for himself and Molly, seeing as every item of clothing had already been brought to Baker Street on Wednesday night. He took off his dressing gown and put on his suit jacket, followed by his Belstaff. He didn't bother with a scarf, as the weather was starting to improve.

He then stacked the cartons just inside the outer door to 221B and went outside to hail a taxi. Shortly afterward, Sherlock and the boxes were safely deposited in his fiancée's flat.

Before getting started, the detective decided to do a little sleuthing. He walked along the street, figuring out how far away a person could be, but still have a sightline to Molly's flat. Then he looked for possible places where a person might stand unobserved. There were two locations which fit the parameters of his search. Two trees were situated on the opposite side of the street, one to the north and one to the south.

The detective kneeled down beside the first tree. He found nothing but dried grass and a few leaves. At the second tree however, he discovered something very interesting, which also disturbed him. There were leaves and grass around the second tree as well. However, there was also evidence that someone had spent a considerable amount of time near the tree, smoking.

Sherlock stooped down and found several cigar butts among the dried foliage. He picked one up and examined it. The butt was brown and still had a partial label. The label was primarily yellow in colour and he could see some of the letters, "COHI". He knelt down and started searching for other butts which still had parts of the label. Two more of the brown cigars had parts of the label intact. One read "VI" and the other "SIG".

Sherlock used his mind palace to identify the type of cigar he was looking at. He was quite knowledgeable about tobacco ash, having done a study on 243 types of distinct tobacco ash, so was very familiar with all the different cigars which were available as well as other tobacco products. He quickly identified the cigars as Cohiba Siglo VI, a very expensive Cuban cigar.

This was unwelcome news. It confirmed that his suspicions were correct. Someone had been watching Molly's flat. He peered around the tree, and could see Molly's sitting room window. If the curtains were not drawn and the lights were on, any movement she made would be clearly visible.

The detective wondered if there would be cigar butts near the church. He still had time for a quick taxi ride. One happened to come down the street right at that moment, so Sherlock hailed it and gave the cabbie the address of the church. A short time later, he was at the desired address. He instructed the cabbie to wait for him and started walking towards the church.

There was a large tree only a short distance from the front of the building. Sherlock leaned down and looked around the tree, on the side away from the church. He was not surprised at what he saw. There were two cigar butts among the grass, and they matched the ones he had seen at Molly's
flat. Dread washed over him.

As the detective rode back to his fiancée's soon-to-be former place of residence, he catalogued what he knew so far.

Someone had been watching Molly. Someone was still watching her. This was by far the most disturbing thought. Obviously the person was not an enemy of Molly's, but of Sherlock himself. The expensive cigars indicated a person who had expensive tastes, who was most likely wealthy.

Most criminals were not independently wealthy cigar smokers. They worked for someone who paid them enough to survive, but not enough to leave the criminal world behind. No, this person was not a mere henchman of Moriarty's, although he must have had ties with him in order to help set up the Sherrinford scenarios. This was almost certainly a man with a personal vendetta against Sherlock himself.

When Sherlock returned to the flat, it was already almost four o'clock. So much for getting a lot of packing done. He decided to start working on it while he continued to consider the evidence he had uncovered.

The detective went into the second bedroom and began systematically removing all the miscellaneous trinkets he found there, stacking them carefully in one of the boxes. As he did so, he puzzled over what he had learned about the person following Molly. He had a vague recollection that someone he knew smoked those Cuban cigars. Try as he might, even his mind palace failed him when it came to identifying the mysterious person.

Once the second bedroom was completely empty, save for the furniture, Sherlock moved to the master bedroom. Here he noticed a jewellery box on the dressing table. Taking a peek inside, the detective saw a large assortment of inexpensive looking necklaces and earrings. There were several pairs of clip-on earrings as well as pierced ones. The clip-on ones were larger than the pierced earrings and appeared to be more like costume jewellery. He would have to buy Molly some more, items that used real gems and proper gold, rather than the tacky cheap ones which were obviously all she seemed to prefer.

There was not a lot in the way of silver jewellery, Sherlock noted with satisfaction, thinking of the crystal drop earrings he intended to give Molly on their wedding day. Those earrings, in their small box, were safely tucked under some socks in the top drawer of his bedside table.

Closing the lid of the jewellery box, Sherlock lifted it and put it into an empty carton. He added other items from the dressing table. The wardrobe and chest of drawers were already empty, as were the drawers of the bedside table, save for the "Our Daily Bread" devotional. Sherlock placed the little book on the top of the nightstand, next to the lamp and alarm clock.

He surveyed the room with satisfaction. All that was left was to strip the bed, but obviously that would have to wait until morning, seeing as he and Molly were spending the night here.

Just then, he heard the sound of the key in the lock on the front door. Molly had arrived.

Chapter End Notes

Sherlock’s research about Jesus was conducted by me as well. If you are not sure about things, dear reader, I encourage you to search for yourselves.
Danger is approaching. What will happen next? Who is stalking our heroine?
Someone is Watching You - The Stranger (Friday)

Chapter Summary

The mysterious stranger thinks about his plan.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The stranger peered from his vantage point behind the tree where he had a clear view of Molly's front door. He was smoking his favourite Cuban cigar.

He watched as she unlocked the door and was greeted by that goody-goody detective, Sherlock Holmes. He curled his lip in a sneer as he watched them indulge in a full on snogging session while the door was still open.

The man wanted vengeance on Sherlock Holmes. The detective had been instrumental in foiling his plans and sending him to prison.

Five years ago, the man had been a secret associate of the master consulting criminal, James Moriarty. They had worked together several times as equals, pooling their talents and resources to cause trouble and make a lot of money for themselves. Moriarty had told him about the lunatic, but super intelligent Eurus Holmes. Eurus had only seen the master criminal once but had maintained contact with him. She had mesmerized the prison guards and brain-washed them to do her bidding. Messages had gone back and forth between her and Moriarty, plotting vengeance on a common foe, her brother Sherlock Holmes.

Well, perhaps not quite equals. Moriarty was definitely more into the thought processes of how things should be done. The man himself was more comfortable with implementing said things. Secretly he had envied Moriarty's utter ruthlessness. Moriarty was the true leader when it came to his plans for Sherlock Holmes. Moriarty's rather timely death had given him the opportunity to come out from under the master criminal's shadow.

During Sherlock's two year absence from London, the man had set his own plan in motion for a grand scheme in which he stood to receive millions of dollars from a country at odds with England. Unfortunately, the detective had returned in time to cost him those millions of dollars and had him carted off to prison in disgrace.

Until the man's release, there had been no further contact with the Holmes sister. After it however, his plan for vengeance on Sherlock Holmes outmatched even that of the incarcerated woman.

When it was time to set her plan in motion, it was the man's suggestion to use a grenade attached to a drone. Eurus had been hesitant about it. She didn't want to spoil her "game" by causing the death of her brother prematurely. The man had insisted, however, that surely her detective brother could outwit a drone. It had been a bonus that Mycroft Holmes and John Watson had been visiting at the time he guided the drone to Baker Street.

The fact that all three men had survived was quite amazing. Luck had definitely been with them too, in the fortuitous placement of huge skips filled with rubbish below the windows of the flat.
The recording of Eurus’s song had been a deliberate attempt to lure the detective to her side, to trigger his memory that he had a sister.

The villain had been responsible for setting up the various tests Eurus had wanted to put her brothers through. He had personally seen to the cameras for the pathetic pathologist's flat. Silently he laughed at his own joke, the "pathetic pathologist." He had easily faked an ID from the electric company, worn a false beard and adopted a cockney accent.

As the door finally closed on the flat, shielding the couple from view, the stranger tossed down his cigar and stubbed it out, grinding it with his heel. Now he just needed to wait, to find a time when the girl was alone. He would then find a way to lure her out of safety and into his clutches. **Soon, very soon, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, you will pay for what you did to me - or rather, your fiancée will**, he thought.

The man gave an evil chuckle and walked away, down the street, to return to the hotel.

Chapter End Notes

I have attempted to give some kind of explanation about the drone and explosion at Baker Street in this chapter. I hate it when shows don’t explain how people survive unsurvivable scenarios. Personally I don’t feel Eurus could have been operating the drone from Sherrinford, thus my idea that she had an accomplice who also rigged the cameras in Molly’s flat. And why would she want to kill her brother before playing her game?

Do you find my explanations remotely believable?

Are you getting scared for Molly’s safety?
Late Night at Molly's flat - Molly

Chapter Summary

Sherlock admits to Molly he is worried about her safety.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Molly's day had been a routine one. She had been pleased that Mike had immediately approved her time-off request, as he marked it on the staff calendar.

She and Kaitlyn had discussed their plans for Tuesday night. Kayla was going to meet them at the hospital at five o'clock. They were going to grab some dinner and then hit the local bridal boutiques and look for bridesmaid dresses.

After work, Molly took the Tube to her flat. She kept having an uneasy feeling that someone was watching her, but nothing seemed suspicious when she turned around. She decided it was just paranoia.

After exiting the train station, Molly stopped at a bakery close to her flat. She purchased Cornish pasties to have for dinner.

As soon as Molly unlocked the door to her flat and dropped the bag with pasties on the table as well as her handbag, she called, "Sherlock?"

Even as she said his name, her handsome fiancé strode toward her.

He took her in his arms immediately and began kissing her urgently, desperately. His tongue traced the line of her lips and the sweet intimacy of the sensation surprised and delighted her, as she responded in kind. They remained locked in a passionate embrace for several minutes as sensations washed over Molly until she felt weak at the knees. She finally pulled back from Sherlock to say shakily, "Wow, that was some welcome home kiss."

The detective closed the front door and leaned against it. "I just missed you, that's all," he said, not quite meeting her eyes.

Perceptively, Molly said, "There's more to it than that, not that I'm complaining. What's going on?"

Reluctantly, the detective confessed, "I'm worried. Someone has been watching your flat. I found evidence outside."

"What kind of evidence?"

"A number of cigar butts," he replied.

"Couldn't it just be some random person who likes to smoke cigars in the street?" she asked.

"Judging by the amount of butts, and their proximity to your flat, I'd have to say it's unlikely. Why would someone stand just there, within the sightline of your flat?"
"I don't know, Sherlock. Why don't you show me?"

The couple went outside and the detective pointed to the evidence on the ground.

Sherlock picked up a cigar butt. "This wasn't here before, and it's still warm on the ash end. Damn, I should have checked outside as soon as you arrived."

Molly watched as her fiancé threw the butt back down and ran down the street to the corner, then up it.

"Must have missed him by minutes," he said angrily, raking his hands through his curly hair.

Molly could see Sherlock’s frustration in the set of his jaw, but what she saw in his eyes - was it fear?

"Back inside - now," he commanded, and they returned to the flat.

Once inside, the sleuth locked the door securely, and checked to make sure the windows were also locked. After he had done this, Molly saw some of the tension leave his body.

"Molly, I am going to arrange police protection for you as soon as I can get hold of Lestrade on Sunday night. It's just a precaution, but I want to make sure you are safe when I can't be around you. Once we catch the stalker, we can have the police detail removed."

"Okay," said Molly, a little bemused at this sudden turn of events. When had the intangible threat to her become a real one? She wasn't going to refuse help though. She trusted that Sherlock knew what he was doing. Trying to break the tension, she asked, "So, shall we eat those Cornish pasties now? Do you want me to reheat them?"

"No, that's fine," he said.

Molly took out two cans of Coke from the fridge. "We might as well have these. The fridge needs to be cleaned out anyway."

After dinner, the couple set to work cleaning out the rest of the kitchen cupboards. Most of the plates and utensils had already been neatly packed by Molly's friends. They had just left a couple of each, in case Molly needed them before Saturday. Soon, everything from the kitchen counters was packed, save for the electric kettle and toaster, which would still be needed in the morning.

Molly cleaned as much of the counters and the sink as possible, while Sherlock, using his height, was able to wipe down the front of the high cupboards.

Molly surveyed their handiwork with satisfaction. "Looking good," she approved. "I'm going to take a shower now."

Sherlock produced the box which had their nightclothes, and Molly took hers to the bathroom. While Sherlock took his shower after her, Molly brushed and braided her wet hair.

Molly got under the covers and retrieved her "Our Daily Bread" from the nightstand, using her phone to look up the day's Bible reading. She was silently praying as her fiancé came into the bedroom and got into the bed next to her. She prayed for God's guidance for them, for His protection. She prayed also for John and Rosie; that he could find love again and Rosie could have a new mother who would love her as much as if the child were her own. Finally, she thanked God for granting the desires of her heart.
When she finished praying, she opened her eyes to see the blue-green gaze of her man fixed intently upon her.

"You look so peaceful," he commented.

"That's because God gives me 'the peace that passes all understanding.' I know He is in control of my life, and He knows what is best for me."

"I've had so much turmoil in my life over these past few months, especially since Mary died. I wish I could find the peace you are talking about."

Molly squeezed Sherlock's hand. "You can," she assured him earnestly, "and you will. I believe God is going to do something that will convince you once and for all that He, and He alone is in control. When you can understand that and relinquish that fight to be the one in charge of your own destiny, you will find the same peace I have."

Molly continued, "Sherlock, when you were standing on the roof of St. Bart's, how did you feel?"

"Scared," he admitted. "Although I had calculated thirteen different scenarios that could happen, I could not be sure I would succeed with the whole 'faking my suicide' thing. Too many variables and things that could go wrong."

"And yet, you still jumped, not knowing for sure you would survive. You took a leap of faith. That's what you do as a Christian. You take that leap, without knowing everything that can happen, but believing God will be there to catch you, if you know what I mean."

The detective nodded slowly. "That's an analogy I can relate to. I do feel a bit like I'm standing on the edge of a building, and trying to decide whether to jump or not."

"I believe in you, my love. Nobody can force you to make that jump. There's a difference between head knowledge and heart knowledge. There are so many people out there who know the Bible thoroughly, but that knowledge is in their head and not their heart. Let your mind palace dwell on that for awhile."

"I will," promised Sherlock, adding, "I suppose we should get some sleep now. It's going to be a busy day tomorrow."

The couple shared a good might kiss and went to sleep, with Sherlock holding Molly close to him.

Chapter End Notes

What do you think of Molly’s “leap of faith” analogy? I thought the whole St. Bart’s scenario lent itself very well to that.

In this world, I personally believe the hardest thing for people to do, and the reason so many people reject or turn away from faith, is that we must relinquish control to God. You cannot serve two masters, as the Bible says.

Hold onto Jesus with both hands and release that death grip on the world.
Sherlock woke and lifted his head to glance at the alarm clock on Molly's side of the bed. It was past eight o'clock. He dropped a kiss on his fiancée's forehead.

Her eyes opened, and liquid brown eyes looked into his turquoise ones. He silently studied her, this woman who had captured his heart so completely. She wasn't a classic beauty with movie star looks.

Her beauty shone in her smile, her adorable mannerisms, like when she stammered a little because she was nervous, and her selflessness.

And this remarkable woman had found something in him to love, despite his many faults. He would never understand it. He couldn't wait for them to truly begin their life together as husband and wife.

"Guess what?" he said, stroking her cheek with his thumb.

"What?" she asked sleepy.

"In nine weeks, you are going to become my wife. I admit, I wish it was sooner, but I suppose we still have a lot to do."

"I feel the same way," she responded. "You're right, though. Next week we really need to organize the wedding invitations or we won't get them sent out in time."

"Ah yes, those invitations usually have your full names on them don't they? John really didn't want his middle name on his, but Mary insisted."

Molly laughed. "Hamish, I remember. I wish we could not use my middle name either, it's so old fashioned."

"Really?" he questioned. "What is it?"

She cringed and sat up in bed. "Do I really have to tell you now?"

Sherlock sat up as well and put his arm around her. "No time like the present. It can't be that bad, surely?"

"It's Enid," she said, looking highly embarrassed.

The detective recalled the bookshelf of Enid Blyton books. "Presumably, your mother is a big fan of the author Enid Blyton," he remarked.
"What? How did you know?" asked the pathologist in surprise.

"The bookshelf of children's stories," explained the sleuth.

"Oh yeah, I forgot about those. My first name comes from that source too, although Mum liked Molly with a Y instead of an IE at the end. That came from 'The Adventures of the Wishing Chair.' Did you ever read any of those stories as a child?"

Sherlock thought back to the other day, when he had seen the books and recalled there was some traumatic memory associated with them, but could still not think what it was. "I did," he said, "but I can't recall any of them specifically. My memory is still fuzzy in relation to events from my childhood, when Eurus was still around. For some reason I have negative feelings towards something related to those books, but I don't know what it is. I'll have to ask my mother about that tonight. Maybe she can shed some light on it."

"Oh my gosh!" exclaimed Molly, "we have so much to do today, and here we are, lingering in bed!" She made a move as if to get up, but Sherlock stopped her, trapping her with his other arm.

"Take it easy, love. It's only just past eight o'clock. The movers won't be here for almost five hours. We have plenty of time. Anyway, don't you want to know my full name?"

"Your full name? Not your middle name? Why do I get the feeling I'm missing something?"

"My clever Molly," approved the sleuth. "My full name is William Sherlock Scott Holmes."

Molly gaped at him. "Two middle names? And Sherlock isn't even your first name? William just seems so common."

My father's name is William, but my parents always intended for me to go by Sherlock. Too confusing otherwise."

"William Holmes; no, you don't look like a William, although Scott is rather a nice name," Molly grinned. "Perhaps I'll have a Lady Di moment in the church and flip your first two names, call you Sherlock William Scott, the way she said Phillip Charles Arthur George at her wedding to Prince Charles. My mother watched the wedding on the telly and thought it was so funny. She always wondered if the mix-up meant they weren't really married," she laughed.

"Don't you dare," said Sherlock. "I don't want anyone questioning the validity of our marriage." He kissed her then, fiercely and possessively.

At last he released her. "Well, future Mrs. Holmes, are you ready to get to work?"

"I guess so," said Molly reluctantly.

"I'm going to get dressed in the bathroom, so you can dress in here," the detective informed her, as he went to get the change of clothes he'd brought for them. He put hers on the bed and went into the bathroom.

When he returned to the bedroom a few minutes later, Molly was dressed and stripping the bed of its sheets and duvet. "Sherlock, can you get me a bin liner from the cupboard under the kitchen sink, please?" she asked. "I'm going to just put the bedding and towels in one of those, easier to carry."

Sherlock found the bin bags and brought back two. "I brought an extra, just in case you need it," he told her. Then he added, "I'm going to text John and see if he has a few more boxes he can bring
over, if he's available."

He sent the text, and a short time later, John replied in the affirmative. He would bring the cartons
over in about an hour, and bring Rosie as well to say hello.

"He'll be here in an hour," the detective told Molly, "and he's bringing our goddaughter."

He noticed the way his fiancée's eyes lit up at the mention of the baby, and remembered how
comfortable she had seemed that day at John's when she had been babysitting the little girl. He
recalled thinking at the time what a wonderful mother Molly would be. If they had children,
hopefully she would make up for all of his inadequacies as a father.

That day had been an awful one for him. It was soon after Mary's death, when John blamed him for
it, and had refused to see him. Molly had sounded so regretful when she had relayed John's words
to him, that he would rather have anyone but Sherlock help him. Thank God, that was in the past
now. Funny how people used the word God so often, either in thanks or as an expression of horror
like, "Oh, my God!" He really felt a sincere thankfulness to God now, that John had forgiven him
for being the cause of Mary's death, inadvertent though it had been.

"Did anyone empty out the cabinet below the television, where the Blu-ray player is?" Molly asked
suddenly. "There are a bunch of Blu-rays in there, mostly Disney ones."

"I know I didn't," replied Sherlock, opening the cupboard to inspect it. "Oops, I guess we have
some more packing to do."

"If you can take care of that, I'll get us some breakfast," said Molly. "There's one Blu-ray you
might find interesting. It's an animated musical retelling of the story of Moses and the exodus from
Egypt. You can put it on to watch as we keep cleaning, at least until John gets here."

Sherlock found the Blu-ray and loaded it into the player, turning the television on and fiddling with
the TV remote until he found the correct input for the Blu-ray player. Once he fast forwarded
through the previews on the disc and pressed the button on the remote to play the movie, he started
sorting through the other Blu-ray titles.

Molly had not been kidding when she said she owned a lot of Disney Blu-rays, most of them
animated titles. She had obviously been collecting them for a long time. There were titles that had
been released well before the age of even DVD's, and subsequently re-released later in Blu-ray
format. He noticed older titles like "Snow White" and "Lady and the Tramp;" ones from the 80's
and 90's like The Little Mermaid" and "Hercules." Then there were some more recent ones, the
most notable of which was "Frozen."

As the detective half-watched the movie that was playing, observing Moses being saved by
Pharaoh's daughter, he carefully stacked the other movie titles on the table.

Molly set down crumpets, butter and honey on the table, along with cups of tea for both of them.
As the couple ate their breakfast, their eyes turned towards the movie that was playing.

"So Moses grew up as part of Pharaoh's family?" he questioned.

"Well, yes. Pharaoh's daughter raised him as her son. The friendship between Moses and Rameses
though is not recorded in Scripture; poetic license on the part of the movie scriptwriters. The Bible
pretty much skips Moses's childhood."

The movie continued to play in the background as they cleared away the breakfast dishes. "We can
just let it run," Molly said. "Most of it is just filler, until you get to the part where God speaks to
Moses through a burning bush and instructs him to tell Pharaoh to release the slaves."

A short time later, the remaining dishes, utensils and cleaning items from below the sink were ready to be placed into cartons for the journey to their new home.

The pathologist went into the bathroom to scrub the tub and basin.

The detective checked to make sure all the cupboards had been cleaned out in the kitchen. Except for the items on the counter, everything was empty. Then his attention was caught by the movie once again, as the scene played where Moses saw the burning bush and God spoke through it.

Sherlock was not usually one to sit and watch a movie, especially an animated one, but his interest was captured by the subject material, especially as it related to something in the Bible.

He called to Molly, “The cupboards are clear. Is there anything else you need right now?”

Molly called back, "I think I have everything covered for now, until John brings those other boxes. Why don't you sit down and watch the movie for a bit?"

"Well, if you're sure..." Sherlock hesitated.

Molly came out of the bathroom, sponge in hand. "Just sit down," she ordered, after kissing his cheek. "You take a break. I'll get mine when you are helping the movers." She grinned and headed back to the bathroom.

Sherlock sat on the sofa and heard a text alert come in. It was from John.

"Rosie had a little accident, need to clean up her mess. Will be there a half hour later, sorry."

"No problem," the detective texted back. He was quite pleased, he could probably finish watching the movie in that time.

Molly came and sat beside Sherlock right at the point when the narrator was talking about the final plagues. "Oh, good timing," she remarked. "Shouldn't John be here by now?"

"He's running half an hour late," said Sherlock as he watched the television screen showing images of what looked to be a wind-like force going from house to house, bypassing the houses with blood on the door frames.

When the next song started, Molly exclaimed, 'I love this song, especially the words!"

The detective listened intently to the lyrics of the chorus:

"There can be miracles
When you believe;
Though hope is frail,
It's hard to kill.
Who knows what miracles
You can achieve
When you believe,
Somehow you will;
You will, when you believe."

"It is a beautiful song," he agreed. The couple watched the last few minutes of the movie together. Sherlock rested his arm around his fiancée's shoulders as they watched Moses part the Red Sea for
"That really happened?" He questioned. "I've heard people use the term to describe something
amazing, but I just thought it was made up."

"It's in the Bible. I believe the Bible is a factual account of things that have happened. I'll let you
make that determination for yourself. And look, there's Moses, coming down from the mountain
with the tablets containing the Ten Commandments." Molly pointed at the TV screen.

As the credits rolled, Sherlock stretched and said, "Well, now I'm ready to read the book of
Exodus for myself." He stood up, pulling Molly with him, then kissed her tenderly. "I'm going to
disconnect the electronics now. John should be here anytime now."

Even as he ejected the disc and set to work disconnecting cables, the doorbell rang and Molly let
John in with the baby. She immediately took Rosie from him.

"Hello, sweetheart," she cooed. "Auntie Molly missed you! Look over there, it's Uncle Sherlock." She gestured to where the detective was rolling up the television power cord.

"Hi John; hi Rosie," Sherlock greeted his best friend and his goddaughter.

"If you can watch Rosie for a few minutes, I'll get Sherlock to help me bring in those boxes," said
John to the doting godmother.

"Of course," she said promptly, walking to the sofa with the baby and seating herself.

Sherlock followed John out the door.

"Looks like you have things well in hand for the movers," commented the doctor.

"Yeah, and just in time too. It was the right decision to get Molly away from here as soon as
possible," confided the detective.

"Why's that then?" John was leading him in the same direction as the tree where the detective had
found the cigar butts. As they passed the tree, Sherlock pointed at the brown oblong shapes on the
ground.

"Someone has been watching Molly. See those butts? They are a very expensive brand, so the
perpetrator has money. Someone is out to get me, and I fear for her."

John whistled. "Sorry to hear that, mate," he said. "Does Mycroft or Lestrade know?"

"I'm seeing Mycroft tomorrow. I tried calling Greg yesterday, but he's out of the office until
tomorrow evening. I'm going to speak with him then and arrange a security detail for Molly."

They reached John's car as the doctor asked, "Do you think this person is connected to the events
of Sherrinford?"

"I am certain of it. I would even go so far as to say I believe he was Eurus's contact. He planted the
cameras in Molly's flat, and most likely operated the drone with the grenade on it."

John opened the car door and then the boot, so the men could grab the cartons.

"He sounds dangerous", remarked the doctor. "Any leads as to his identity?"

Sherlock took two boxes and frowned. "I keep thinking I SHOULD know who he is, but my mind
palace seems to be taking a holiday. If I could only remember where I've seen those cigars before..."

The men began walking back towards the flat, cartons in hand. "You probably remember the brand from when you did that ridiculous 'identifying 243 different types of ash' study."

The detective gave his friend a sour look. "That's not what I meant. Yes, I recognized the cigars as being one of the brands I studied, but I feel as if I should know who smokes the damned things."

"It will come to you," said John consolingly. "You always figure things out in the end."

"I suppose so," replied the sleuth.

The men arrived back at the flat and set to work transferring the rest of the items that needed to be packed.

Sherlock consulted his watch. "The movers should be here soon," he said.

Molly fed Rosie a bottle while the men did a final check to make sure the rooms were empty except for furniture. Sherlock grabbed Molly's devotional and slid it into his pocket, then unplugged the alarm clock and bedside lamp. He deposited the clock into a box and put the lamp on the floor of the sitting room area, ready for the moving men.

John offered to take some more filled cartons back to the flat, so the men made two trips to the doctor's car and back.

Rosamund fell asleep after taking her bottle, so Molly gently deposited her on the bed in her room. She placed a pillow on either side of the baby, to protect her from rolling off the bed. Fortunately, Molly had not packed the pillows. They would remain with the bed.

The doorbell rang and Sherlock opened it to admit three burly men.

The men were very efficient and skilled at their job. Within forty-five minutes, their van was loaded with all the furniture save that from the small bedroom and the bed from the master bedroom. The rest of the cartons were duly loaded.

John went to the bedroom and retrieved his sleeping daughter, then offered to take the engaged couple back to Baker Street.

The detective noticed a wistful expression on Molly's face as she looked at her empty flat and then closed and locked it from the outside for the last time.

"Are you okay?" he asked, squeezing her hand.

"Yes," she responded. "Just a lot of memories."

"I understand, but just think of all the new memories we are going to make, together," he said gently, as they followed John and Rosie to the car.

The movers had just left to head to Baker Street with their loaded van.

Molly looked at her fiancé and smiled, before turning one last time towards her flat. "Thanks for the memories," she said softly.

While John got Rosamund situated into her carseat, Sherlock took one of the boxes and put it on his lap so there would be room for Molly in the backseat.
Shortly thereafter, they were on their way back to Baker Street.

Chapter End Notes

Farewell to Molly’s flat. Baker Street has a new permanent resident.

I really loved the “Prince of Egypt” movie and thought it would be a good way to introduce Sherlock to the major events in Exodus.

Are you familiar with the Enid Blyton books? They are hard to find in America, but popular in Australia where I grew up. I wish more children in America could enjoy her lovely children’s stories!
Molly closed her eyes as she sat in the back seat of John's car. Everything had gone remarkably well. She felt a little nostalgic. She had a lot of good memories at her flat, the best of course being those from the past ten days or so. She had good memories too from when she had her cat, Toby. When he had disappeared one day, she had been crushed. It had been not long after Sherlock had left London for his two year exile. She didn't have the heart to get another cat after that.

Almost as if he had read her thoughts, Sherlock turned in his seat to look at her.

"Molly, I just remembered you used to have a cat, Toby I think? What happened to him?"

Molly sighed. "He went out one day and never came back."

"I'm sorry, love," said Sherlock sincerely. "I know you doted on him."

"Ha," she snorted. "Toby doted on you more than me. When you stayed with me until after your 'funeral,' all he wanted was for you to hold him. I've heard that cats are often drawn to those who seem disinterested in them, and Toby was a perfect example of that. You barely gave him the time of day, yet when you left, he mooned about the place as if he'd lost his best friend. Honestly, I think he left to look for you when he disappeared a few weeks later."

"My poor Molly, I guess I was disrupting your life even then."

John cut into their conversation. "So you stayed with Molly after your apparent suicide?" he asked Sherlock. "I had wondered about that."

"Well, he obviously couldn't go back to Baker Street," Molly pointed out. "My flat was the logical place for a temporary hideout."

John merely nodded, and they rode in silence the rest of the short ride to Molly's new permanent home.

Fortunately, they arrived before the moving van, and John was able to find a parking spot very close to the flat.

As the men started the job of carrying the boxes into 221B, Molly took Rosie from her carseat.

Mrs. Hudson appeared almost immediately once the outer door was opened. John had apparently spoken to her earlier, and she was ready to take the infant into her own flat. Molly handed over the baby and changing bag to the woman who was now her landlady as well as Sherlock's.

The removal van came around the corner and the next hour was spent in getting Molly's furniture
unloaded and situated in its new home. The cartons were stacked mostly in the sitting room, to be unpacked at a later time.

By the time the movers were finished, and John also left with Rosie, it was after three-thirty. Molly dashed into the bathroom for her shower, while Sherlock tried to make sure the furniture was arranged properly. He also set up the television and Blu-ray player.

As soon as Molly exited the bathroom, Sherlock entered it to take his own shower. Molly dressed in her fanciest dress, which happened to be the black one with the spangles that sparkled at the top of the bodice, as well as on the shoulder straps.

Molly hadn't washed her hair, choosing instead to release it from the braid she had put it in the night before. Her hair fell in soft waves around her face as a result.

Sherlock walked into the bedroom, clad only in a towel, and Molly felt her heart jump. His wet hair was even curlier than usual and he looked so utterly adorable that she had to remind herself to breathe. She noticed the scar on his chest from the bullet hole that had almost killed him the previous year and thought she'd have to ask him about it at some point, when she wasn't in a hurry to get ready to meet her future in-laws.

"I remember that dress," remarked Sherlock, completely relaxed in front of her despite his state of undress. "You look beautiful."

Molly blushed despite herself, at both the compliment, and because she desperately wanted to press herself against that bare chest. Instead, she contented herself with a "Thank you," and a quick kiss on his cheek as she returned to the bathroom to apply some makeup, and give her fiancé some privacy to get dressed.

Molly inspected her face in the bathroom. She did not usually wear much makeup, but it was fun to make the effort once in awhile to apply a little more, and she wanted to make a good impression on Sherlock's parents. They were probably tall and statuesque, as well as elegant. She hoped they wouldn't consider her too plain for their gorgeous son.

When she reentered the bedroom, it was to find the object of her affection standing there in a classic suit with white shirt. He was even wearing a tie for the occasion, instead of leaving open the customary button at the top of his shirt. He looked so devastatingly handsome, she had an impulse to fan her hands in front of her face, the way women do to show a deep appreciation for something or someone.

She remembered him looking incredibly handsome in his waistcoat and tail coat for John's wedding. That had been the day Molly acknowledged to herself that she had never gotten over Sherlock and was still crazy about him. She had treated Tom quite badly, irritated by his "meat dagger" theory, and his comment about Sherlock being "pissed". That had earned her ex-fiancé a stab to the hand with a fork. Of course Sherlock had been acting a bit strangely, but she was used to the detective's rants, and unwilling to let anyone say anything negative about the man. She'd even surreptitiously taken a photo of him, which was now the image on her phone's home screen.

Sherlock interrupted his fiancée's reverie. "So, do you think I am dressed well enough for the opera?"

Molly laughed at Sherlock fishing for compliments. "Are you serious? You look so darned hot I am afraid to touch you in case I get burned," she teased.
"I think we should test that theory," remarked the detective, walking over to Molly and subjecting her to a sizzling kiss that made her feel that he was almost indeed too hot to touch. She clung to him as he kissed her breathless. He finally released her and they both had to take a moment to compose themselves.

Sherlock glanced at his watch. "My parents will be here any minute," he said.

Molly gasped. "Already? Do you happen to know where my jewellery box is? I need a pair of earrings."

Sherlock found the carton in which he'd placed the jewellery box. He pulled it out and handed it to her, asking, "Are you going to wear those big, glittery hoops again? They did go well with your dress."

"I guess you were paying more attention than I thought," commented the Molly, finding the earrings and putting them on.

"I always noticed you. I was just too blind to really see you for the amazing woman you are. Well, no, that's not quite accurate," he corrected himself, "I was too full of myself to acknowledge my feelings for you, because I was so sure love was just a complication that ruined lives. Once again, I was wrong. Loving you hasn't complicated my life; it has transformed it into something so much better."

Molly put her hand on his well defined cheekbone, stroking it with her thumb. "You have no idea how much it means to me, to hear you say that."

Sherlock took her hand from his cheek and moved it so he could kiss her palm. Molly quivered at his touch. How was it that everything he did, every gesture made her heart beat so fast?

"I can feel your pulse racing," he murmured as he kissed her wrist.

Just then, the doorbell rang and reluctantly Sherlock let her hand go, as he said quietly, "Just to clarify for you, my pulse is definitely operating at a much faster speed than normal right now too." He smiled at his fiancée with the same gentle one he'd used when he'd kissed her cheek after he'd found out she was engaged to Tom. His eyes were limpid aquamarine pools that revealed his love for her so clearly.

Then he went downstairs to open the front door, saying, "Time to face the music, or the parents, as it were."

Molly chuckled at that, although she still felt extremely nervous. She walked into the sitting room to wait for the Holmes parents.

When Sherlock's parents preceded him into the room, Molly couldn't help but feel surprised. The couple looked, well, normal was the only way to describe them. Mrs. Holmes was not much taller than Molly herself, and she certainly didn't fit the "elegant and statuesque" image the younger woman had painted in her mind. She looked to be a woman in her late seventies, with grey hair that didn't quite reach her shoulders. Her eyes were an arresting green colour, which made her the major contributor to Sherlock's own changeable blue-green eyes. She was dressed neatly, but conservatively in a light grey linen suit and wore no jewellery.

Mr. Holmes had hazel eyes and was the same height as Sherlock. He was also dressed nicely in a suit which complemented his wife's attire. Molly could see characteristics from both parents in her fiancé. She wondered from whom he had inherited his superior intellect.
"Mummy, Daddy, this is Molly," announced Sherlock, going to stand by her. "Molly, these are my parents."

"I'm very pleased to meet you Mr. and Mrs. Holmes," said Molly shyly. To her surprise, the older woman embraced her warmly. "Do call me Violet, dear," she said. "After all, we are going to be family very soon."

"And you can call me William," piped up Sherlock's father.

Molly liked him at once, he was very soft-spoken, and he seemed to be content with his wife taking the initiative in conversation.

"Why don't we sit down?" suggested Sherlock. "You can have my chair, Daddy," he said, before taking Molly's hand and pulling her towards the sofa that had previously been in her flat.

Mrs. Holmes seated herself in the matching armchair.

"Can I get you something to drink, Mrs. Hol...I mean, Violet and William? Perhaps a cup of tea?" asked Molly, trying to be a good hostess.

The older woman answered for herself and her husband. "Nothing for us right now; we'll be headed off soon anyway for dinner. I'd like to get to know you a little better. You are obviously a very special person to have made my boy change his mind about relationships."

"She is," stated the detective firmly, as he looked at his fiancée tenderly. "Molly is everything you could want in a daughter-in-law, and the only woman I could ever contemplate having as a wife."

Molly smiled up at him as he took her hand in his.

"So," said Violet Holmes, "How long have you two known each other? Where did you meet?"

At Sherlock's nod, Molly told the story. "We met at St. Bart's Hospital. I was working there, as I still am, conducting post-mortems and performing lab tests, then analyzing them. Sherlock came in from time to time if he was on a case and needed to look at a body in the morgue. I think I was part of the furniture as far as he was concerned at first."

Sherlock looked a bit embarrassed at her statement, but did not try to deny it.

"It took me over six months to gather up enough courage to ask him out one day. He interrupted my feeble attempt, and in the end he thought I was just asking him if he wanted to have coffee, rather than go out with me for coffee. So he told me, 'black, two sugars; I'll be upstairs,' and crushed my hopes."

"What are you talking about?" asked Sherlock in obvious confusion. Molly could see him casting back into the remarkable depths of his mind palace to retrieve the memory of that day. "Your exact words to me were, 'I was wondering if you'd like to have coffee?' How does that equate to asking me out?"

"Apparently you don't recall what happened just before that," said Molly pertly. "I started to ask you, 'Maybe later, when you're finished,' when you decided to make a comment about my lipstick. If you connect the phrases together..."

Sherlock said slowly, "Maybe later, when you're finished...I was wondering; would you like to have coffee?" Realization dawned on his face. "Molly, I'm sorry. That does put a completely different interpretation to what we were saying. Now I'm going to be forever wondering what
might have happened if I had understood what you were trying to ask me."

Mr. And Mrs. Holmes both laughed. "That's my Sherlock," said the older lady. "Totally oblivious to anything going on around him, unless it directly pertains to what he is working on."

Sherlock frowned at his mother. "Well at least I came to my senses in the end."

"And it only took seven years," teased Molly as she squeezed his hand to show she wasn't cross with him.

"With all due respect, Molly Hooper, it might not have taken seven years if you hadn't been engaged when I came back to London after my return from exile."

The Holmes parents were watching the pair's banter with interest. "Do tell," begged Mrs. Holmes. "What happened when he came back?"

"Shouldn't we be leaving now if we want dinner before the opera?" asked Sherlock, obviously trying to change the subject.

"Yes, it's rather a long story. We can talk more during dinner," agreed Molly, looking up at her flustered fiancé.

"Oh lovely," said Mrs. Holmes enthusiastically. "I do so love a good story."

Mr. Holmes, who had remained silent throughout the conversation, finally spoke. "Sherlock, it seems you have found yourself a woman of both beauty and brains, just as I did with your mother."

Molly knew then that Sherlock's mother was obviously the genius parent.

"Well, my dear," Mr. Holmes said to his wife, "let's be off then." He stood up and walked over to the armchair, holding his hand out to her as she rose from her chair.

Sherlock did the same for Molly.

"Do you have the tickets?" she asked him.

"In my pocket," responded the sleuth, patting the pocket of his suit jacket.

The four of them headed downstairs, and Sherlock hailed a taxi.

Then they were on their way to Covent Garden.

Chapter End Notes

A lot of people write about Molly having a cat. I did not realize at first he was mentioned in her blog, so hadn’t even considered it. Anyway, I think it makes things easier that she does not have a cat anymore.

I had to put in that "coffee" thing, because Sherlock was so oblivious about Molly asking him out. But really, you can see where he might have thought she was just offering him coffee. Have you ever thought about that before?

I love that Sherlock’s parents were played by Benedict’s real-life parents. It’s cool
being able to make true comparisons to their son.

I appreciate any and all feedback.
Chapter Summary

Sherlock has his first opera experience.

Danger looms for Molly.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The quartet arrived at Covent Garden and found a restaurant within walking distance of the Royal Opera House.

As soon as they had placed their order, Sherlock's mother wasted no time in asking what had happened between Molly and the detective after he had been away for two years.

Molly began to recount the story.

"First of all, you have to understand that I did not know if I would ever see Sherlock again after he left the country. He used my flat to keep a low profile until after his 'funeral', and then he was gone."

She sighed. "I met someone else about a year later, someone I hoped would help me forget about Sherlock."

"Yet you chose someone who had a similar hairstyle to mine and wore clothes like mine," cut in the sleuth, chuckling.

Molly felt her face colouring. "Well, at least he wasn't a sociopath," she shot back, before adding "not that you are one...anymore." She looked apologetically at Mrs. Holmes.

"It's okay Molly, my parents know I called myself a high-functioning sociopath."

"I'm glad you put that in the past tense, son," remarked Mr. Holmes, voicing his opinion for once.

"I don't think that has been an accurate description for a long time," ventured Molly. "You were different when you came back to London."

"I'm still waiting to hear about how Sherlock found out you were engaged to someone else," Mrs. Holmes pressed, looking at Molly.

"Very well, Mummy," Sherlock interceded. "I will continue the story for you. That way Molly can have some insight into my thoughts on what happened."

He continued, "As you know, John was not aware that I had faked my death, so he was justifiably angry at me when I returned, for deceiving him. I asked Molly to replace him as my assistant for a day. We had a lovely day together, investigating two different cases. Then I asked her if she wanted to get some chips..."
"And I asked Sherlock why he wanted me to help him that day..." interrupted Molly.

Sherlock looked at his fiancée, forgetting he was relaying the tale to his parents. "And I told you I was thanking you for making everything possible for me to outwit Moriarty, because he thought you didn't matter at all to me. I told you that you were the person that mattered the most....and then I saw that bloody ring on your finger."

By now, Sherlock and Molly were completely oblivious to anything going on around them, or that Sherlock's parents were witnessing a heartfelt conversation between them.

"Are you saying - do you mean that if I hadn't been engaged at the time, things might have been different?"

"I honestly don't know," admitted the detective. "Looking back, I think you evoked feelings of jealousy in me that day."

"Don't forget, you had asked if I wanted to get chips with you, and then you went off and left me just standing there."

"Because you were engaged to someone else." Sherlock's eyes met Molly's for a long moment.

Molly's heart ached at the thought of what might have been, but then gave herself a mental shake. What mattered was the present, and they were together now.

Mrs. Holmes' voice broke the silence. "Well, all's well that ends well. You sound like a pair of star-crossed lovers. I never would have expected it of you Sherlock." Her voice softened then as she spoke to her son, "I'm...we...your father and I are so happy for you. We've always wanted what's best for you. After Eurus, and what happened with your friend, we saw how you changed, but felt it was better that you forgot what happened, and forgot your sister. It was the wrong thing to do. We should have reminded you, let you grieve for your friend. I feel we are responsible for the man you became, who didn't believe in God anymore, or in love."

The food was served at that point and conversation stopped as the quartet ate.

Molly could see that Sherlock's mother seemed sad after what she had said. As soon as she was finished with her meal, the pathologist said gently to the older woman, "You shouldn't blame yourself for doing what you thought was best. These things happen for a reason. God's timing is not ours."

Mrs. Holmes looked over at her son who had put his arm around Molly as they sat on their bench seat together across from the Holmes parents. "Your fiancée is not only smart and beautiful, but wise as well. I couldn't ask for a better woman for you."

"Nor could I," agreed Sherlock as he kissed Molly's cheek.

The atmosphere at the table relaxed.

Sherlock paid for the dinners and the quartet set off for the Royal Opera House.

Once they were in the crowded lobby, Mrs. Holmes hugged Molly again and said,"I'm so glad we got to spend some time getting to know you this evening."

Mr. Holmes also hugged Molly and told her with a smile, "Thank you for making our son so happy."
The detective's mother then hugged him. "We'll see you at Sherrinford then tomorrow evening, Sherlock. I hope you can help get through to Eurus by playing your violin for her. Thank you for taking us to dinner."

"My pleasure, Mummy. I'll see you tomorrow. Love you," Sherlock told his mother fondly as he gave her a quick peck on the cheek.

Molly noticed the look of delight that spread over her future mother-in-law's face. Apparently the evening had served to soften Sherlock's attitude towards his parents. She wondered how long it had been since he had told his mother he loved her.

The Holmes parents made their way to the doors that would take them to their seats in the balcony. Sherlock and Molly's seats were very good ones, in the centre of the orchestra stalls.

"I'm just going to duck to the loo," Molly told her fiancé.

Sherlock nodded and said, "I'll wait for you here."

Molly made her way to the ladies toilets. After using the facilities, she reapplied her lipstick and returned to where Sherlock was still patiently standing. He had apparently had time to purchase a programme for the opera, however. As she reached him, she looked around uneasily. She felt a sudden chill along her spine, as if someone was watching her. She scanned the crowd, but nothing seemed amiss.

"Molly, are you okay?" asked Sherlock with concern. He began looking around at the mass of people as well.

"I just had that funny feeling again, that someone was watching me," she replied.

Sherlock took her by the arm and almost pushed her to where the door attendants were checking tickets and handing out papers with the opera synopsis on them.

They settled into their seats and Molly looked at Sherlock. There was a grim set to his mouth. "Why the rush to sit down already?" she questioned. "We still have fifteen minutes before the opera is due to start."

"If someone is still watching you, I didn't want them to overhear any of our conversation. We should be safe to talk now."

"I'm worried," admitted the pathologist.

"Don't be," assured the detective. "I will always protect you. We will find this stalker and bring him to justice soon, mark my words."

Molly noted that although the words sounded confident, Sherlock's eyes were still darting back and forth around the huge expanse of seating, as if to reassure himself that everything was truly okay.

"Well, let's just enjoy this night, then," she said, in an effort to lighten the moment. She took the programme Sherlock was holding and leafed through it. Finding the listing of chorus members, she pointed out a name to him. "Look, it's Kaitlyn's sister, Madison. Her name is listed as one of the sopranos."

Sherlock nodded. "So what's this opera about again?"

Molly skimmed the synopsis paper, rather than looking for the page in the programme. "Well, it's
like I said when I texted you. Princess Turandot says she will marry the suitor who can correctly answer her three riddles. Apparently there have been a lot of failures and executions before the setting of the opera. One prince has just tried his luck and failed. Then along comes the hero...

She thrust the synopsis at her fiancé. "Here, you can read it for yourself."

Sherlock waved it away. "I'll just listen to it."

"It's in Italian, although the are supertitles projected above the stage with the translation," she said.

Sherlock raised an eyebrow at Molly. "Why would I need that?"

"I suppose you speak fluent Italian," remarked the pathologist, rather dryly.

"Of course. I also speak German, French, Russian, and Serbian. Comes in handy to speak the language of a country when you are working on a case there."

Molly couldn't help but tease her super-intelligent future husband, "So not Spanish or Dutch? No Chinese or Japanese?"

Sherlock just shrugged. "I haven't had any need to learn those languages. If I had to go to Japan for a case in the future, for instance, I would set aside a few hours to learn the language." He said these words without any sign of boasting.

"You can learn a new language in just a few hours?"

"Oh, I'm not as clever as my brother. He learned Serbian in just a couple of hours when he cane to find me, before I returned to London. I had gotten myself in a bit of, uh, trouble. I had been discovered as an infiltrator. Actually, if I have to be honest...and please don't ever tell Mycroft I'm saying this; I think he saved my life."

Molly gasped in horror. "I didn't know you were in danger after you left. I just thought you were hiding in some other country."

"Nope." Sherlock popped the 'p' in the cute way he liked to do. "I was working on dismantling Moriarty's network. The Serbian part of it was the last of it, or so I thought. Apparently I need to find someone here though, the person who helped Eurus finish Moriarty's mission to destroy me. I guess my nemesis wasn't willing to take any chances, in case I didn't follow through with jumping off the roof of St. Bart's. My sister was his contingency plan."

Their quiet conversation was interrupted by applause as the conductor took his place at the podium in front of the orchestra. Then the lights dimmed as the Maestro began to conduct the huge orchestra. A few moments later the curtain was raised to reveal a sumptuous set, filled with people milling about, the "popolo," the Chinese people who were being told about yet another suitor failing to solve Turandot's riddles.

As the orchestra played and the chorus sang out with magnificent volume and superb voices, Molly glanced back and forth from the stage to the supertitles so she could understand what was happening. She glanced over at Sherlock. His eyes were riveted on the action happening onstage.

A few minutes into the performance the detective whispered, "That mob is bi-polar. One minute they are crying out for blood, and the next they are asking for mercy for the Prince of Persia."

Molly giggled. Maybe the crowd of people was crazy, but wow, did those singers sound fantastic!
As the action continued onstage, Molly could see that Sherlock was totally absorbed. He had his fingers steepled as he leaned his elbows on his knees. The music was so rich and the lead singers superb.

At the end of the first Act, the lights came up for a twenty minute intermission. Molly and Sherlock stayed seated, although many people used the time to exit the huge auditorium to get a drink or use the toilets.

"So, what do you think so far?" asked the pathologist, although she was sure she knew what his response would be.

"It's incredible. The way those singers can make themselves heard over the orchestra without using any type of amplification, it's amazing." His voice held a note of awe in it.

"Do you think you could play the violin in an orchestra?"

Sherlock thought on this a moment. "I'm a good player, but I haven't had the musical training to do anything that complicated. My sister, on the other hand, she's a natural. She told me that she taught me how to play. I still don't remember that though."

Molly looked at him sympathetically. "It must be hard having those gaps in your memory. Do you think they will ever come back to you?"

"I've had some flashbacks, but that's all. I don't know if I'll ever have full recall. But that's okay. That is in the past. My only concern now is for the future, our future." He leaned towards Molly and whispered, "Do I get my kiss now?"

Molly giggled. "Wait till the lights go out again."

The detective pouted. "Very well then." Instead, he took her hand and kissed it. "I hope you won't object if I rest my arm on the top of your seat, or maybe around your shoulders."

"I guess that would be acceptable," she said in a mock prim tone.

Sherlock did so, and when the lights dimmed to indicate that the second Act was about to begin, he leaned over and gave his fiancée a sweet kiss.

The second Act held the pair spellbound. Princess Turandot finally arrived on the scene and sang her riddles. She sang about the first one, and Molly distinctly heard Sherlock murmur the answer as "hope," just before the unknown prince said the same thing, "la speranza," at which time the wise men on stage opened their Chinese scrolls to confirm that was correct.

With the second riddle, once Turandot finished singing about it, the unknown prince took a few seconds to think about the answer. Not so Sherlock. He leaned his head towards Molly and said, "Of course the answer is 'il sangue,' which means blood. This proved to be the correct answer.

Molly remembered reading the riddle answers as part of the synopsis, however, she knew her fiancé had not done so. She wondered if he would answer the third riddle correctly.

Turandot's voice soared as she sang the final riddle. The prince took even longer to think about his answer. In the music that played while the man desperately thought about the answer, Molly distinctly heard the detective mutter, "Come on you fool; can't you figure it out? The answer is her nane!"

The prince finally came to the same conclusion, was proved correct by the wise men, and the people
of the royal court sang "Gloria, al vincitore," - "glory to the victor. The Act ended after the prince offered a devastated Turandot a way out of marrying him. If she could discover his real name by the following day, he would agree to die instead of marrying her.

The lights came up for another twenty minute intermission and scene change.

"I think I'm going to go to the loo again," Molly told her fiancé.

He immediately stood up. "I'll come too."

As usually happened at any place with a lot of people, there was a line of women waiting for the facilities. Sherlock was in and out of the men's toilets before Molly, and was waiting for her when she exited. He took her hand as they strolled back to their seats. A few people turned and looked at them, and Molly heard a whisper here and there, "Is that Sherlock Holmes?" "He looks different without the hat;" "Surely that is the famous detective and his fiancée?"

They ignored the whispers and sat back down.

The final Act was not as long as the first two. The prince sang the famous aria "Nessun Dorma," "None shall sleep." His companion killed herself, rather than reveal his name, which brought tears to Molly's eyes. Finally the prince told Turandot his name, Calaf. She told everyone she knew his name, and pronounced it to be "love," and the opera ended with more glorious singing by the whole ensemble, a happy ending. It was truly satisfying.

Many people rose to their feet as the principals made their bow, and the whole cast of singers also bowed. Molly could tell that Sherlock had really enjoyed it as well.

As they left the Royal Opera House, Molly asked, "Well, do you think you'll go to an opera again?"

"Most definitely," he answered. "I had no idea how much beauty could be contained in music combined with such thrilling voices. The plot though was a bit thin. I mean really? The man offers to die if the princess learns his name, and then he ends up telling her himself?"

"I guess it was true love, Sherlock. He was willing to die for it. If she couldn't love him back, he was not willing to live without her. Makes sense to me."

"So, if I had not loved you, you would have wanted to die without me?" questioned Sherlock cheekily, as they stood at the kerb, waiting for a taxi.

"This is real life, not a fictional romance story, and you know it," she chided. "I would never choose to die, even if I felt like my heart was breaking, because my life belongs to God. Sacrificing yourself to save someone you love though, there is no greater, more selfless love than that."

The couple got into a cab and Sherlock instructed the driver to take them to Baker Street. Then their conversation continued.

"So, you were talking about sacrificing yourself for others whom you love. I'm guessing you were referring to Jesus, when he died on the cross?"

Molly was floored by this. "That certainly is what Jesus did for us, for all of humanity. However, I wasn't actually thinking of His sacrifice in this instance."

"You weren't? Then who were you thinking of who was willing to die for someone else?"
"Actually, I was thinking of you, Sherlock." Molly turned in her seat to look directly into her fiancé's eyes, as he turned his head towards hers with a look of open-mouthed astonishment.

She clasped his hands and said earnestly, "When you came to me for help, it was because you suspected Moriarty would present a danger to your friends. Yes, you planned things, taking into account many variables, but there was always the chance things could go wrong. You were willing to take that risk."

She continued, "My dearest love, I have always known your emotions ran deep. You just pushed them away with that façade of arrogance and superiority. I knew the real you before you did."

"I should have kissed you properly, that day when you asked what I needed, and I said 'you.'"

"We could play the 'what if' game forever with our history of near misses, but it wouldn't accomplish anything. I am happy to be where we are right now. I dreamed about us being together, but I didn't really expect it to ever happen."

"When we get home, I'm going to make sure you are in no doubt as to how I feel about you," the detective promised, with a glint in his eye.

"Oh really? I'll look forward to that," she replied, a little breathlessly, as her stomach clenched at the thought of more of his delicious kisses.

It was almost midnight, by the time they arrived at Baker Street.

"We should really get to bed," said Molly, once they had ascended the stairs to the flat. "Church is at ten o'clock tomorrow morning."

"That still gives us at least two hours before we need to get to sleep for a good night's rest," teased the detective.

"Ha, ha, very funny. I guess we have time for some tea first." Molly walked into the kitchen and switched on the electric kettle to boil the water.

Sherlock followed her into the kitchen. "Among other things," he said, "first, I intend to thoroughly kiss you, Molly Hooper." He scooped her into his arms and carried her to his chair, continuing to hold her as he seated himself. The detective then proceeded to make good on his word, keeping the one arm around his fiancée and cupping her chin with his other hand. He set his lips to hers, kissing her gently at first, then more demandingly as her mouth opened to his in response to the invitation of his tongue. He traced the line of her lips with his tongue, before returning to kissing her ardently.

Molly put her arms around Sherlock's neck as she returned his kiss. Her heart, as usual thumped rapidly inside her and she gasped when Sherlock kissed the pulse point at her throat, before returning to capture her lips with his. She lost track of time. She was drowning in his embrace, electrified by his touch. Her mind threatened to shut down as her body betrayed her longing for him. She knew Sherlock was similarly affected, by the way he too was breathing fast. It would be so easy to lose herself in him, to relinquish control to the needs of her body, but no, this was not the time.

Molly finally pulled back from Sherlock, trying to catch her breath and force her brain to reassert itself.

Sherlock groaned and said shakily, "Molly, you have no idea what you do to me, what I want to do to you. Now I understand how a person can so easily lose control. Our bodies were made for this,
for love. And on that note," he added ruefully,"I think I shall go take a cold shower while you get ready for bed."

Molly immediately scrambled off his lap, flushing. "I'm so sorry, Sherlock."

"What for?," he asked. "I'm not sorry. Kissing you is worth a few cold showers, and it's not forever." He winked at her and headed for the bathroom.

The sound of the water being turned on galvanized Molly into action. She thought it was a good thing the electric kettle automatically turned off after the water boiled; so much for having tea before bed.

She was suddenly overwhelmed with exhaustion. It had been a long day. The pathologist got ready for bed, then waited until Sherlock was out of the bathroom, so she could take her turn in there, scrubbing off her makeup and washing her face.

Sherlock was already under the covers when she returned. He was on his back, hands folded behind his head. She got in beside him, taking care to keep her distance, not wanting to tempt him, or herself any further.

The detective, sucker for punishment that he was, reached for his fiancée anyway, sliding his arm out and folding her into his embrace.

They kissed softly once, twice, then Molly sighed contentedly. She drifted into sleep, safe and secure in the arms of her future husband.

Chapter End Notes

Danger is coming for Molly...

I hope you enjoyed reading about Turandot. All the details are accurate as I have sung in that opera four times, so am very familiar with it. I highly recommend people see an opera. It is where you will hear voices with the finest training. No microphones are used. And the orchestra is a treat to listen to as well!

What did you think of Sherlock and Molly’s little chat about their day of solving crime together? How about Molly talking about Sherlock’s willingness to sacrifice his life for his friends?

Sorry this chapter is so long!
The stranger kept his vigil from his car, a few metres from the flat in Baker Street, until the lights went out, and it was completely dark. It was past one o'clock in the morning.

He threw his cigar butt out the window and headed to the hotel. Traffic was light due to the lateness of the hour, and he was able to think about his plan as he made his way back to the scene of his almost triumph from about two years before.

How he hated Sherlock Holmes.

The plan from two years before had been so perfect. Blow up the Palace of Westminster when Parliament was in session, create chaos within the government, and collect a big, fat payment from his North Korean contacts. Yes, if only that damned detective hadn't resurrected himself and returned to London in time to prevent the bombing, Lord Sebastian Moran would have been wealthy beyond his wildest dreams. Oh, he already had money, that was for certain, but it was an inherited legacy. Moran wanted to make his own name in the world, well, in the underworld. He wanted to replace James Moriarty as the world's most famous Consulting Criminal.

The evil genius had promised Moran a share of his wealth and network in the event of his death. This deal was struck with the caveat that Sebastian must carry out his plans later, if it were necessary to dispose of the goody two shoes detective Sherlock Holmes.

Moriarty had despised Sherlock, seeing him as his polar opposite. The detective was firmly on the side of what was moral and just, while James enjoyed playing with people's lives, torturing them just to see how the human psyche would react to certain triggers. In this he had found an ally in the Holmes sister, who was also analytical, curious about what made people tick.

Where Moriarty had thrived on watching people suffer, Eurus Holmes was interested in it merely from an intellectual perspective. Sebastian himself was more like the consulting criminal. He liked to stir the pot, draw people out of their commonplace existence and witness the resulting mayhem.

James Moriarty and Sebastian Moran had been a formidable team indeed.

Then, along came Sherlock Holmes, with all his superior ways and do-good attitude. A dangerous game of cat and mouse ensued between the two men.

Moriarty had flirted with death, had never been afraid of it. He had always thought three moves ahead, as if he were in a chess game. He had outlined his plan to Moran, about discrediting the detective and forcing his suicide. He had also told Moran what to do, if for some reason he, the famous consulting criminal was unable to follow his plan to its conclusion, and ensure Holmes' death.
If the detective should somehow manage to escape the permanent clutches of death, and Moriarty was dead or otherwise incapacitated, Moran was to contact Eurus Holmes and see that her own plans came to fruition.

When Sherlock had jumped off the roof of St. Bart's to his apparent death, Lord Moran had concluded the book was closed on Moriarty and Holmes. He made his own plans for fame and glory within the underworld, although for some reason, Moriarty's immense international network kept shrinking.

Then had come the day when the famous detective returned in triumph to London, having miraculously escaped death after all. Lord Moran was in the midst of his own nefarious scheme at the time, but was ready to implement Moriarty's plan with Eurus after his own success.

When the attempt to blow up Parliament had failed and Lord Moran had been arrested, the Eurus plan had to be put on hold. Lord Moran had been stripped of his title, although he still personally continued to use it.

A court case had ensued. With the help of very good, and extremely expensive lawyers, the criminal was convicted only of conspiracy to commit murder. Being a first offense, he was sentenced to three years in prison, of which he served half. Most people were unaware of the fact that a prison sentence was automatically reduced by half if the prisoner did not cause any trouble which would lead to an extended term.

Moran placed the blame squarely at Sherlock Holmes' feet, for the horrors he had endured in prison. The man, who was used to forcing his own attentions on women, and getting away with it, found himself the object of unwelcome attention. He was considered a "pretty boy," with his aristocratic features and smooth skin. Several men were attracted to him. Those men, who were long-term offenders had built up their own network of supporters within the prison. They had the power to do what they wished when the guards were not around. Moran found himself the recipient of frequent night time visits, where he was violated by these men. The former lord had endured this without complaint, so that he did not risk his early release from prison.

Oh, how he hated Sherlock and wanted to make him pay for the indignities he had suffered.

Upon Moran's release, he had immediately contacted Sherrinford, using the special method of communication Moriarty had set up years before. He had found an underworld hacker who was able to briefly disrupt television communications and project the image of the dead consulting criminal all over London.

With the help of some of his "for-hire" network, Moran had arranged for Eurus to be smuggled out of Sherrinford on several occasions, so she could anonymously spend time around her brother and his friend John Watson. She had somehow managed to bewitch her guards into doing whatever she wanted, so his was the easy part. Moran just had to take care of the transportation back and forth.

Then had come the set-up for Eurus's experiments. Moran had arranged these as well. After the explosion at Baker Street, all had gone to plan, although Sebastian had half-hoped the grenade blast would have killed Sherlock Holmes and rendered further planning unnecessary.

Sherlock and his best friend had gone to Sherrinford to see Eurus, along with the older Holmes brother, Mycroft.

Sebastian had waited to hear from Eurus about what had happened, but inexplicably, all communication had been cut off from the prison. Moran had not known the final result of the psychotic woman's plan, until he had seen the detective return unscathed to Baker Street.
Sebastian had been furious. As he contemplated what to do next, he had seen the television broadcast where Sherlock Holmes had confirmed his engagement to Molly Hooper, a pathologist at St. Bart's Hospital.

A plan had started to formulate in Moran's mind. He mulled over how he could use this new information about the sleuth to his own advantage. A few days later he had made the decision to focus his attentions on the woman instead. What better way to get back at that bastard detective, than to threaten his precious little fiancée? He just needed to figure out how to get her away from the man.

On Wednesday evening, he had seen the flurry of activity at Molly Hooper's flat. It had annoyed the criminal immensely, for he could see she was packing to move in with the detective. That would make things more difficult. He had thought to lure her away from her flat under some pretext or other, but getting her alone would become more difficult once she was situated at Baker Street.

On Thursday night, he had followed the engaged couple to a church. That was something he found interesting. Moran came to the conclusion that the sickly sweet little pathologist was a Christian. If she was a Christian, she was likely keeping her virtue intact for her husband. Those Christians were renowned for believing in purity before marriage. Sebastian thought with satisfaction that it would give him great pleasure to force his attentions on the girl. She was attractive enough. He almost laughed aloud as he imagined the expression on her fiancé's face if his precious virgin bride was no longer pure. Oh yes, sweet revenge indeed.

Moran had another thought. Perhaps he would carve his initials into that delicate skin, mar her pretty face. With both emotional and physical scars, the girl would probably break off their engagement, or the detective would have a permanent reminder of how he had been the cause of his woman's pain. Glorious!

Sebastian chuckled as he parked at the hotel. He went first to one of the designated smoking areas outside. It was damned inconvenient to be staying in a non-smoking hotel, but worth it for the view from his room. He puffed on his cigar for a few minutes, reflecting on the stroke of luck that had befallen him a few hours earlier.

Moran had continued his vigil at Baker Street the previous day. He had watched as the moving van had delivered the furniture from the pathologist's flat. That had been the final proof to show the pathologist was indeed moving to the security of her fiancé's flat. Sebastian had been angry with himself for not making a move to snatch the girl earlier.

He had watched later as an older couple entered the flat and came out again, along with the engaged couple. He had carefully trailed their taxi and seen the restaurant the foursome had entered.

After parking his own car, Moran had watched until the little group had exited the restaurant and made their way to the Royal Opera House.

The opera house lobby was crowded and it was easy for him to slip in and remain unobserved, while keeping within earshot of the detective.

Then he had heard some illuminating words.

"We'll see you at Sherrinford then tomorrow evening, Sherlock. I hope you can help get through to Eurus by playing your violin for her."
That explained why there had been no communication from the Holmes woman since the tests. It also gave him the information he needed. Sherlock would be away the following evening. He just needed to find a way to lure the pathologist away. Maybe he would tell her that her beloved fiancé had been in an accident and needed her. Yes, that would work. Fear for a loved one was a great motivator for impetuous action.

Moran went upstairs to his luxurious suite and gazed thoughtfully outside his window. He could see the outline of the Palace of Westminster. It was an impressive sight, although it still bothered him that he had not been able to see it blow up.

The man walked over to where his briefcase lay open on the bed. He inspected its contents, making sure he had everything he needed. Inside the briefcase was his loaded revolver, a syringe with which to render the pathologist unconscious after he kidnapped her, and there was a roll of masking tape with which to bind her hands and feet, and to put over her mouth. There was also a wickedly sharp pen knife.

Snapping the briefcase shut, Sebastian rubbed his hands together in anticipation. 'Sherlock Holmes is going to pay dearly for what he did to me,' he thought.

Chapter End Notes

So the stalker is revealed. I tried to craft an explanation for all the things that happened at Sherrinford, and for the big “Did you miss me” thing on all the televisions in London. Eurus needed a confidante on the outside, so Moran seemed a good candidate. He exists in the canon stories, and had a role in this series. I hope you find my explanation somewhat believable. The show, if it returns will certainly not explain things!

Interesting thing I found out about the English jail system. Prison sentences are indeed halved automatically if a prisoner doesn’t cause trouble. This afforded me an opportunity to make sense of why it took so long for Eurus’s plan to be put into action, because her “helper” was in jail.

Anyway, I’d love to hear your thoughts on this chapter. Thanks!
The Church Experience - Sherlock (Sunday)

Chapter Summary

Sherlock attends church for the first time with Molly, and experiences the presence of God.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sherlock woke to the soft touch of Molly's lips on his cheek. He turned his head and captured her lips with his for a much more satisfying kiss.

"Time to get up for church," she said as she got out of bed.

The detective watched as his fiancée selected a cream silk blouse and softly flowing peasant skirt which was also cream coloured and had light pink flowers throughout. She took her clothes into the bathroom to change.

Sherlock decided it would be nice to wear colors that complemented the pathologist's ensemble. He got out of bed and found a cream colored shirt to wear with his usual dark suit. He contemplated wearing a tie, but decided it was not necessary. He had just finished dressing when the pathologist returned to the bedroom.

He let out a low whistle and Molly blushed. She looked feminine and beautiful as she always did. As her lips curved in that familiar smile, he wondered again why she had hung in there for so many years, until he came to his senses.

He watched as she found a pair of dangly pearl clip-on earrings in her jewellery box, which she put on to complete her ensemble. With her hair down, you couldn't even tell the pathologist was wearing them, but the detective decided not to say anything. Some day he would buy his Molly a pair of real pearl earrings that weren't just cheap clip-ons.

They ate breakfast at the table that had been Molly's until yesterday. It was strange to eat at a table. Before the explosion, his table had always been littered with a various assortment of scientific instruments, such as test tubes and beakers, and his microscope. Sherlock resolved to keep the table clean enough in future so there would always be room for them to sit at it.

After breakfast, he asked a little nervously, "So, what should I expect at this church service? Except for John's wedding and Rosie's christening, I haven't set foot in a church since I was a child."

"Our church service is quite non-traditional," replied Molly. “We start with some contemporary praise songs, listen to a couple Bible readings. Pastor Briggs will give a sermon. There's some prayer of course. We finish the service with a traditional hymn. Just follow my lead for standing and sitting. You'll be fine."

Sherlock wasn't sure if he would be fine. He felt like a child going to a new school. He would know nobody, and he was sure everyone would be looking at him. He wondered if people would
recognize him and embarrass him. However, he kept those worries to himself.

The pair left for church at around nine-thirty and arrived twenty minutes later.

The first person to see them arrive was someone Sherlock thankfully had met. It was Molly's friend, Kayla.

"Hi, Sherlock," she greeted him warmly after giving her friend a hug hello. "It's great to see you here. I hope you will enjoy our service!"

Then the detective found himself being surrounded by a number of friendly people who all knew Molly very well, and who were anxious to meet her fiancé. Surprisingly, only one or two made mention of the fact that he was a well known figure in London. Most of the people seemed to genuinely be interested in him because he was with Molly, and therefore must be welcomed. Sherlock felt more relaxed after that.

Molly led Sherlock to a pew about halfway down the aisle. Sherlock looked around him with interest. This was the place where he would be making his vows in a few short weeks. He took a brief journey into his mind palace and thought back to his foolish words at John and Mary's wedding.

"I've never made a vow in my life, and after tonight, I never will again," he had said as he swore to always be there for John and Mary.

How sure of himself he had been. He had been certain he would remain a bachelor. After all, the woman who mattered the most to him was engaged to someone else.

He felt a little shiver of anticipation run through him at the thought of his sweet Molly walking down the aisle to him. That day could not come soon enough.

As if she could read his mind, Molly said, "I'm looking forward to it too, Sherlock." She squeezed his hand.

Whatever Sherlock had expected from a church service was nothing like what he experienced.

At the front of the church stood a man and woman with microphones who were leading the praise songs. Molly told him the man was Caleb and the woman was Abigail. Their voices were very good, at least as far as Sherlock could tell. They led the songs with confidence. There was a pianist, a drummer and a guitarist as well. Sherlock listened as Molly sang along. He had never heard her sing before. Her voice was just like he would have expected, sweet and melodic, clear with vibrato when she held a note. She could carry a tune with no problem, and it pleased the detective to hear it. He wondered if she had had singing lessons at some point. He observed that she exhibited diaphragmatic breath control and decided that was a pretty good indicator that Molly had indeed had some sort of vocal training at some point. He had never really tried his hand at singing, but he assumed he would be able to match pitch, due to his good ear for playing the violin, and for composing his own music. He'd have to try singing sometime. Maybe they could even do a duet together.

An idea struck him. He would look up on YouTube the wedding hymns that Molly had chosen and practice them so he could join in on their wedding day.

For now though, Sherlock let the music wash over him. He could tell that the people singing around him were not just paying lip service to the music. They sang sincerely and with reverence.

The first piece of music was "Shine, Jesus, Shine." The second one made the detective really think
on its words. Some of the lyrics especially struck a chord within him.

It was “The Power of Your Love,” written by Geoff Bullock.

“Let my heart be changed, renewed.”

And then,

“The weaknesses I see in me
Will be stripped away
By the power of Your love.”

The final verse included the words,

“Lord unveil my eyes, let me see you face to face.”

The lyrics tugged at Sherlock's heart. He could see people around him, singing with their eyes closed, some with their arms raised. Molly was one of those who participated fully in that way and suddenly, he felt something. He felt a Presence. This was more than a church of people gathering to worship. He could feel that God was here. It was an extraordinary feeling and it terrified as well as intrigued him. This was something bigger than him. The detective felt he was on the cusp of a great revelation.

When the songs were finished and everyone sat down, Sherlock continued to think about the song, even as he dutifully followed Molly's lead when she stood or sat for various prayers.

When Pastor Briggs began his sermon, Sherlock resolved to pay attention.

"Today we are looking at the passage in Acts 17:22-27," he began.

"(22) Then Paul stood before the meeting of the Areopagus and said, 'People of Athens, I can see you are very religious in all things. (23) As I was going through your city, I saw the objects you worship. I found an altar that had these words written on it: TO A GOD WHO IS NOT KNOWN. You worship a god that you don't know, and this is the God I am telling you about! (24) The God who made the whole world and everything in it is the Lord of the land and the sky. He does not live in temples built by human hands. (25) This God is the One who gives life, breath, and everything else to people. He does not need any help from them; he has everything he needs. (26) God began by making one person, and from him came all the different people who live everywhere in the world. God decided exactly when and where they must live. (27) God wanted them to look for him and perhaps search all around for him and find him, though he is not far from any of us.'"

Then the pastor said, "There is a God-shaped hole in our hearts. Many of us attempt to fill it with other things, idols or addictions. Some people use drugs or alcohol to fill that void. Others fill it with mindless television or seek excitement in other ways, like sex or pornography." Sherlock sat up straight. It felt like the pastor was speaking directly to him when he had mentioned addiction.

"But no matter how hard we try to fill that hole with material things, it won't work. It's like fitting the wrong puzzle piece into an intricately shaped gap. You can twist and turn it, but unless you have the correct piece, you will never get it to fit. Only God can fit that hole correctly in the person of His son Jesus Christ. Jesus, who died on the cross for you and me can truly fill that hole, which many people consider an emptiness."

Sherlock thought about his own life. He had used drugs to get an artificial high. He had traded cigarettes for nicotine patches to use as a stimulant for his thought processes. He thrived on danger
Suddenly, the detective realized how things were changing in his life. Part of it was definitely Molly's influence and her selfless love, but his new belief in God's existence had led him away from other pursuits, into a desire to learn more about Christianity. The sleuth still didn't feel quite ready to make a heart and soul commitment, because he still wanted to know more, understand more, but each day seemed to be bringing him new revelations and discernment.

Pastor Briggs concluded his sermon. Soon afterward, the church service ended with a hymn and benediction.

"So, how was your first church experience?" Molly asked, as they left the pew to head out of church.

"Most illuminating," responded Sherlock. "Your pastor is a good speaker. He has given me a lot to think about."

Molly took his hand, as she gave him a pleased smile.

They walked out into the late spring sunshine. People were outside, chatting. Molly introduced Sherlock to other members of her church family, including the secretary, Nancy Schmidt.

"It's so lovely to meet you," said the secretary. "I've read about your cases from your colleague's blog. I can see that you and Molly make a fine couple. You have helped so many people with your detective work. I do hope we will see you again here at church."

"I'm sure you will," responded the detective with a polite smile.

They headed back to Baker Street, getting out of the cab a couple blocks from the flat in order to get some take-away.

After lunch, Sherlock decided to borrow Molly's Bible again to do some reading. He figured it was as good a time as any, being Sunday. He was only being picked up at four o'clock after all.

As Molly started unpacking some more of the cartons, Sherlock offered to help, but she insisted he continue reading.

The detective decided to read through Exodus. After watching "The Prince of Egypt," he was even more curious about the whole story of Moses. It was very absorbing. Chapter twenty was where God revealed the Ten Commandments to Moses. The detective half expected that would be the extent of the teaching Moses received, but he was astonished at everything that came afterwards, all the instructions. God gave Moses meticulous instructions for many things.

Sherlock glanced at his watch. He wasn't finished with Exodus but it was past three o'clock, and he wanted to spend a little time with his fiancée before he had to leave. He set down the Bible on Molly's, well, their table now, he supposed. He went in search of the pathologist, and found her in the bedroom, putting clothes into her chest of drawers that had been added to Sherlock's- their bedroom. The room looked a little more cluttered with the extra furniture, but he liked seeing their furniture combined. It just called attention to the fact that their lives were being combined also.

Creeping up behind Molly, he wrapped his arms around her from behind and whispered, "Hi, love."

Molly jumped a little, then twisted around to face him. "Finished reading then?"

"For now," he replied. "I need some quality time with you before I leave at four."
"Oh, I completely forgot you were going to see Eurus. How long will you be gone, do you think?"

"A few hours I guess. I need to talk to Lestrade when I get back, about our little stalker problem."

Molly's arms went about Sherlock's waist as she pressed her face into his chest. "I certainly hope you find him soon, I'm afraid he will hurt you."

Sherlock's arms tightened around his fiancée as he said, "He's not going to hurt me. We're going to catch him. But you must be alert to any unusual situation. Be careful. If anything were to happen to you, I don't know what I'd do."

With those words, Sherlock moved his hands to cup either side of Molly's face. He kissed her gently at first, then more forcefully, as if to show her how much she meant to him, how much he needed her.

Molly yielded to his kiss, and he felt her hold around his waist tighten as she responded to his caress.

He could have kept kissing his pathologist all day, but he knew he had to be alert for the sound of the doorbell, and he had to get his violin into its case. Reluctantly, he released his hold on Molly.

She dropped her hands from his waist immediately and sighed. "I'll miss you."

"I'll miss you too. I'll text you when I am on my way home."

"Okay," she nodded. "I might go and visit with Mrs. Hudson for awhile after you're gone."

"I'm sure she'd like that," responded the detective. "You can talk about her hip and how badly it's doing."

They both laughed. Sherlock went out into the sitting room and gently placed his violin into its case, ready for the trip to Sherrinfird.

When the doorbell rang a short while later, Sherlock walked downstairs, violin case in hand.

Molly followed him to the door to say goodbye. "I'll see you later, sweetheart," he said, pressing a lingering kiss to her soft lips. If anyone had a problem with him kissing his fiancée in public, well, that was their problem, not his.

He got into the waiting car and settled back in the seat, thinking about the evening ahead.

Chapter End Notes

This is quite an important chapter in regards to Sherlock’s personal journey towards faith. I hope I portray it in a believable manner.

I do believe there are some churches where you can feel God’s presence more, because of the people within.

What did you think of the “God-shaped hole” sermon? A dear friend at my church once used that analogy, and it really is a beautiful one. I did not copy the sermon from elsewhere. That came directly from me, from what I believe to be true.
Kidnapped! - Molly (Sunday)

Chapter Summary

The unthinkable happens, as Molly is kidnapped.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Molly stood at the kerb, watching as her fiancé left for Sherrinford. "I love you," she whispered, then turned and went back inside.

As she returned upstairs, Molly thought about how proud she had felt that morning. She had loved introducing her handsome fiancé to her church family. The old Sherlock would have been standoffish and spent the church service on his phone, the way he had done at Rosie's christening. Her Sherlock, however, as she thought of him now, had acquitted himself well with the people he met. He had been attentive throughout the church service as well.

Molly had been pleased when he seemed anxious to delve back into reading the Bible when they got home. She had plenty to do while he read. First she had made room in the kitchen cupboards for all her various pantry items. This was relatively easy. The cupboards were quite bare, with no sign of the usual staples you would normally see, like flour and cooking spices. Molly carefully organized the cupboards so she could find things as she needed them. She added her electric kettle to the counter.

Her microwave was already set up. It was rather fortunate she had one of her own, as Sherlock’s had been damaged during the explosion, and had been thrown away. One thing she would not allow was for him to use her microwave for experiments. It was strictly for food. She was quite certain the only use Sherlock had made of his, was when he was conducting experiments on various body parts.

She had a feeling that her fiancé’s eating habits were very erratic, judging from the lack of food and his lean frame. Mrs. Hudson had probably been a life saver when it came to feeding him. Well, that would change now.

Molly thought, seeing as she had some time on her hands now, she would bake some ginger nuts for Sherlock, as they appeared to be his favourite biscuit. She looked up a recipe for them online. She had all the ingredients except golden syrup, so decided to head downstairs and see if Mrs. Hudson had any. Otherwise she would have to go to the shops.

The pathologist went downstairs and knocked on the door to her landlady's flat. Mrs. Hudson opened the door almost immediately.

"Oh, hello dear," she greeted. "How are you settling in?"

"Pretty well," answered Molly. "I'm just getting some things organized, and I thought I'd bake some ginger nuts for Sherlock."

"Is he out on a case then?"
Molly shook her head. "No, he went to visit his sister."

"Such a strange business, that," remarked the older woman. "Sherlock and his brother having a sister he didn't remember."

"Yes," Molly agreed, "he's determined to restore his memories if possible. Anyway," she continued, wanting to avoid a lengthy discussion about Sherlock and his family, "I don't have any golden syrup for the biscuits. Would you happen to have any?"

"I'm sure I do. Come on in. I'll have a look."

Mrs. Hudson motioned for the pathologist to follow her to the kitchen. She rummaged around in the pantry and finally exclaimed, "Aha! I knew it was here somewhere."

She held out to Molly an unopened "Lyle's Golden Syrup Baking Bottle."

The pathologist accepted it gratefully. "I'll bring back what I don't use," she said.

"No, no. You keep it," insisted Mrs. Hudson. "It has been sitting in there for months."

"Very well, thanks. I'll bring you some ginger nuts instead."

"No, dear. You keep them for your man. I know he loves them."

Molly grinned at the elderly landlady and waved goodbye as she headed back upstairs.

Setting all the ingredients on the counter and pulling out baking trays from the cupboard where she had put them, Molly got to work. She doubled the recipe, figuring that might make the biscuits last a week, provided the detective didn't demolish them in one sitting.

After putting the biscuits in the oven and setting the timer for fifteen minutes, the pathologist got wire racks out for cooling the ginger nuts, then washed the baking dishes. She glanced at her watch. It was almost six o'clock. She supposed Sherlock would be at Sherrinford at this moment, playing his violin.

Molly thought about having something to eat, but she didn't feel hungry. Perhaps she would just eat a warm biscuit or two. She did make herself a cup of tea though.

The timer went off, and the perfectly baked biscuits were duly removed to the wire racks for cooling. After a few minutes, Molly selected one of the ginger nuts and bit into it. She was very pleased with the result, especially as this was the first time she had attempted to make them.

Then Molly decided to read her "Our Daily Bread" reading for the day. Sherlock had placed the little devotional on her bedside table the previous day, before he got changed for the opera. She had neglected her Bible reading of late, with all the moving and wedding planning. The day's reading talked about grace.

Ephesians 2:8

"(8) For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-(9) not by works, so that no one can boast. (10) For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Molly reflected on that for awhile. So many people thought they could earn their way into heaven by doing good deeds, but that was not what was needed. He needed people to know Him and to desire to do good things as a result of that grace.
Molly prayed that Sherlock would come to know God's saving grace as she did. He already did so many good things for people, with his crime-solving ability. He just needed to know that those works had been prepared in advance for him by God, and that he could find true fulfillment in his life only by recognizing God's sovereignty over everything. Whatever happened, God was in control.

Molly checked her watch again. Half past seven. The night was dragging without Sherlock. She longed for his comforting presence.

Suddenly, downstairs came the sound of the doorbell. It rang once, then twice more in quick succession.

Molly heard Mrs. Hudson leave her flat to answer the front door. A few moments later, two sets of footsteps came up the stairs and there was a knock at the door.

Molly opened it to see the landlady, with a strange man beside her.

"He said he's come to see you, Molly dear," explained the landlady.

The man was shifting nervously, twisting a chauffeur's cap in his hands. "Begging your pardon, Miss," he said. "Mr. Mycroft told me to come and fetch you."

Molly's suspicions were aroused. She remembered Sherlock's caution to her to be careful. Those suspicions were allayed however, by the man's next words.

"There's been an incident at Sherrinford."

Mrs. Hudson had started walking back downstairs as the man continued. "Apparently your fiancé insisted on going into his sister's cell to play his violin. They played together for awhile. Then, when he turned away to put his violin back in its case, she attacked him. She had somehow had a knife smuggled into her cell, which she used to stab him."

Molly's eyes grew wide with horror, and the room began to swim around her. Not Sherlock, not now. "Is he- is he going to be okay? H-How badly is he hurt?" She managed to ask, even as her thoughts whirled.

"It's very bad, Miss. The helicopter took him straight to St. Bart's hospital. Mr. Mycroft called me to come and get you. The doctors aren't sure if they can save him."

Molly's eyes filled with tears. "Let me just get my stuff, and I'll come right away."

She gathered up her handbag and her phone, then followed the man out of the flat. Mrs. Hudson poked her head out of the door to her flat and asked, "Is everything okay?"

"No," responded the pathologist shakily. "No, it's not. It's...It's Sherlock. H...he's been badly hurt," she managed to say through her tears. "Mycroft's chauffeur is taking me to the hospital. I...I'll call you when I have news."

"Oh my goodness," the landlady said. "Not again. He's always getting into trouble. But he'll be alright, dear. He's a strong man. And he's got you to live for now," she said reassuringly.

Molly just nodded as she exited the outer door into the street. She followed the man, almost blinded by her fast-flowing tears. He stopped a little way up the street at the door of a black sedan and opened the front door for her.
Why now? she thought as she fumbled for the seatbelt. Why, when Sherlock is so close to faith? Surely God wouldn't allow him to be lost now? She began to desperately pray silently, God, please let him be okay. Please save him, please.

The chauffeur got into the driver's seat and leaned towards her. "Here," he offered. "Let me get your seatbelt." He leaned across her, and even as he did so, she felt the sting of a needle being pressed against her neck.

"What?" She managed. "What's going on?" She blinked rapidly to clear her vision. "Who are you?" She struggled to reach the car door and open it, but the man had pressed the auto-lock on his side. He was holding strong hands against her. Even as she struggled, she could feel the syringe taking effect. Her vision began to dim. Even as it did so, she was aware of a text alert coming from her phone, Sherlock's text alert.

If he was texting her, how could he be near death? Even as her foggy mind processed this, she felt relief washing over her. The man she adored was okay, he wasn't dying after all.

Thank you, God, she thought as she drifted into unconsciousness.

Chapter End Notes

Before we get all scared about Molly, I just want to encourage people to really think about God’s grace, and how important it is to realize we are saved through grace and not works. Works are a response to the grace we are given.

Okay, now you can all be scared, because being kidnapped would be a rather terrifying experience!
A Visit to Sherrinford- Sherlock

Chapter Summary

Sherlock visits Eurus to play his violin. He comes home to discover Molly has been kidnapped.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sherlock watched Baker street and Molly recede behind him as the car took him towards Mycroft's office building.

He was ready to visit with Eurus, and he was desperately hoping he could get through to her. He needed her to provide him with information about who had helped her set up her experiments. It frustrated the detective that his mind palace was drawing a blank on the identity of the man who smoked those Cuban cigars.

Suddenly, he had a thought. In his bedroom bookcase was an album with photos of his contacts, his homeless network and other persons of interest. When he got home, he would look through it. Perhaps something there would trigger his memory. Thus resolved, the sleuth sat in silent contemplation until the car pulled up in front of Mycroft's building.

The detective was led inside, and up to the roof. The helicopter was already waiting to take him on the forty-five minute journey to Sherrinford.

The chopper pilot handed him a key card which would enable him to access the various doors to the maximum security area where Eurus was being held.

As the helicopter made its way towards the desolate island prison, Sherlock remembered that he still had to ask his mother about that traumatic experience he vaguely recalled, the one Eurus had referred to when he saw her at the prison for the first time. She had made him cry, and it had been something to do with those Enid Blyton storybooks.

Upon reaching Sherrinford, the detective exited the chopper, violin case in hand. He made his way through the bowels of the prison, using the key card to gain access to the various levels.

Finally, he reached the maximum security level. Mycroft was already seated in the exterior room with their parents. Sherlock greeted them, then took his violin out of its case. He plucked the strings to make sure it was in tune, and commenced playing. He played the tune Eurus had been playing when he first saw her at Sherrinford.

The was no response right away, but after a minute or so, his sister turned towards him and picked up her own violin. She started to play the same melody, exquisitely. She was a true virtuoso, worthy of the Stradivarius she was using. Sherlock could hear how much better she was than he, but he started to play again. He wove in a harmony to her melody, and the two violins joined in a beautiful counterpoint of sound that was moving to anyone who listened. They could have been performing in a famous concert hall, so lovely was the music.
The Holmes parents and Mycroft sat, spellbound at the magic happening before their eyes.

Sherlock continued to play with his sister for about an hour. Finally, he stopped and asked, "Eurus, can you tell me who it was, the person who helped you set up your experiments? I'm not angry at you, I just need to know."

Eurus looked into her brother's eyes for a moment. "Mor.." she started, then subsided back into her own, lost world.

She spoke not another word, despite Sherlock's pleas, turning away, with her back to him once again.

"Let's go upstairs," said Mycroft.

The Holmes family, minus Eurus, headed back up to the office that had been the prison governor's.

In the office, Mrs. Holmes burst into tears. "Why is she like that?" she sobbed. "Why won't she talk?"

"Mummy," Mycroft said gently. "She may never talk again. She has been through a lot, but she has also caused a lot of harm."

"If not for Eurus, though," pointed out Sherlock, "I would not have had the emotional breakthrough that has brought me to where I am now. I have to give her the credit for making me see that love is a worthwhile emotion rather than some chemical defect, and that I was finally able to reconcile myself to the fact that I have been in love with Molly Hooper for years. I was just in denial about it."

Mrs. Holmes directed a wobbly smile at her younger son. "That's something, anyway, I guess," she said, as Mr. Holmes, in his usual quiet manner just nodded.

"She did at least try to communicate a little," said Mycroft consolingly, "even if it was just to implicate Moriarty, who is long dead, and not the person stalking Molly."

"Someone is stalking Molly?" piped up Mr. Holmes.

"Unfortunately, someone has been watching her. I found evidence of it," sighed the detective. "As soon as we get back to London, I am meeting with Inspector Lestrade to arrange a security detail for her, until such time as we can figure out who helped Eurus from the outside. He is obviously the same man who is stalking her."

"On an unrelated subject, Mummy," said Sherlock, "I need to ask you something."

"What is it, dear?" questioned his mother.

"After Redbeard, I mean Victor, disappeared, there was a time you found me crying. Apparently Eurus had said or done something to me. I have been wracking my mind palace for answers. The only thing I can recollect vaguely, is that it has something to do with one of thos Enid Blyton children's stories you used to read to me."

Mrs. Holmes thought for a minute, then said slowly, "I do recall something. Eurus used to love to show off her proficiency with reading from an early age. Although you were a year older, she enjoyed reading to you. You were very emotional and impressionable as a young boy."

She continued, "Now let me see, she had been reading from-" she paused for a moment as she
struggled to remember the book title. "Oh yes, it was 'The Magic Faraway Tree,' you know, the one with Silky, and Moon Face, and the Saucepan Man."

She continued thoughtfully, "I don't recall all the details. It was over thirty years ago. There was some story in the book about a nasty old lady called Dame Slap who had her own school. I think somehow Eurus convinced you the story was real, and that Dame Slap's school really existed."

A flash of memory rose to the surface in the detective's mind. "That's it," he said. "I'm starting to recall something. I think...I think she must have told me that my friend had been taken away to that school, and he was never coming back. I remember crying, and asking why he was being punished. My sister, told me he had been very naughty, and if I told Mummy about it, I would be sent there as well. I guess even then, Eurus knew how to manipulate people. I...I feel better now that I have remembered something. Perhaps one day I will regain more of those lost memories."

"There are a lot of memories you don't need to remember," Mycroft said. "It would be best that some things never come to the surface."

Sherlock could tell that his brother was trying to protect him as usual. They often didn't see eye to eye, but he was beginning to understand that his brother had always wanted what was best for him. Indeed, he had helped him out on numerous occasions, from helping him get off drugs, to changing the visuals on Magnussen's death, so that Sherlock would not be sent to jail.

"Thank you, Mycroft," he said sincerely. "I do appreciate everything you have done for me, the lengths to which you have gone to, to protect me. Without you, I think I really could have come to a bad end." He surprised both himself and his older brother by walking over and giving him a hug.

Mr. and Mrs. Holmes smiled at their sons. It seemed that the whole Eurus incident had begun a process of healing within their family, and Sherlock was the one who was breaking down those barriers in a most unexpected way.

"It's time for us to go," announced Mycroft a short time later, after answering a phone call. "We can all squeeze into the helicopter, there are enough seat belts. I will sit up front with the pilot. He has brought us some sandwiches to eat on the way, seeing as we missed dinner."

Sherlock checked his watch. It was almost seven o'clock. He decided he would text Molly as soon as they arrived back in London.

During the journey back to Mycroft's office building, everyone sat in silence, eating their sandwiches, except for Sherlock who said he really wasn't hungry. It was too hard to have a conversation over the roar of the rotors anyway. As London appeared on the horizon, Sherlock turned on his phone. He sent a text to Molly. He hit the send button. The detective half expected an immediate response, but when it didn't come, he supposed Molly was busy doing things in the flat, or visiting with Mrs. Hudson, and didn't have her phone nearby.

Upon arrival at the office building, Sherlock bade his parents and brother farewell, then hailed a taxi to take him to New Scotland Yard.

The Yard was quiet, not the bustling hub it usually was during the day. Only a few people were on duty, and Sherlock was immediately shown to the detective inspector's office.

"Hello, Sherlock, I was told to expect you," said Lestrade. "I hear you are having a problem. What
"Well, Greg, as you know, I've been trying to figure out who helped my sister and organized those citywide television transmissions of my former nemesis, James Moriarty."

At Greg's nod of acknowledgment, he continued, "Well, since Thursday, I have been aware that someone has been watching Molly, stalking her movements. I suspect it is the same person whom I am seeking. I'm worried about Molly, for her safety. I fear he may seek to harm her, in order to get at me. Until I know his identity, I have to admit I am at a loss to know what to do next."

"You'd like me to arrange police protection for your fiancée, correct?" asked Lestrade shrewdly.

Sherlock was quite amazed at the detective inspector's perceptiveness. Lestrade was usually a bit slow on the uptake.

At the sleuth's obvious look of surprise, Greg merely shrugged. "If Molly was my woman, I'd be wanting a police escort for her as well until the threat was over."

Sherlock clenched his jaw, irritated at the thought that Lestrade might have entertained thoughts of Molly being 'his' woman.

"Settle down, mate. I've never thought of Molly in that way. She's just a friend."

"And she's my fiancée, so it had better stay that way," said Sherlock gruffly. "So, how about it? Can you spare a couple police officers to watch over her? If not, I suppose I could ask Mycroft, but he's always so busy with government affairs, I'd rather keep that as a last resort."

I can send over two plain clothes detectives to keep an eye on Molly during the day, when she's at work, and going to and fro from her flat."

"Well actually, you don't need to have anyone at her flat. She is now residing with me, so you can send your people to Baker Street. I asked her to move in with me ahead of schedule due to my concern for her wellbeing."

"Sensible," said the detective inspector. "What time do my people need to be there, so they can arrive before Molly leaves for work?"

"Actually, I don't know," admitted Sherlock. "Let me text her and see what her work schedule is this week."

He sent a quick text to Molly, noting that his previous text showed as delivered but not as read.

After waiting a few minutes for a response, the detective stood up to leave. "I guess she is not near her phone," he said. "Will you be here all night?"

"Yup, my week for the nightshift."

"Very well then. I am going home now. When I get there, I'll speak with my fiancée and let you know what time she leaves for work tomorrow." Sherlock deliberately used the words 'my fiancée' just to make sure Greg was clear that Molly was unavailable. The detective was well aware that Greg held a high regard for Molly, and he had been lonely since his marriage had finally dissolved, once and for all. Poor Greg had suffered the indignity of being cuckolded several times by his wife, before he finally realized she was never going to change her unfaithful ways.

The detective headed home to Baker Street, anxious to spend some time with the woman he loved.
Opening the door to his flat, Sherlock called, "I'm home." He had expected Molly to hear the door and come to him, but perhaps she was in the bathroom. He could smell she had been baking, and followed the aroma to the kitchen, where he spied ginger nuts that had been placed on wire racks to cool. The biscuits were completely cool to the touch, and the sleuth wondered why Molly had just left them sitting out, instead of putting them in a container. Oh well. He picked one up and took a bite. It was delicious, and he crammed the rest of it into his mouth, taking a second. He did so love ginger nuts! How sweet it had been for his Molly to make him such a lovely treat.

Then the sleuth poured himself a glass of milk to wash down the biscuits.

After his little snack, Molly had still not appeared. Sherlock decided Molly must be downstairs chatting with Mrs. Hudson, and had not heard him come home.

He went down the stairs and knocked at 221A. "Mrs. Hudson," he called, "tell Molly I'm home."

Mrs. Hudson opened the door and looked at him in bemusement. "What are you doing here?" she demanded. "Aren't you supposed to be in hospital?"

"What are you talking about?" asked Sherlock in confusion. "I've been at Sherrinford, visiting my sister."

"But the man told Molly you were hurt. He was going to take her to the hospital. Your brother sent him."

Sherlock gripped his landlady's arms. Panic welled up in him. Something was very wrong. He wanted to shout at Mrs. Hudson to explain exactly what had happened, but he took some deep breaths to calm himself.

After composing himself, the detective asked, trying to keep his voice steady and not betray the dread he was feeling, "Please tell me what happened, as accurately as you can, and what time it was."

"Well, it was about seven I think, or perhaps seven-thirty. I answered the door to a man wearing one of those chauffeur's caps. He asked to speak to Mr. Sherlock Holmes' fiancée, so I took him upstairs."

"And?" pressed Sherlock.

"Well, I took him upstairs to Molly. He said something about an incident, as I was headed back down to my flat."

"Can you describe the man?"

"Well, he had brown hair, quite short, not lovely and curly like yours. He was probably the same height as you. I didn't really pay close attention to him," explained the landlady.

"Can you tell me anything else? Did you see him leave with Molly?"

"Oh yes. I popped my head out of my door as I heard them coming downstairs. I asked if everything was okay. Molly was crying. She said you were badly hurt and that she would call me from the hospital when she had any news. Then she left."

"Oh God, oh God," said the detective, "I should never have left her alone- I should have known he'd get to her."
"Who is he?" asked Mrs. Hudson.

"I don't know," he practically shouted. "I need to call Lestrade."

He ran upstairs and grabbed his phone, punching in the numbers to the inspector's private line.

"Lestrade here," came the voice on the other end of the line.

"Greg, it's Sherlock. He's got her!"

"What?" asked Lestrade. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, Molly has been kidnapped by her stalker!" pronounced the detective frantically.

"I'll be right over," soothed Greg. "We'll find him. We will just have to figure out who he is and where he has taken her."

"Just? What the hell do you think I've been doing? I can't lose her Greg, I just can't."

"Sherlock, use your mind palace, settle down and think. I'm coming right now."

Sherlock heard the dial tone as Lestrade hung up, and retreated to his sitting room chair. He put his head in his hands. 'Please God,' he pleaded silently, 'help me figure this out. Help me find her.'

Almost as if in response to his prayer, he remembered the album he had been planning to look at when he got home. The sleuth hurriedly walked to his bedroom and grabbed it from the bookshelf, then returned to his chair and sat down. Placing the album on his lap, he started leafing through the pages. He was halfway through the album and starting to despair of finding anything, when his gaze fell upon a picture of a man holding a cigar. He noticed the cigar first, then drew his glance up to the man's face. His stomach lurched. Oh, he had been so stupid. How could he have missed this? His mind palace had really let him down.

The man in the photo was Lord Sebastian Moran, well the former lord. But wasn't he in jail? The sleuth's thoughts flew back to Eurus from earlier that day when he had asked her who helped her. She had said "Mor," before falling silent. Not Moriarty, as he'd incorrectly assumed, Moran! She had been trying to tell him, after all. Everything was falling into place now. Of course Moran had a vendetta against him, he had foiled a huge plan that would undoubtedly have made the former lord a very rich man. How could he not have known about the man's connection to Moriarty?

The sleuth heard the sound of the doorbell. Lestrade had arrived.

As soon as Greg entered the flat, Sherlock filled him in about his newfound knowledge. "But isn't he supposed to be in prison?" asked the detective.

Lestrade placed a phone call, asking for information about Moran. After a few minutes, the detective inspector shouted into the phone, "He's been out for six months? Why didn't anyone bloody well tell me?" More conversation ensued, and then Greg hung up the phone.

He told the impatiently waiting Sherlock, "Apparently he was released six months ago, after serving half of his three year term. Nobody bothered to tell me, because he had caused no trouble in prison and was therefore considered to have been 'rehabilitated.'" The detective inspector rolled his eyes. "Bloody idiots. The man tried to blow up Parliament, for God's sake."

Sherlock tried to calm himself. He had to draw the criminal out somehow, try and figure out where he was. The detective forced himself to enter his mind palace and think logically about the
situation. He sat in his chair with fingers steepled in their usual fashion, when he was deep in thought. Lestrade stood silently by, waiting for Sherlock to speak.

Finally, he said, "Okay, I deduce that Moran has taken Molly somewhere else than a private property. It would be too easy to find him if he had a place of residence. He has probably, at least temporarily, taken her to somewhere close by, a hotel most likely. He won't stay silent for long. He will want to gloat. He had a car, obviously, if he was pretending to be a chauffeur. Molly would never have believed him if he showed her to a taxi."

"We need more to go on than that, Sherlock," remarked Greg.

"Yes, I know." The detective looked at his watch. It was almost ten o'clock. He suddenly had a very strong urge to call Molly, almost as if someone was telling him to do it. Was God trying to tell him something? He silently prayed, 'God, if you are listening, help me. Help me find the woman I love.'

He picked up his phone.

"What are you doing?" asked Lestrade curiously.

"Calling Molly's phone. I just have this feeling..." He tapped in her number and waited. On the third ring it was picked up. He was surprised, and yet part of him wasn't.

"Molly?" he asked, even as he knew it wouldn't be her.

"Well, hello there, Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Your fiancée is rather- indisposed right now and can't come to the phone."

"What have you done with her, Moran?" grated Sherlock roughly.

"Oh, how clever you are. You've figured out who I am," cane the silky reply, eerily reminiscent of the way Moriarty had always spoken to the detective, in his condescending manner. "I haven't done anything with her, but I am going to do something TO her, Mr. Holmes. You cost me almost two years of my life and a huge sum of money. I think you need to be punished. I'm going to break your virgin bride in for you."

Don't you dare touch her, Moran. I will find you, and I WILL make you pay. You'll be charged with kidnapping and go to jail for the rest of your miserable life," threatened Sherlock.

"Oh, I don't think so. I was clever enough to get her away from you in the first place."

As the former lord was speaking, Sherlock could hear the sound of Big Ben chiming in the distance. He didn't know if Moran realized it. People tended to not pay attention to things they had grown accustomed to hearing. He felt a spark of hope. This was a big clue. He wanted to keep talking, to distract Moran from listening to the sound of the clock.

"Why are you doing this, Moran? You have no beef against Molly. She's innocent. If you want someone, come for me instead. If you are as clever as you seem to think you are, surely you can find a way to get at me? I'm the one you want. Let Molly go, and I won't pursue you."

"Do you think I'm fool enough to believe you?" snarled the criminal. He sounded slightly insane. "I'm going to make you pay for what I suffered in prison. What those men did to me, I'm going to do to your precious fiancée. Well, I think it's time for me to hang up now. Wouldn't want you to be able to trace this call. Goodbye, Sherlock Holmes. Don't call me, I'll call you...or not." There was a click and the line went dead.
Greg was still patiently waiting for Sherlock to tell him what to do next.

"Call in reinforcements," commanded the consulting detective. "I have an idea about where to find Molly. The game is on!"

Chapter End Notes

Did you like Sherlock’s jealousy about the thought of Greg being potentially interested in Molly?

So, our detective has an idea about Molly’s location. Isn’t Moran disgusting? Sherlock’s also asking for God’s help. Will this be the turning point for him?

Isn’t it convenient that Moriarty and Moran start with the same three letters? Thus my idea to have Eurus try to help...a little.

I love to hear from my readers, it is encouraging to know people are reading and enjoying it. Remember, I want this to be a dialogue. Your opinions are important to me.
Molly came to, slowly. She felt groggy and discombobulated. *What's going on?* She wondered. *Why does my head feel like it's going to explode?* She forced herself to open her eyes. She felt like she was drunk, unable to clear her thoughts and focus on anything. Looking around, the pathologist could see she was sitting in the passenger seat of a car.

Next to her was a man she didn't recognize, and he was smiling at her.

"Welcome back to the land of the living," he said.

"Who are you?" she tried to ask, but the words came out as if she had a mouthful of marbles. Even to herself, she sounded drunk.

"I'm here to take care of you, Molly," said the stranger. "You had a bit too much to drink, and I'm going to take you up to my hotel room to rest, okay?"

Molly looked at the man. She had been drinking? She wasn't one to drink to excess. Her brain however, was refusing to function correctly. "Where's Sherlock?" She tried to ask, but the words sounded more like "Wa Shuck?"

The stranger understood what she was trying to say, however. "He had to go out on an important case. He told me to take care of you."

Again, Molly was confused, but she assumed it was the effect of the alcohol she had apparently imbibed.

"Why don't we get out of the car now?" suggested the man. He handed Molly her handbag and got out of the car, walking around to the passenger side to open the door for her.

The pathologist got out of the car, standing unsteadily, until the man gripped her arm.

"This way," he said, leading her from the car park towards the hotel entrance. The man gripped Molly's arm tightly, undoubtedly bruising it, but she was too busy trying to put one foot in front of the other to notice. She did vaguely notice people looking her way, and the man saying, "Come on, love. You just need to sleep it off."
The stranger ushered Molly into the lift and pressed the button for his floor. When they exited, he led her to a room and fumbled for his key card, releasing his grip on Molly for a moment.

She felt a moment of clarity. Something was not right here. She was sure she didn't know this man. If that was the case, she needed to do something to help Sherlock find her, but what?

A flash of inspiration hit her dulled senses and she reached up to her ear quickly, pulling off her clip-on earring and surreptitiously dropping it onto the carpet. She silently thanked God that she had not worn pierced earrings that day.

The man was too busy putting his key card into the slot to notice her furtive movement. As soon as the door was open, he pushed her inside.

Molly's head was beginning to clear somewhat, although she still felt weak and disoriented.

The stranger noticed Molly's growing awareness. "That won't do at all," he murmured, before he struck her on the side of her head with his fist. Molly crumpled to the ground and blacked out.

When she woke again, it was to find herself lying on a bed, restrained with masking tape binding her wrists and her ankles together, as well as a strip of masking tape over her mouth. Her head was pounding furiously, both from whatever drug she had been given, as she now realized it must have been, and the blow to the side of her head. As she looked around groggily, the door to the room opened and the man entered. Molly knew immediately where he had been. He reeked of cigar smoke. Molly had vaguely seen the Marriott sign as she was led into the hotel. She knew the Marriott was a non-smoking hotel franchise. Mary had mentioned it to her. She and John had stayed there for their wedding night, and Mary had said how glad she was that there was no smoking allowed, especially once she knew she was pregnant.

Molly felt a tiny flicker of hope. She knew Sherlock was aware that the stalker, as she was now certain this man was, smoked cigars. She could only pray that somehow, he would be guided to her. The pathologist began to pray. Lord, she said silently, *I know you are with me no matter what happens, but I pray you will help Sherlock to find me. He's in a fragile state right now. This situation could either draw him to You, or destroy his budding faith. Help him Lord, as I know you can.*

She had closed her eyes to pray, and when she opened them, the man was next to her. His breath as he leaned over her had the foul stench of cigar smoke and Molly turned her head away from him.

"Too good for me, are you?" rasped the man, as he forcefully turned her face back to meet his cruel gaze.

Tears leaked from Molly's eyes, as she stared at him, unable to speak due to the tape over her mouth. She wondered what he planned to do with her. Even as she thought about it, she heard the ringing of a phone, her phone. It was Sherlock calling, she could tell by the ring tone she used specifically to indicate it was him.

"Well, hello there, Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Your fiancée is rather- indisposed right now and can't come to the phone."

*I'm here, Sherlock,* Molly thought desperately. *Save me!*
As she listened to the stranger's side of the conversation, Molly's heart started thumping painfully, as fear started to invade her body. This man intended to hurt her, to rape her. Tears were falling faster down the pathologist's cheeks even as she heard Big Ben in the distance. She silently counted the chimes, even while she continued to strain to hear the man's side of the conversation. Ten deep chimes sounded. It was ten o'clock. She was surprised it wasn't later.

Molly heard the man say, "Goodbye, Sherlock Holmes. Don't call me, I'll call you...or not." Then he turned off the phone.

"Awww," he purred, coming close to Molly again, "your fiancé misses you. Too bad you are going to be soiled goods when he gets you back." He traced a finger down Molly's tear-stained cheek. "Don't cry, pretty lady, maybe you'll like it so much with me, you'll throw over that goody two-shoes detective. Wouldn't you rather have a bad boy? Believe me, we're much more fun." He bent down and licked the tear-stain from her cheek.

Molly shuddered and tried to twist herself away from the man again. At least Sherlock knew who he was, even if she didn't. He had obviously made some progress.

The criminal back-handed her across the cheek. An expensive diamond in a ring he was wearing grazed her cheek, leaving a deep scratch that started to bleed, and Molly winced in pain at the sting of it. She was determined not to cry again. She had to be strong for Sherlock. If only she knew how to retreat into a mind palace, the way her fiancé was able to, but no, she would just have to endure it.

"Don't try and fight or avoid me in any way, or I will have to punish you," the man said. He walked past the bed and looked out. "Your detective should have just stayed dead," he remarked. "You can see the Palace of Westminster from here. If it weren't for Sherlock Holmes, that place would have been nothing but a pile of rubble."

At last Molly knew who the man was. Ironically, he was the person involved in the investigation Sherlock had been conducting with Molly's assistance, when the detective had returned to London. Sherlock had informed her that Lord Moran, who had been the man who "disappeared" from a Tube compartment, was the person behind the plan to blow up Parliament. The detective had realized, during the course of his investigation, that the lord had not disappeared. It had in fact been the whole train car that had been detached from the rest of the train, and left in an unused station that had never been opened. That station was directly below the Palace of Westminster, and the train car had been rigged to explode. Sherlock had discovered the Tube compartment and disarmed the bomb. Actually he had just pressed an "off" switch, as he had later told Molly, but saying he had single-handedly disarmed it was much more impressive. Knowing the man's identity however, filled Molly with even more fear. This man had no regard for human life whatsoever. He had been willing to commit the murder of hundreds of innocent people. That made him incredibly dangerous.

Moran turned back towards Molly. "Your fiancé cost me a fortune. I hope you understand, I have nothing against you personally." He smiled at the pathologist, and she realized he could have been a handsome man, if he didn't have such a twisted expression of hatred on it most of the time. She felt sorry for him. What could have happened in his life to turn him into such a monster? Molly decided to remain passive. Hopefully it would make him more at ease, so he would not feel it necessary to hurt her right away. She hoped, prayed that she could buy enough time for Sherlock to figure out where she was.

The tactic seemed to work, as the criminal visibly relaxed. "You must be thirsty," he remarked. Walking over to the little fridge in the room, he pulled out a bottle of water. "If you promise to not
make a sound, I will remove the tape, so you can have a drink. If you try to scream, or call attention to yourself, I will punish you. Do you understand?"

Molly nodded mutely. She winced as the masking tape was ripped from her mouth.

Moran uncapped the bottle and held it up to his captive's mouth. She drank gratefully. Whatever drug had been in her system had made her extremely thirsty. She took a few swallows and nodded her thanks.

The criminal lifted the bottle to his lips and finished the water. Then he suddenly announced, "Damn, I need another smoke." Confidingly, he said to Molly, "They wouldn't let me smoke my cigars in prison. I was able to trade for cigarettes once in awhile, but it wasn’t the same. Cigarettes are no substitute for a fine Cuban cigar."

Molly nodded again. She thought if she could get him to go have another cigar, she could buy Sherlock more time. How could she convince him to trust her, to leave her alone? Then, as if God was telling her what to do, she cleared her throat and spoke quietly, hoping Moran wouldn't hit her again.

"You can go have your cigar. I- I won't try to escape. There's an armchair over there." She indicated the chair with her bound hands. "If you don't trust me, you can tie me to the chair and put tape back over my mouth."

Her captor thought for a few seconds, then nodded thoughtfully. "Yes," he murmured, "I think that would work. I won't be gone long, so make sure you don't try anything foolish or it will be the worse for you."

"I won't, I promise," said the pathologist meekly.

Moran went to his briefcase and pulled out the roll of masking tape. Tearing off a strip, he placed it over Molly's mouth once again. Then he led her to the armchair. He made her sit in it and then wound the tape around the chair and her body several times, until he was satisfied that she was securely fastened against the chair, unable to move.

He stood up and inspected her. "You’re a courageous lady, Miss Hooper. I think we can have some fun together." He returned the rest of the masking tape roll to his briefcase and drew out his revolver, putting it in his trouser pocket. "I'll be back soon," he said and winked, before exiting the hotel room.

The man was gone longer than Molly expected. She heard Big Ben strike the eleven o'clock hour. She had managed to buy Sherlock an hour. How much more would he need? She began to pray fervently again. Lord, help him find me. Help him put the clues together so he can save me. Please God, I know there is a reason I am going through this, and that You have a plan for me. I trust you God.

When Moran finally returned to the room, he was not in a good mood. "Damned nosy, people are," he muttered crossly. "First I go outside for a nice, peaceful smoke, and someone else is smoking and trying to strike up a conversation with me. Took me ten minutes to get away from him. Then I got stopped in the lobby by one of the hotel workers. They asked me how I was finding my stay and if there was anything they could do to make it better. That took another ten minutes." He looked over at Molly, who was still quietly sitting in the armchair. She had lolled her head forward and closed her eyes, as if she had fallen asleep, in the hopes that her captor would leave her alone for awhile longer.
That bought her about ten minutes, until the man got bored. "Well, he said, I think it's time you and I had a little fun." He pulled the pen knife out of his briefcase and slashed the bindings holding the pathologist to the armchair and she made a muffled noise. "What's that?" He asked, pulling the tape from her mouth.

"I- I really need to use the loo" she stammered, flashing the man an embarrassed smile.

Moran rolled his eyes. "Women," he said in an irritated tone. "Always dashing off to the loo at every opportunity. I'll unbind your hands so you can go, but your feet are staying bound for now. Don't try anything while you are in there, or I'll come in after you."

"Thank you," Molly murmured. She held out her hands and her captor cut the tape off with the pen knife. Molly shuffled slowly to the bathroom next to the main room and was about to close the door when Moran put his foot against it.

"I'm not that stupid," he said. "I can't allow you to lock yourself in, so we'll just have to leave it ajar. I promise I won't look."

Molly felt a flush of embarrassment rise to her cheeks. Fortunately, the toilet was located behind the door, so the man would not be able to actually see her unless he stepped fully inside the bathroom. She took her time in there, hearing the television turn on in the outer room. She lingered so long the man finally called out, "Did you fall down the toilet? Hurry up now."

Molly hurriedly flushed the toilet, not wanting him to come inside the bathroom. Then she ran the water and washed her hands, taking as long as she could. She knew every extra minute she could give Sherlock, could make a difference.

Finally she emerged from the bathroom and gasped in shock. Moran had used his time alone to get out of most of his clothing. All he was wearing was a pair of silk boxer shorts. Apparently he was tired of waiting.

Molly stopped in the doorway of the bathroom, and tried to control the feeling of terror welling up from within her.

"You really are a pretty little thing," remarked the criminal. "I can see what that detective sees in you." He grabbed her roughly and pinned Molly's hands to her sides, as he dragged her to the bed. He lifted her up, and pushed her down onto her back on the bed.

"Please don't do this," pleaded the pathologist weakly. She was out of time. If Sherlock didn't come within the next few minutes she was going to be the victim of more than just a kidnapping. She tried to struggle, but Moran was too strong and he just laughed at her.

"Honey," he purred. "I had plenty of time in prison to work on strengthening my muscles." He pulled both of Molly's arms above her head and pinioned her with one strong hand. Struggle as she might, she could not free herself.

Then he straddled the pathologist and lowered his mouth to hers. Molly was disgusted by his lips. His breath held the foul odour of the cigar he had recently smoked. She tried to press her lips together, but he grabbed her jaw with his free hand and forced her mouth open to receive the repulsive touch of his tongue.

Molly bit down hard on the unwelcome invader into her mouth and Moran yowled in pain. He slapped her face hard and growled, "So, you wanna play rough, do you?" With those words, he temporarily released Molly's hands and used both of his to rip her blouse open. The button popped
as he tore at it, exposing her bra. Even as she tried to push the man away from her, he tore open the delicate lace of her bra and put one of his hands on her naked, exposed breast. Molly screamed, as her vision blurred with tears. *Save me, Sherlock. Save me.*

Chapter End Notes

I know, this is rather terrifying, but our Molly is no fool. She tried to leave a clue for Sherlock and buy him time. Above all, she prayed. When all else fails, pray!

I hope this chapter is believable. I had to figure out how to get Molly to Moran’s hotel room without her causing a fuss. It isn’t as if he could have tied her up and taken her into a busy hotel without anyone noticing!

What are your thoughts?
Sherlock paced his sitting room, as he put his thoughts in order.

Finally, Greg said, "Sherlock, I'm happy to call for my people, but they will need to know where to go."

Sherlock drew a deep breath. "While I was on the phone with Moran, I heard Big Ben in the distance, not too far away. I'm quite certain it was coming from across the River Thames, because I couldn't hear any signs of traffic. I believe that the rat has holed up with Molly at the Marriott County Hall. It is just across the river from Big Ben and the Palace of Westminster. I think, although I cannot be certain, that Moran chose the hotel due to its proximity to the place he was planning to destroy."

"Okay," agreed Lestrade, "That makes sense, but how can we find him at the hotel, if he is indeed there? I doubt he would have used his real name."

"Of course not," replied the detective. "We can, however, narrow down our room choices."

"How so?" questioned the detective inspector.

"We must call the hotel ahead of time and discover which guests have paid to keep cars on the premises. I believe this will significantly reduce the number of possibilities. We are also looking for a room which overlooks the Thames."

"Got it," said Lestrade. "Anything else?"

"He will undoubtedly have chosen a room with only one bed, no need to waste money on a larger room than he requires for his dirty little scheme." Sherlock was thinking fast, trying to be logical and push away his overwhelming fear for Molly. There was not a moment to lose.

"Very well, I'll make the call for my men to meet us at the hotel."

"Make sure they are not using their sirens or lights. We don't want to alert Moran in any way."

"Right. I'll call the hotel as well and get them to make a list of the rooms that match our criteria."
As Lestrade made the phone calls, Sherlock started to pace again. The first thing he had to do, when they reached the hotel, was check the designated smoking area for cigar butts that matched the ones Moran used. This would be the final confirmation he needed that they had the correct venue. "Help me, God," he whispered, even as Greg finished the first call to alert his men.

"What was that?" asked the Scotland Yard man.

"Just praying aloud," said Sherlock, noting Greg's undisguised stare of surprise. He shrugged. "Never hurts to call on a higher power, does it?"

"I thought you didn't believe in God. You certainly seemed pretty certain about God being a fictional creation when you made your speech at John's wedding."

"Long story. Suffice it to say certain events have caused me to change my mind about that."

"Well, it's about time you realized there was a Power higher than yourself," Lestrade teased.

"Indeed," was Sherlock's only comment.

As Greg placed the call to the Marriott, the detective thought of what he would do when they found Molly. Should they attempt to break the door down, or ask one of the hotel staff to open the door? He figured they could decide that when they had determined the correct room.

The detective inspector hung up the phone and said to the sleuth, "I spoke to one of the managers. They are going to compile the data and print it out, so it will be ready when we arrive."

"Thanks, Greg," said Sherlock sincerely. "I'm glad you were the one on duty tonight. I doubt any of your colleagues would have been so quick to do as I asked."

"I know this is a matter of utmost urgency. I've worked with you long enough to know you don't ask for help erroneously; well, except the time you wanted my help to compose your best man speech and I thought it was an emergency, so called in reinforcements. That was not a good day," he said ruefully.

"Yeah, I don't think I apologized for that. I'm sorry."

"Water under the bridge," shrugged the detective inspector. "Now let's get going so you can bring your fiancée back, safe and sound."

Sherlock was not a fan of riding in police vehicles, but he submitted to it, because he knew it would be faster than going by taxi. Greg drove to a predetermined area a few blocks from the hotel, where the men met up with the six other police officers. The men discussed what to do next. Just as Big Ben sounded the hour, Sherlock walked to the designated smoking area of the hotel as arranged, while the policemen stayed out of sight to avoid alerting anyone to their presence.

The smoking area was fortunately empty, so Sherlock immediately headed to one of the receptacles to view its contents. His sharp eyes almost immediately caught sight of the distinctive cigar butts with their yellow label. 'Bingo,' he thought, elated. It couldn't just be a coincidence. Moran was definitely staying here. He returned to the small police contingent and gave them the good news.

Next, Sherlock and Lestrade made their way to the reception desk. The detective inspector flashed his badge and asked for the manager, who was expecting them. The manager produced the printout of guests with the matching criteria. Fortunately there were only three. Sherlock immediately eliminated one, as the guest was a woman, and he was certain Moran would not be able to pull off such a charade.
That left two rooms, both equally promising, a few doors apart on the same floor.

"I guess we should check out both rooms," said Lestrade. "Maybe you will find some clue for the correct one. We don't want to make a mistake, and we only have one shot at this, if we want to surprise Moran. If we find the right room, I'll let the rest of the men know, and they can come upstairs as backup."

Sherlock nodded and the men took the lift to the floor with the two room options. At the first door, Sherlock inspected everything about it. He was unable to see anything that would give him a clue as to who was inside. If the second room was the same way, they would have a problem.

The two men walked silently to the second room. The detective looked around it. His eyes spotted something near the door. Leaning over to pick it up he saw it was an earring. He could have shouted in triumph. He recognized it immediately as Molly's, that she had worn to church that morning. His clever fiancée had left him a clue.

Gesturing to Greg, he whispered, "They're here. This is Molly's earring."

The detective inspector beamed with relief. "Good work, Sherlock. I'll just walk down the hall a bit and tell my men to come on up. Should we get the manager to open the door?"

"I guess so," agreed the detective. Hopefully we can catch him by surprise."

Lestrade moved a few paces down the quiet hallway and called his men. He was just about to call the hotel manager, when the two men heard a man's loud yelp from the room. Startled, they looked at each other, uncertain as to what the noise was. Greg pulled out his gun.

Moments later, Sherlock heard the scream. Without thinking of what he was doing, just terrified at the thought that his fiancée was being hurt, he rammed the door with his shoulder, feeling a surge of strength and adrenaline course through his veins.

The key card lock gave way and the door burst open.

Sherlock, at a glance, could see exactly what was happening. The bastard was on top of his fiancée, and her blouse was in tatters. Without thinking of waiting for Lestrade, Sherlock rushed at Moran, who was caught completely by surprise.

Moran scrambled off the bed and tried to reach for his revolver, but Sherlock bore down on him with purpose. He punched the man with a right hook that was worthy of any prize fighter in the boxing ring. Moran went down, hitting his temple hard on the corner of the television stand, and lay still on the ground.

Sherlock didn't even bother to look at the criminal. He had eyes only for Molly. Tears were streaming down her bruised face. He saw a cut on her cheek and her state of undress, ruined blouse, and torn bra which only covered one of her breasts properly. He quickly looked back up, to her poor, battered face and put his arms around her.

In the background, he vaguely heard Lestrade talking to his men, who had just entered. He wasn't paying attention though. All he knew was that he had found Molly.

"Molly, my darling, are you okay?" he asked her urgently. "Did he hurt you? Oh God, did I get here in time?" He gently cradled her head in his hands and looked into her face anxiously.

"Sherlock," she whispered brokenly. "I knew you'd come. I prayed you would."
With the pads of his thumbs, the detective wiped away her tears. "Please tell me you're okay. He didn't do anything to you, did he?"

"No," she whispered. "If you hadn't come when you did though he was so strong- he was going to force himself on me."

"I know, darling. I'm so sorry he put you through that. I'm so sorry I didn't anticipate he might take you tonight. Forgive me Molly, please forgive me."

He felt Molly's soft hands stroking his dark curls, as all of a sudden, she became the strong one, while he succumbed to the weakness that coursed through him, now that the adrenaline rush was over. "There's nothing to forgive, my love. You couldn't possibly have known what would happen, and besides, you found me in time. It's all over."

Sherlock saw Molly looking over at the fallen man, "and apparently it's over for him too," she noted, giving her fiancé a wobbly smile.

Sherlock then listened to what was going on around him.

One of the men had his hand on Moran's pulse and was shaking his head. "He's dead, sir," he said to Lestrade, as he turned the criminal over. There was a deep indentation in the man's temple, through which blood was pouring copiously. Sherlock buried Molly's face in his shoulder. "Don't look," he commanded her. "It's pretty ugly."

Molly choked out an unexpected laugh. "Sherlock, I do post-mortems for a living. Do you really think I'd be so squeamish at the sight of blood?" Raising her head and looking over at the fallen man, she directed a question at Lestrade. "Is he - is he really dead?"

"Apparently so," answered the detective inspector, smiling slightly. "Guess you won't be needing to worry about him anymore."

Greg turned to one of the men. Call an ambulance for Dr. Hooper and get a van to transport Moran to the morgue."

To Sherlock, he said, "Don't be concerned about any accountability for this. I saw what happened, and Moran hit his own head on the television stand. I'll make sure the paperwork is in order."

Sherlock was only half listening. He took off his coat and wrapped it around Molly, to cover her ruined blouse and exposed breast. He spied the pen-knife Moran had left on the bedside table and used it to cut the tape which still bound Molly's ankles. Then he lifted her gently onto his lap and held her close.

"I don't need to go to the hospital," murmured Molly.

"Of course you do," responded the sleuth. "You've just been through a traumatic experience and have to be examined. I expect you will not be going to work for the next few days. You'll need time to recover."

As Molly cuddled against him, Sherlock felt relief and thankfulness wash over him. He instinctively knew it was not an accident that he had found her in time. He held his fiancée until a gurney was brought up to transport her to the ambulance. He looked questioningly over at Lestrade, who was still waiting with two men, for the van that would take Moran's body to the morgue.

"Go ahead," said Greg. "You don't need to be here. Go in the ambulance with Molly. She needs
you."

Sherlock nodded. He walked beside the gurney, holding tightly to Molly's hand all the way to the ambulance. A small crowd of curious onlookers had gathered and he heard whispers of, "Isn't that Sherlock Holmes and his fiancée?" He groaned inwardly at the thought that this would undoubtedly make its way to the media by the following day.

Sherlock dropped Molly's hand briefly as she was loaded into the ambulance. Then he climbed in and held it again as they rode to St. Bart's.

Chapter End Notes

This was a tough chapter to write. I spent hours researching the Marriott Hotel, looking at room images, even YouTube videos. The Marriott does have its own car park, and is across the river from the Palace of Westminster. I had to think of a believable way for Molly to stall Moran, so Sherlock would have time to find her.

I know shouldering a door open is unlikely, but let’s just say, at that moment, God gave Sherlock the strength of Samson. And yeah, I killed Moran off so I wouldn’t have to deal with arrests and trials etc. This is a story about Sherlock and Molly after all.

Do you think I pulled it off successfully?
Molly has been saved physically and Sherlock is saved spiritually.

How appropriate that I happen to be posting this on Valentine’s Day, when Sherlock come to understand the depth of love God has for us by sending His Son to redeem us through His death and resurrection.

When Sherlock barged through the door of the hotel room after she screamed, Molly thought he looked like an avenging angel, with his Belstaff flapping behind him. Her knight in shining armour had arrived in the nick of time to save her.

She watched, slightly dazed, as Sherlock punched the evil man, before coming to her and pulling her into his comforting arms. Her nightmare was over.

As they held each other in the hotel room, Molly thanked God for helping Sherlock to reach her in time. When he asked for her forgiveness, with agony evident in his voice, Molly stroked Sherlock's dark curls comfortingly. She knew her faith had brought her through the ordeal, but she worried that the detective would hold himself responsible. She wasn't going to let that happen though. She wasn't going to let him retreat back to the person who hid his emotions in order to deny that they existed.

As they rode in the ambulance, Molly said, "Sherlock, you must listen to me."

"Sherlock, you must not blame yourself for what happened."

"But it was my fault. I should have anticipated what could happen. I knew he was stalking you. I should never have left you alone."

When he looked up again, she saw the shimmer of tears in his eyes, and hers began to swim with tears as well. "Sweetheart, don't do this to yourself. Everything worked out okay. I'm okay and the threat is over."

"Why would God put you through this?" he demanded suddenly, hurt and anger evident in his voice.

"Sherlock, my dearest love. God did not put me through this. Moran was an evil man, who was corrupted by Satan. Satan is the one who led Moran to do this. God is the one who led you to save me. Don't you see? God allows things to happen in our lives to make us stronger. He loves us so much that He sent His Son to die for us, to free us from our bondage to sin. I know you are only
just starting to learn about this, but I need to make you understand this was not your fault."

A tear plopped onto Molly's hand. "How can you be so strong? Why am I the mess, while you are the strong one? You just went through a horrific time. You were almost raped, and yet here you are, trying to comfort me." Another tear fell on her hand.

With her free hand, Molly reached up to tenderly touch Sherlock's face. "Don't you understand? It is BECAUSE of my faith that I can be strong. I know that God is always in control, that there is always a purpose for everything that happens. I believe that some good will come out of this, somehow."

Sherlock was silent, and Molly sensed that he had retreated into his mind palace. She waited patiently for him to return to her.

When Sherlock finally spoke, she saw a flicker of hope in his eyes. "I want to have the faith that you have. I want to know that everything has a purpose. How do I do that?"

"It's easy," she said, squeezing his hand. "All you have to do is believe. You have to surrender your life to Jesus Christ, to acknowledge that He died and rose again from the dead for you. Sherlock, just as He died and rose again for me. That is the salvation that leads to everlasting life. It gives us the knowledge that there is something beyond this life. This world is just our temporary home." Molly spoke with passion and conviction.

Sherlock closed his eyes and spoke softly. "God, I've denied Your existence for so long, and yet for some reason I've escaped death more times than I can count. I guess You've been trying to get my attention. I'm ready to listen now. Thank You for bringing Molly into my life and for giving me someone who has always been there for me, even when I didn't know how much I needed her. I want to keep learning about You and what You've done for me. I do believe what I've been reading in the Bible, and I want to keep learning. Help me to be the person You want me to be and someone Molly can be proud of."

Molly squeezed Sherlock's hand again. "How do you feel now?" she asked.

"Strange," admitted the detective. "Peaceful, like I know everything is going to be okay."

"It is," Molly assured him. 'You've just started a journey on a new path, and it's a path we are taking together."

They looked at each other and smiled.

At the hospital, Molly was taken to an examining room. Sherlock, of course, insisted on being with her. When the nurse politely asked him to leave, so that Molly could talk in private with the doctor, Sherlock stubbornly refused to leave.

"It's okay, " Molly assured the nurse. "He's my fiancé and I have nothing to hide from him."

The doctor came in and asked the pathologist several questions about her ordeal. She answered as comprehensively as possible, explaining how she had received her bruises and the cut on her cheek. Molly could see the grim expression on Sherlock's face as she talked.

The doctor seemed satisfied with her answers, but recommended she take the week off to recuperate.

"You've just been through a terrible experience, and shock may yet set in. I'll let your supervisor
know. It's Mike Stamford, right?"

Molly nodded, and the doctor said she was free to go.

The pair walked outside and Sherlock hailed a taxi.

"I should let Mycroft and John know what happened," remarked Sherlock after they entered the cab. "I'm sure they will be glad to know that I discovered the identity of the stalker, and that he's dead."

"I can't help but be relieved," said Molly. "He was quite mad I think, and he wanted revenge on you so badly, he would have pursued you forever."

"By the way, my love," said the detective, as he smiled tenderly at Molly, "you were very clever to leave that earring for me to find."

"I knew you would," she said. "I just had a feeling about it."

"Another prompt from God, I guess," stated the detective sincerely.

"Yes, I think it was too."

Sherlock sent off his texts to Mycroft and John. Both men sent replies almost immediately.

"Expect visitors tomorrow afternoon, Molly. They want to see for themselves that you are okay, and obviously to get the whole story. Might as well tell both of them at the same time."

They arrived home to find that Mrs. Hudson had been waiting up for them.

"Inspector Lestrade called me to tell me what happened," she exclaimed, enbracing Molly and then Sherlock. "I'm so glad you are both okay, and that that nasty man is dead. Come into my flat and I'll make you a nice cup of tea." She ushered the couple ahead of her and put on the kettle.

"By the way, Molly dear, I put those ginger nuts into a container for you. I didn't think you would want them to go stale."

"Thank you Mrs. Hudson," said Molly warmly. "I completely forgot about them."

"They are delicious," said Sherlock. "I saw them when I got home, and had to eat a couple of them. I probably would have eaten more if I hadn't discovered you had been kidnapped."

"Well, I expect you are both hungry. I'm sure neither of you had dinner. Let me get you a couple of scones," said the landlady solicitously.

She fetched scones, jam and cream and set the items on the table, while she went to make the tea. "Help yourself," she invited.

Molly hadn't realized until that moment how hungry she was. "I'm starving," she admitted, taking a scone and adding jam and cream to it.

Sherlock took one also, as he too said, "I'm quite famished myself."

They ate the scones, taking a second one apiece, and drank the tea so kindly provided by Mrs. Hudson. Molly had a second cup when it was offered.

Molly could tell the landlady was dying to hear the whole story of what had happened, so she said,
"Mycroft and John will be coming over tomorrow to get the whole story, so you are welcome to come up to the flat and hear it then as well." She yawned and looked at her watch, then gasped. "Make that today. I had no idea it was so late.” It was past two o'clock in the morning.

"Thank you for waiting up, Mrs. Hudson," said Sherlock. "We appreciated the tea and scones. Now I think it's time my fiancée and I get some sleep."

With that, the engaged couple went upstairs to their flat. As soon as they entered, all of a sudden, Molly felt incredibly drained. She was barely able to keep her eyes open. The events of the evening were catching up to her.

"Sherlock, would you help me get to bed?" she asked sleepily. "I can't function anymore. I think I'm going to just fall asleep on my feet."

"Of course, my love," replied the detective. He picked Molly up in his arms and gently deposited her on the bed. She sat obediently for him as he removed his coat from her body. Then he helped her wriggle out of her skirt. The elasticized waistband made that quite easy. He found her chemise that she liked to wear to bed. Fingers trembling slightly, he removed the ruined blouse and tossed it on the floor. Her one breast lay exposed, thanks to Moran’s destruction of the lace that would normally have preserved her modesty.

Molly heard Sherlock's sharp intake of breath as he had a glimpse of her exposed flesh. She should have been embarrassed, perhaps she would be in the morning, but right now she was too tired to care. What was the big deal anyway? He was going to be her husband in a few short weeks, and he would be seeing a lot more of her body at that time, than just her breasts.

"Help me get the stupid thing off. It's ruined anyway," she murmured. She felt Sherlock fumbling for the hook and eye fastenings at the back. He was obviously not accustomed to undoing a bra because it took a few tries until he managed it.

Molly almost laughed, when he muttered, "How on earth do women manage to put these things on, and behind their backs to boot?"

He drew off the bra and slipped the chemise over Molly's head, helping her put her arms through the straps. Molly could tell that her fiancé had been trying not to stare at her breasts, as he focussed on his task, but the look in his eyes told her he had observed her quite thoroughly, despite himself.

"Modesty is highly overrated," quipped the pathologist, trying to get her fiancé to relax. She must be overly tired, she thought to herself, wondering how those words had slipped out.

"Don't say things like that," Sherlock scolded. "You need to just get some sleep. And I might have to subject myself to another cold shower if you keep it up," he complained.

"Sorry," she murmured, as the detective got her situated under the duvet. Molly watched, with her eyelids half closed, as he proceeded to undress as well, leaving on just his Union Jack boxer shorts.

"Nice boxers," she teased, as he got into the bed beside her.

"I thought you were already asleep," he said, frowning at the pathologist.

"Not until I've had my goodnight kiss," she returned, trying to frown back at him, but dissolving into giggles.

Molly and Sherlock came to the same realization. "Mrs. Hudson spiked our tea, didn't she?" She said.
"She probably did it to help us sleep. I think she might have been a bit heavy-handed with yours though. Plus, you had a second cup and I didn't finish my first one," noted the sleuth. "I must be slipping, or overly tired myself."

"Oh dear," said Molly. "Now I'm acting like a total lush."

"I don't know," grinned Sherlock. "I think I kind of like seeing uninhibited Molly Hooper."

Molly rolled her eyes at him. "Well that sobered me up fast," she snorted, "Realizing why I'm so tired and loose all of a sudden."

Sherlock pulled Molly against his body and she felt him kiss her hair.

"Sherlock Holmes, just because I've come back to my senses, doesn't mean I don't still want my good night kiss."

So he kissed her, thoroughly and deeply, as his hands stroked her back through the thin chemise. It felt wonderful, so perfect that she almost forgot about the traumatic events of the past few hours.

She fell asleep, still locked in the embrace of the man she loved.

Chapter End Notes

Author’s note: Obviously this was a pivotal chapter. The journey towards faith has ended, and the journey with it has begun. Can I have an amen or a hallelujah?

I believe out of great tragedy can come great things. In this instance, Molly’s kidnapping was the catalyst for Sherlock to finally come to faith. I hope you found the premise believable. Only God knows a person’s heart. He will knock at the door, but only come in if He is invited.

How do you think Sherlock will change as a result of his newfound faith?

It means more than you know to get feedback from my readers. I want to be an encouragement and inspiration with my writing, and the only way I know if I am being successful is if I hear what you have to say. If my interpretation of Sherlock and Molly speaks to you in a better way than the interpretation of other writers who consider them to be more worldly and carnal natured, speak fearlessly
Quiet Day at Home - Sherlock (Monday)

Chapter Summary

Sherlock and Molly talk about wedding matters and enjoy being together after the traumatic events of the past evening.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sherlock's eyes flew open at the pressure of Molly's hands on his chest, trying to push him away.

"Please, let me go. Don't hurt me," she pleaded.

For a moment the detective was confused, until he realized that Molly's eyes were closed. She was having a nightmare. Her subconscious was reacting to what she had suffered at the hands of her captor.

Sherlock stroked her hair and said soothingly, "Hush, love. It's me. It's Sherlock. You're safe. Nobody is going to hurt you."

Molly's movements stilled and her body relaxed as she fell into slumber once more.

The detective lay awake for awhile longer, thinking about how he could have lost her, or gotten her back after she had been physically abused and violated. If he lost Molly, he didn't know what he'd do. She was truly his anchor. He adored her, and he wanted to spend the rest of his life proving it. She deserved nothing less.

When next he awoke, the sunlight coming through the window indicated to him it was late morning. Molly was stirring next to him, and her eyes blinked open.

"What time is it?" she asked. "We've slept late, haven't we?"

"Mhm," agreed the detective. "It must be after ten o'clock, but quite frankly, I'd rather look at you, than bother looking to check the alarm clock."

Molly laughed as she put her hands to his head and twirled one of his dark curls with her finger. He took that as an invitation to give her a smouldering, intense good morning kiss.

It was exhilarating, to feel her body so close to his, with only the silky fabric of her chemise separating them. Until the previous night, he had deliberately worn pyjamas, feeling that he should keep a little more fabric between them. He hadn't thought to do that last night. He had been too unnerved by the events of the evening and uninhibited, slightly tipsy Molly. He could only assume that Mrs. Hudson's little elixir had affected her so much, due to her almost empty stomach. He himself was not one to handle copious amounts of alcohol.

As if she suddenly realized her fiancé was not wearing his usual nightwear, Molly asked, "Why aren't you wearing your pyjamas?"

"I forgot," he admitted sheepishly. "I have become accustomed to just wearing my boxers to bed."
The pyjamas were really more for your benefit than mine."

He was quite surprised when his fiancée told him, "If you don't usually wear them, you shouldn't be going to the trouble just to preserve my modesty." He saw the flush rising in her cheeks as she added honestly, "I like having you close to me. Those pyjama buttons are a little uncomfortable when you are holding me close."

"You would really be okay with me not wearing pyjamas?"

"As long as you are comfortable with me admiring your naked chest."

Sherlock's stomach flipped as her words brought back the memory of her own partially naked chest from the previous night.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" asked Molly.

"Um..." Sherlock hesitated, then the words came out in a rush. "I had a glimpse of your own, um, partially naked chest last night too, and it was beautiful."

Molly blushed. "I was kinda hoping I dreamed that part. Did I really ask you to help me undress?"

"That you did," affirmed her fiancé. "I tried not to look but, well, I'm only a man after all. Primal instincts, you know." He winked at Molly. "So, now that I've seen more of your body, does that mean I can kiss you below the neck?" he asked hopefully.

Molly gave him an exasperated look. "I'll make you a counter-offer. You may go as far as my shoulders."

"Well, okay. I guess I can live with that," Sherlock said in a disappointed tone. Then he perked up and asked, "Can we revisit this next week?"

"Sherlock Holmes, are you not wanting to keep anything sacred till the wedding night?"

"I promise not to ask for any liberties below your navel," said the detective with a wicked gleam in his eye. "After all," he said, "in all fairness, if you get to see me half-naked, wouldn't it be fair for you to allow me to receive the same consideration?"

Molly chuckled. "Ask me again later. No promises, though."

Sherlock almost clapped his hands with glee. She hadn't completely shut the door on him. "Well, I suppose we should be getting up now," he said reluctantly. He really wished he and Molly could just stay in bed all day and talk, or that he could kiss his beautiful fiancée.

"I suppose so," agreed Molly, just as reluctantly. "I really need to take a shower anyway. I need to feel clean, like I've gotten rid of that man's odour. I still feel like I can smell that cigar smoke."

"You do that," approved Sherlock. "I'm going to call Mycroft and John. Should I have them come over at two or three o'clock?"

"Let's make it three," said Molly. "I need that extra hour to compose myself. Plus, I should really call my mum and tell her what happened."

"That's a good idea," said the sleuth. "There were a few curious onlookers when we left the hotel last night. I wouldn't be surprised if someone somehow contacted the newspapers."

Sherlock's hunch proved to be correct. When he phoned Mycroft to invite him over for three
o'clock, the older Holmes brother remarked. "Well, you've made the news again, brother mine."

"I guess there was no avoiding it," grumbled Sherlock. Too many people these days with camera phones at the ready, willing to sell a story to the papers for lots of money. He thought about Janine, and the way she had spread false rumours about him.

"Well, Sherlock Holmes is a hot commodity, after all. You should be used to it by now."

"I am," replied the detective, "but Molly isn't. I wish I could shield her from the press."

Mycroft laughed dryly. "She'll just have to get used to it. You do know, I assume, that your wedding is sure to become a public spectacle. Your fame these days, especially since you exposed Culverton Smith as a serial killer, is only a few notches below that of the Royal Family. As soon as there is anything special to report on your status, you can bet it will make the newspapers, and probably the television as well."

"I can live with that, as long as nobody follows us on our honeymoon."

"Don't worry, little brother. Once you have decided on a destination, my plane will be at your disposal. I trust my pilots implicitly. They will not divulge your location. You will be able to enjoy your honeymoon in peace."

"Well, that's something at least," Sherlock said, looking up as Molly entered the sitting room, freshly showered, with her hair still damp and falling around her shoulders.

"I'll see you at three then," he hung up and called John, making the same arrangements for the meeting at three.

Molly had gone over to the sofa, while he was talking to John. "Is he bringing Rosie?" She questioned.

"Nope. Harry cane to see him over the weekend. She'll babysit."

Molly looked crestfallen, and the detective hastened to reassure her. "I'm sure we'll see her again soon. It's probably better that she is not around when we are talking about what happened yesterday."

"I know you’re right. I just love that sweet baby so much."

Sherlock walked to the sofa and sat beside her. "I hope it won't be too long before you have your own baby to love, our baby." He took her hand and squeezed it gently.

"I can't wait," whispered Molly, leaning her head on his shoulder.

They sat in silence for a minute, then the detective asked, "Do you want to tell me exactly what happened last night, or wait till Mycroft and John arrive?"

"I'll tell you now."

Molly gave him an account of all that had happened, until he rescued her. "And how were you able to find me?" She questioned.

"If that idiot hadn't picked up the phone when I called you, I may not have," he told her. "I figured he had taken you somewhere local, but London is a big place to search. When I heard Big Ben striking the hour in the background, I just had a feeling I knew where he had taken you. After that,
it was just a matter of eliminating that which was not possible. I had deduced he was using his own car, or at least a hired one, to kidnap you. That alone was the best clue, because not many people bring their own car and pay to park at the hotel. After deducing he would have a room with just one bed, and one which overlooked the river, I was able to narrow it down to two possible rooms. It was upon investigating around the second room that I found your earring. I told Lestrade and he went down the hall to call the men who were waiting as back up. When I heard you scream, I couldn't wait any longer. So I rammed into the door with all my might, and it came open. I'm not sure how I had the strength to do it, I guess it was adrenaline."

"Or maybe God gave you the strength of Samson, just for the time it took for you to get the door open," stated Molly seriously.

"Samson?"

"It's one of the stories in the Old Testament. He was a very strong man. You'll have to read through the whole Bible in order to see all the different people God used in extraordinary ways."

"I will endeavour to do more reading of the Bible soon. But, for now you are my priority. I need to be certain you do not suffer any long term effects from your ordeal with Moran. Now I think we should have something to eat."

"Why don't you take a shower, while I prepare some lunch for us?" suggested the pathologist.

"Very well," agreed the sleuth. "I won't be long."

When he came out of the bathroom a short time later, he found Molly in the kitchen, setting cups of tea and sandwiches on the table.

They sat down to eat and Sherlock teasingly asked, "You didn't do a Mrs. Hudson special with the tea did you?"

"Very funny," retorted his fiancée. "I must have been rather tired last night. Thinking back, I had a vague notion that it tasted funny, but I just attributed it to her using a different brand of tea than I am used to."

"Remind me to thank her," remarked Sherlock, as he gave her a sideways, cheeky glance which made Molly squirm with embarrassment.

After lunch, the couple retired once more to the sitting room. Instead of going to his chair, the detective opted to sit instead with his fiancée. The television was turned on, but neither of them paid attention to it, being much more interested in each other.

Sherlock could smell the delicate jasmine vanilla scent that emanated from Molly. He took great delight in sniffing her neck, then kissing it, while she giggled. Then he inspected her arm, delicately sniffing along it, placing kisses on her palm, her wrist, and up to her elbow. "You smell good enough to eat," he murmured, before capturing her mouth with his own. Kissing was eminently satisfying, thought the detective. As usual, Molly's lips were soft and inviting, and his heart thumped in his chest at double its normal speed. When he put his hands gently on either side of her face and neck, he could feel by the rapid beat of her pulse, that he affected her in the same way.

Finally Sherlock drew away from her and tried some deep breaths to bring his heartbeat back to normal. Mycroft and John would be arriving soon, and he needed to get his thoughts in order, to give them the whole story of the previous day's events.
At three o'clock precisely, the doorbell rang. As usual, Mrs. Hudson was on hand to let the visitors in. Mycroft and John had arrived at the same time, fortunately.

"You might as well come upstairs too, Mrs. Hudson," Sherlock called down to the elderly lady. "I know you're dying to hear what happened yesterday."

The three people came upstairs, and Mycroft commented, "You might want to speak with that gaggle of reporters outside, after we leave. I have not seen anything as of yet in the newspapers, so I would suggest you give those people out there some details about what happened, in order to avert the possibility of misinformation."

The detective sighed. "I suppose so."

Once their guests were comfortably seated in the sitting room, Sherlock asked Molly to begin her side of the story.

Molly recounted the events, from being told Sherlock had been severely injured, to having the syringe put into her neck, and everything that had followed. She explained how she had tried to play for time, being certain that Sherlock would be doing his best to save her.

By the end of her tale, Molly was crying, as was Mrs. Hudson. John blinked rapidly a few times, and even Mycroft seemed moved. The landlady stood up, went over to Molly and gave her a big hug. "I'm so sorry for everything you went through, dear."

Then it was Sherlock's turn to relate what had happened from his perspective. He paced the room as he talked. When he got to the part about the phone call, he said, "Moran made a mistake when he answered my call. He got overconfident. Just as Moriarty slipped up when he discounted Molly as a friend to me, thus enabling me to get her help with the whole St. Bart's rooftop plunge, Moran thought he was smarter than I am. When I heard Big Ben in the background, I had almost all the information I needed to find my fiancée, to save her."

He went on to describe his final deductions, and the final conundrum about which room the criminal was using. Looking over at Molly and giving her a tender smile, he said, "If Molly hadn't had the presence of mind to leave an earring on the floor in front of the room, I am not sure how I would have gotten the final clue."

The visitors all sat silent for a few moments after Sherlock finished speaking.

John finally said what they were all feeling. "I for one, am very glad that Moran is dead."

Sherlock was surprised when his brother spoke in a sincere tone. "I am very proud of you, brother mine. I am also glad that Lestrade was on hand to help you. This has shown me more clearly than anything before, that you are a changed man. You and Molly are good for each other."

Turning to Molly, he said, "I will be proud to welcome you as my sister-in-law. I can see how happy you've made my brother."

He went to the pathologist and kissed her cheek. Sherlock was astounded, to say the least. He had never seen his brother demonstrate any sign of physical affection, that was not his way. Mycroft was an intellectual, even more so than Sherlock, and disdained the use of physical contact to show how he felt. It seemed as though Molly had not only broken down the detective's walls, but made some cracks in Mycroft's as well.

The trio left soon afterwards, and Sherlock prepared to face the waiting reporters.
"Would you like me to come outside with you?" asked Molly.

"Only if you feel strong enough to handle it."

"Of course," she replied promptly. "I'll let you take care of answering the questions though."

The pair walked outside, where they were immediately accosted by reporters holding cameras, phones and recording devices.

One reporter asked, "Can you tell us what happened last night, Mr. Holmes?"

Sherlock calmly addressed the questioner. "My fiancée was kidnapped by a vindictive man who nursed a grudge against me, after I stopped him from carrying out a nefarious scheme to undermine the government."

Another reporter pushed a microphone into the detective's face. "Isn't it true that the man you are speaking of is the same one who was plotting to blow up the Palace of Westminster a couple of years ago?"

"Indeed he was," affirmed Sherlock.

Some of the paparazzi were trying to ask Molly questions, but Sherlock said firmly, "My fiancée is not going to speak of this. You may direct your questions only to me." He was holding her hand tightly, to reassure her.

"Our sources say they saw a body being removed from the hotel last night," said a lady, who held a notepad in her hand, and a camera phone in the other. "Can you tell us what happened?"

"During the rescue attempt, the man fell and hit his head. He did not survive," Sherlock said simply.

The sleuth fielded a few more questions, and then held up his hand to indicate he was not going to answer any more. He hoped these people would not attempt to sensationalize what had happened, as he had deliberately tried to downplay it.

The reporters dispersed as the engaged couple re-entered 221B.

"Okay?" asked Sherlock, putting his arm around Molly once they reached the top of the stairs.

"Okay," she nodded.

Inside the flat once more, the detective commented, "I suppose we will have to watch the news later and see if they keep the story straight. Meanwhile, why don't we look at the wedding planner John brought over?"

"Good idea," agreed Molly. "I think our first priority needs to be the wedding invitations. They will need to be printed and sent within the next two weeks."

Sherlock fetched the planner and opened it at the kitchen table.

The couple perused different vendors for wedding invitations.

"Let's call the one John and Mary used, and also this other one." She pointed out a business that offered good prices for smaller scale invitations. "I don't think we need to send out more than 50, and the other companies seem to have a 100 invitation minimum purchase."
Sherlock nodded his agreement and made appointments to go to the two businesses the following day, to look at their sample invitations and styles. Both businesses were within walking distance of each other, a short train ride away.

Molly found her pad on which she had been writing her checklist.

"Do you have a colour in mind for your bridesmaids?" asked the sleuth. "Do you want us to do matching ties? The flowers, don't they usually coordinate with the dresses, and the cake too?"

Molly looked surprised. "How on earth are you such an expert on weddings all of a sudden?"

"Well, when I was John's best man I did a lot of research about weddings. I may not have been responsible for all of those things, but I thought it would be good to acquaint myself with them, just in case they needed help. After all, I did end up making the serviette decorations," he said rather smugly.

"Well, you did a good job of learning all of that then. I bet you never thought you'd be using that knowledge for your own wedding."

"Definitely not. I anticipated that my mind palace would eventually delete all that information to make room for something more important."

Molly laughed at that. "You and your mind palace. I wish I had that ability, to pick and choose the most important information to keep. Instead, my brain insists on forgetting heaps of useful stuff, but retaining the useless things, like what colour nail polish I was wearing for my 16th birthday party."

"So what colour was it then?"

"Neon rose. I was really into anything neon coloured during my teen years. The brighter the colour, the more I liked it." She smiled at the memory.

"So," asked Sherlock cautiously, "am I to expect your bridesmaids to be wearing some garish neon colour?"

"Very funny," she scoffed. I'm hardly a teen anymore. Actually. I was thinking maybe a peach colour. Then for the bridal bouquets, perhaps peach and champagne coloured roses."

"It sounds like I'm not the only one with some knowledge of flowers."

Molly blushed. "Well, girls tend to be interested in all things to do with weddings. I used to plan in my head exactly what I'd want for my wedding, flowers, cake, dress. That was when I was in my early twenties though. I'd kind of given up on the idea of getting married by the time I met you. Then when you left, and I got engaged to Tom, I started thinking about it again. Of course, we didn't get very far with it."

"So, how long were you and he engaged for, before my return?" asked the detective curiously.

"Not even a month," admitted Molly. "After you came back, I kept finding excuses to not set a date or do any planning together."

"Thank God, and I mean it literally, that I came back before it was too late." Sherlock felt his heart drop at the thought that Molly might so easily have been married to someone else.

"I don't know," said Molly slowly. "I am thinking now that I provably would have broken off the engagement before the wedding anyway. The whole time I was with Tom, I kept comparing him in
my mind with you. Maybe we could have been happy if you were really dead, but I knew you were still out there, somewhere. My heart was always in your keeping, even though you didn't know it."

"Molly, I did know you cared about me a lot. You were always there for me. I knew you loved me even, but I supposed you would just get over it eventually. I told you that you deserved to be happy, and I meant it. I didn't think I could be the man you wanted me to be, the man you deserve. I still have my doubts."

Molly laid a hand on his arm, where it rested on the table. "Please, you need to stop thinking that way. How can you be so incredibly brilliant in some ways, and yet have such a low self-worth? We deserve each other, because we were made for each other. Maybe it took you longer to realize it, but you know it now and I'm not going to let you forget it. I'm afraid you are stuck with me, Sherlock Holmes."

Sherlock felt as if a weight had been lifted from him. His self-doubt, the feelings of inadequacy dissolved, as if they had never been. He understood now, the depth of feelings they shared, the way God had been drawing them together. They were truly soulmates. "I love you, Molly Hooper. I can't begin to express how much, but I think you know, because I now understand you feel exactly the same way."

With that, he rose from the table, pulling Molly towards him, and kissed her reverently. He felt the blessing of God on their union. True, they weren't yet man and wife, but saying those words to make it legal wouldn't change the fact that they were committed to each other now and for the rest of their lives. Yes, he desired her physically, wanted to be with her in every way a man could be with a woman, but their relationship was so much more than physical. It was an emotional connection, and now that he shared her faith, a spiritual one as well.

When they broke apart from the kiss, Molly seemed to sense his feelings. "I love you too Sherlock; heart, body and soul."

Shortly thereafter, the couple strolled outside and down the street a few blocks to buy something for dinner. Sherlock's favourite food was chips, followed closely by ginger nuts. His favourite fish shop was not far away, but he didn't feel like walking to it. He just wanted to spend as much time with Molly as possible in the flat. So they went to the nearby Subway store and bought sandwiches.

He thought of the delicious ginger nuts awaiting him for dessert and gave a carefree laugh.

"You certainly are in a good mood," remarked the pathologist.

The detective smiled at her. "What more could I want? I have the perfect lady, and my favourite biscuits waiting for me."

"I'm glad you put me first " teased Molly.

At home, they ate in front of the TV. Partway through the evening news broadcast, the news report they had been expecting played.

"And in other news," said the announcer, "London's very own famous detective has solved a case once again, this one much closer to home than usual."

Some footage was shown of Sherlock and Molly from that afternoon.

The announcer continued, "Our sources say that the former Lord Sebastian Moran, who was behind the plot to blow up Parliament a couple years ago, nursed a grudge against the detective, who had averted the attack. He was released from jail approximately six months ago, and was also
apparently behind the broadcast that interrupted our usual viewing a few months ago. That broadcast of course, was one pre-recorded by the now deceased criminal James Moriarty. If you’ve had your head in the sand for the past several years, Moriarty was the man who pretended to be an out-of-work children’s actor named Richard Brook who was hired by Sherlock Holmes to make himself appear as a legitimate sleuth.”

A picture of Moriarty as Richard Brook appeared on the screen behind the announcer. “Brook attempted to discredit Holmes, who took an apparent plunge off of the roof of St. Bart's hospital. Our intrepid detective returned two years later, after his name and reputation were cleared. We may never know the story about how he managed to escape death, but one thing we do know - his fiancée is one lucky lady. Mr. Holmes, in a matter of hours, was able to rescue his lady. Moran suffered a fatal fall after the rescue.”

She concluded her report with, ”The detective and the future Mrs. Holmes seem to be doing well after the unfortunate incident. We certainly hope the rest of their engagement will be drama free.”

Five minutes later the phone calls and texts began.

Chapter End Notes

This is a huge chapter, my longest yet, at well over 4000 words, but I am very proud of the way it turned out. What did you think about Sherlock and Molly’s discussion about wedding things, and their knowledge about certain aspects?

I hope you enjoyed it and are looking forward to continuing Molly’s and Sherlock’s journey together.
Chapter Summary

Moly and Sherlock field the phone calls and texts from concerned friends after her rescue is broadcast on television.

Chapter Notes

Special Note: My prayers and thoughts are going out to the victims and families of the victims of the horrifying school shooting in Florida on Wednesday. May God comfort them in this time of loss.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Molly heard the announcer use the words "the future Mrs. Holmes," she felt a little quiver of excitement run through her body.

Sherlock looked at her. "I hadn't thought to ask before, but do you intend to take my name once we are married, or continue to use your own, or a hyphenated version of both? I know in this day and age, many people think it old-fashioned for a woman to take her husband's name, especially an established career woman."

Molly looked back at him, somewhat surprised by the question. "I will be honoured to take your name. Maybe it is 'old-fashioned,' but I also believe a man should be the head of his family. That being said, I want to take your name, to be identified with you as your wife." She smiled at him.

Sherlock's answering smile of happiness delighted her. Funny how such a simple thing like saying she wanted to take his name as her own, brought her fiancé pleasure.

Her phone and Sherlock's both rang at the same time. Sherlock's parents were calling him, having seen the news, of course.

Pastor Briggs was on the other end of Molly's phone call. He too had seen the news and wanted to be sure she was okay.

While Sherlock tried to reassure his parents that he and Molly were fine, and no longer in any sort of danger, Molly was speaking to the pastor.

"Pastor Briggs," she said, "you know how I feel about things, how I believe that God uses circumstances to strengthen our faith. In this instance He used it to strengthen Sherlock, to give him that same faith."

"Molly, I am delighted to hear it," exclaimed her pastor. I know you have been praying for him, and I have been doing so as well. God certainly moves in mysterious and sometimes extreme ways. I am so sorry you had to endure such a trying experience, but if that experience is what led to Sherlock's salvation, all I can say is 'amen!'"
Molly looked over at Sherlock, who was still speaking with his mother. "I think Sherlock really had a breakthrough today," she confided. "He has had such a low opinion of himself. I find it so hard to understand, knowing as I do, how much good he has done for others. Finally though, I think he has come to realize his own value to God, and to me of course."

"That is indeed good to hear," responded Pastor Briggs. "Having a poor opinion of oneself can be very destructive. It can eat away at the person and undermine their faith. Just keep reminding him that he is loved and valued by both God and yourself."

"I will, Pastor Briggs," promised the pathologist. "Thank you for calling to see how I was doing."

No sooner had she hung up the phone when Kaitlyn called.

"Hey Molly, I missed you at work today. Stamford told me what happened, and I just saw the news when I got home. Are you really okay? It's so romantic the way Sherlock found you in time!"

Molly laughed. "Yes, I'm fine, just a couple of bruises. I hadn't really thought of the situation as being romantic, but Sherlock really was my hero in a big way." She looked over at the detective, who was no longer on the phone. He was grinning, and she knew he had heard what she had just told Kaitlyn.

"Are you still up to going out tomorrow night to look for bridesmaid dresses?" asked her friend.

Molly walked into the kitchen and grabbed the container of biscuits, then returned to the sitting room, putting it onto the coffee table in front of the television as she replied, "Of course I'm still up to it. We need those dresses chosen before I can coordinate the flowers and cake with them."

"Great," said Kaitlyn. "Am I coming to Baker Street then or should I meet you at the mall?"

"Whatever is easier for you," responded the pathologist.

"I'll take the Tube to Baker Street after work then, and we can go from there. I have a couple of errands to run first though, but I should be there by around five-thirty. Are we going to get something to eat at the mall first?"

"Sounds good. I just have to make sure it's okay with Kayla too. If I don't text you, assume we are good to go for tomorrow."

"Awesome, All being well, I'll see you at five-thirty then."

Molly put in a quick call to her mother to reassure her that she was fine. Mrs. Hooper had actually not seen the news and was quite surprised and horrified when she heard about Molly’s ordeal.

"Are you sure you’re alright, darling?" The older woman asked.

"I’m fine, Sherlock’s with me," Molly assured her. "Actually, I meant to let you know that I’ve moved into Baker Street. When we found out I was being stalked, he wanted me close so he could protect me. Of course, that didn’t end up making any difference. However, I did want to share some wonderful news with you as well. This horrible incident, well, it has brought Sherlock to faith in Jesus."

"That’s wonderful, darling. Having a shared faith was a big contributor to your dad’s and my successful marriage."

"I know it was, and I hope Sherlock and I can instil those same values into any children we have in
the future."

They talked a little longer, then Molly hung up.

She glanced at her fiancé and saw him surreptitiously taking two biscuits from the container. Judging by the crumbs on his shirt, he'd already polished one or two off. At Molly's stern look, he gave her a bashful grin and said, "These ginger nuts are just too good."

"Just as well I made a double batch then," said the pathologist, shaking her head.

"Do you want one?" Sherlock offered her a biscuit.

"No, I made them mainly for you. Enjoy them. But try to make them last at least a couple of days or I'll be spending all my time in the kitchen, baking."

Sherlock's phone went off again, and Molly watched as he tried answering with a mouthful of biscuit. She nearly laughed aloud as he said "Hi Greg," before chewing and swallowing quickly.

The pathologist listened in as the detective was apparently told that everything was "sorted" in regards to Moran's death. It had been deemed accidental, according to the coroner.

Molly breathed a sigh of relief as her fiancé hung up from the latest call. "I'm glad you won't have to testify in court or anything like that," she said.

"Me too. The last thing I would have wanted to do, was drag up bad memories for you with an inquest into his death. The whole story would have had to come out. People don't need to know the sordid details of what almost happened." He came over and kissed her on the lips. His mouth tasted of the ginger nuts he had been eating.

"Mmmm, you taste yummy," she said, as he released their lip-lock.

"In that case, I'll kiss you some more," he winked, pressing his lips to hers again, until Molly's phone pinged that she had a text message.

Reluctantly, she pulled away and checked her messages. It was from Kayla.

"Saw the news. How awful. Are you still okay for tomorrow? I understand if we need to reschedule."

Molly quickly texted back, "I'm fine, still good for tomorrow. Kaitlyn will be here at five-thirty, seeing as I was given the week off work. Can you be here then so we can take the Tube to Westfield?"

The reply came back almost immediately. "Sure thing. I'll expect details about what happened if you are up to it. See you then."

"Okay, see you tomorrow."

Sherlock looked questioningly at Molly.

"It was Kayla," she told him. "Just confirming for tomorrow. She and Kaitlyn will be here at five-thirty."

"Do you want me to come along?" asked the detective.

"That's not necessary. You'd be bored, and the danger is over, so I don't need a protector."
"If you say so," responded the sleuth reluctantly. Molly could see he was still uncomfortable at the thought of her being somewhere without him.

"Don't worry," she assured him. "I'll be with my friends. It will be a girls night out for us, and you can have a night in. Maybe you and John can find another case to work on, to keep you occupied."

"I'd prefer my time to be occupied with you," said Sherlock with an impish grin. He walked towards her, with the obvious intent of kissing her again judging by his eyes lingering on her mouth.

Once again, they were interrupted by the phone. For the next three hours, Sherlock and Molly fielded texts and phone calls from various people - in Molly's case, work colleagues and friends from church. In Sherlock's, a call from Mycroft to ask if he had watched the news, and one from John to ask the same. Taking Molly's advice, the sleuth invited John over for the following evening at seven, to discuss resuming work on cases. John was planning to bring Rosie, in the hopes that Mrs. Hudson would babysit.

Molly pouted when she heard this. "I guess you will get to see our goddaughter and I won't."

Sherlock gave her a sidelong glance. "I'm her favourite anyway," he teased.

"Hmph," grumbled Molly. She knew the infant absolutely adored the detective. She loved to grab at his curls and pull on them. Apparently he has that effect on all females, even the littlest ones, she thought. Goodness knows she had seen plenty of admiring glances sent his way both at the hospital, and even at church. It's the gorgeous curls and the chiseled cheekbones, she decided.

"Don't worry," the detective assured her, as if she had spoken both of her thoughts aloud. Then she realized with chagrin she had.

"You're MY favourite, my one and only, and you can put your hands in my curls anytime." He winked

So she did, threading her hands through those incredible locks, as she kissed him in a way that left him in no doubt as to who was HER favourite person, and HER one and only.

As the evening wore on, and the calls and texts ceased, Sherlock asked Molly, "Can I borrow your Bible again? I'd like to finish reading Exodus. Then maybe I'll go back to reading something in the New Testament."

"Of course you can," responded the pathologist promptly. She was delighted that her fiancé wanted to continue reading the Word. "I'd suggest going to the beginning of the New Testament next, reading Matthew."

Molly brought her Bible to him, and he sat in his favourite chair to read. While he was thus occupied, Molly puttered about, cleaning up the rubbish from their dinner, putting the biscuits back in the kitchen and making cups of tea.

At one point, the sleuth said, "This is some serious stuff. Those Hebrews were given an awful lot of rules to follow."

"Yeah," responded Molly. "It can be rather arduous, reading some of that. I've read through the whole Bible twice, but I tend to skim the stuff with all the laws and requirements."

"Perhaps I'll skim the parts with all the offerings and such."
"That's why a lot of people don't read much from the Old Testament. There are some great stories throughout though, it's just a matter of getting through the rather, um, tedious stuff, to the more interesting accounts."

Sherlock nodded. He accepted a cup of tea from Molly, then she went to the bedroom to get ready for bed. After setting her teacup on the nightstand, the pathologist slipped her silky blue chemise over her head, then picked up her "Our Daily Bread" and looked at the day's reading. As often happened, when she read, the scripture reading was particularly relevant. She’d have to show Sherlock.

It was John 1:12-13

"(12) Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God- (13) children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."

Molly sipped her tea thoughtfully. She needed to ask her fiancé if he understood what that meant.

The detective came into the bedroom a short while later. He dropped the Bible on the bed with a triumphant, "Finished Exodus." Then he started to undress.

Molly watched as the man she loved stripped down to his boxer shorts. She gulped, remembering how she had said he shouldn't wear pyjamas if it wasn't what he habitually did at night. It was one thing to say that, when he had been under the duvet, but actually seeing so much of Sherlock’s body made the pathologist feel a little giddy. She longed to touch his chest and the little sprinkling of hairs on it. She realized she was glad he wasn't a hairy man.

When Sherlock sat on the bed beside her, Molly realized she hadn't even thought about getting under the covers. The room was starting to feel a bit cold, so she snuggled up against her fiancé and showed him the devotional reading for the day. "Quite an appropriate reading, with your new outlook, don't you think?" she asked.

"I have so much still to learn," he said. "So, everyone is not automatically a child of God, right?"

"Right," affirmed Molly. "When you make a commitment to follow Jesus as your Saviour, you become adopted into God's family. That means we received the inheritance of God, which is everlasting life. Life that will continue beyond this mortal plane on earth."

"It's good to know this existence isn't all there is, a relief, even. But I confess it's a little scary to think about what it will be like after this life is done."

"I know. Even as Christians who believe in Heaven and life after death, thinking about what it will be like is rather overwhelming. I content myself with the knowledge that the Bible says we will recognize people once we go to Heaven, we will retain memories."

"Where does it say that in the Bible?" questioned the sleuth.

"Jesus refers to it in one of the Gospels, if memory serves me correctly. Also, the final book of the Bible is called 'Revelation.' John the Apostle had a dream about the future, and the last days, which he recorded on paper. That gives us some interesting insight into what things will be like when Jesus comes back again."

"I guess I'm going to have to read that book. It sounds interesting."

"There's a lot of symbolism in it, so the book isn't easy to understand unless you have other
resources to help you interpret it. I don't understand it all myself," said Molly truthfully. "But I am happy to discuss any questions you might have about it, once you've read it."

"Perhaps I'll leave the reading of that book until I understand more from the rest of the Bible," remarked the detective.

"I think that's probably the best option," agreed Molly. "Anyway, I'm going to take my teacup to the kitchen, and I need the loo. I'll be right back."

When she returned, her handsome fiancé had gotten under the covers. He had placed her Bible and the devotional onto her nightstand. Molly joined him between the sheets and he pulled her close. She luxuriated in his warmth, his nearness. "I love you, Sherlock."

"As I love you, Molly Hooper."

They kissed with tenderness and devotion, and slept.

Chapter End Notes

This is another important chapter, where Molly explains more of her beliefs to Sherlock. Of course, those beliefs are a reflection of my own.

Do you find Molly’s explanation clear to Sherlock? I have heard that “new” Christians tend to be “on fire” for God, so the portrayal of Sherlock is that he is enthusiastically embracing his newfound faith, and hungry to learn more about it. What better way to learn about it than to read the Bible itself?
A stabbing sensation behind his left eye that travelled upwards and outwards into the left side of his head woke Sherlock from a deep sleep. He sat up straight and slammed the heel of his left hand against his eyebrow as he uttered a low groan of pain.

Molly's eyes snapped open, instantly awake and concerned. "Sherlock, what is it? What's wrong?" She sat up and looked at him.

"Migraine," uttered the detective, squeezing his eyes shut.

"What can I do for you? How can I help?" asked his fiancée.

Sherlock didn't get migraines often, but when he did, they could keep him incapacitated for up to two days, if he didn't combat them fast enough with medication.

"Tablets," he muttered. "In my bedside drawer. And water to swallow them down with."

Molly immediately got out of bed and hurried to the kitchen for a glass of water. Back in the bedroom, she opened the drawer of the nightstand and found a cardboard box with Migraleve tablets. She consulted the instructions, because there were both pink and yellow tablets. The instructions said to take two pink tablets at first sign of migraine. The yellow were to be used four hours after the pink ones if needed for continued symptoms. The pathologist quickly removed two tablets from the foil packaging and held them out to Sherlock, along with the glass of water.

The detective accepted them gratefully. He swallowed the tablets and drank half the glass of water, before sinking back down on the bed.

"I'm going to get a wet flannel for your head," said Molly. My mum used to get migraines, and that was always helpful."

Sherlock nodded weakly. He hated feeling helpless. He had suffered through migraines before in silence, with nobody to assist him, so receiving the solicitous attentions of his fiancée was a new experience. Although it was a bit embarrassing for him, to have Molly see him like this, he was nonetheless grateful that she was there.

Molly came back into the bedroom again with the cold, wet flannel. "Hold this for a minute," she ordered, before getting back into bed. She placed her pillow and Sherlock's behind her, so she was partially propped up against them. Then she gently drew Sherlock's head down, cradling it on her shoulder. Taking the flannel from him, she placed it on his forehead carefully and used her other hand to gently stroke his hair.
"It's my turn to take care of you." She whispered. "Sleep, my love, and feel better."

Molly's gentle touch, as well as the coolness of the wet flannel soon lulled the sleuth back to sleep, away from the pain in his head.

When he next awoke, it was to find the migraine had substantially subsided. There was still some pain, but it was more of an ache that he felt when he was at the tail end of the migraine, and something he could easily be distracted from. The Migraleve often didn't work as well as it had this time, and the detective supposed it had been a combination of taking it quickly, and Molly's ministrations to help him go back to sleep.

Sherlock noted that his head was still against Molly's shoulder and his face was being pillowed by the soft curve of her breast. It was remarkably comfortable and he was sorely tempted to kiss that curve through her chemise, but he restrained himself. He was not about to break the "rules" Molly had established. Instead he lifted his head and kissed her shoulder. He kissed along the line of it. Reaching the thin strap of her chemise, he pulled it so it slid off her shoulder and he could have an unimpeded path to her neck.

A quick intake of breath showed him Molly had woken. She stiffened for a moment, then relaxed. Her hand reached up to stroke his curls as his lips moved along her skin.

"I deduce that you ate feeling a lot better," she said impishly.

"Not one hundred percent, but yes, much better, thanks to you," he responded, lifting his lips from her smooth skin briefly. Then he resumed his attentions, moving his lips from her neck to her jawline and her chin, finally capturing her lips with his. All thoughts of the residual ache in his head disappeared as he concentrated on the satisfying feel of their lips touching and their body contact.

Molly shifted her position from the way she had been lying on her back, to her side. This enabled the detective to hold her closely against his body. He rubbed circles on her back through the thin fabric of her chemise, wishing he dared to lift it and touch her skin. Then he decided, even as they continued to kiss, that it was probably better there was some barrier between them.

Finally, he broke their kiss. His heart was pounding and desire was washing over him in waves. He knew Molly felt the same way, if her erratic breathing was any indication.

"We need to stop, now," he told her huskily. "If we keep going like this, I won't be able to. I thought being a Christian meant it would be easier to control myself around you, but apparently that is not the case."

Molly laughed at him. "Why would you think that?"

"I don't know," he muttered. "You seem to have a better handle on your self control than I do, so I guess I thought...."

"Oh, Sherlock, my dearest love, being a Christian doesn't make me want to be with you any less than if I weren't one. It just means I want to please God in everything I do. My heart wants to wait for our union to be blessed before God first, but my body betrays me. Have you heard the saying, 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak?'"

At Sherlock's nod, she said, "That saying is a direct quote from the Bible."

"I guess that makes sense, but it doesn't make it any easier." He leaned on his elbow and looked into the eyes of the woman he loved. "So what do we do now?" he asked.
"We change the subject, do something else," replied his pathologist. "For instance, how long have you been a migraine sufferer?"

Sherlock breathed a sigh of relief. Changing the subject was a good idea. It would give his mind a chance to reassert control over his traitorous body. "I started getting them soon after I left London. Not frequently, but every couple of months or so. They could get so bad I would need to stay in bed for two days, or at least do a minimum of activity."

"Have you considered getting a sumatriptan prescription? I know people who take that for migraine relief."

Sherlock shook his head. "I wasn't a candidate for it, at least not then. I used nicotine patches when I quit smoking, and I was still using them once in a while if I needed a nicotine fix. Sumatriptan doesn't react well with nicotine, so it wasn't an option. I suppose I could see about that now, as I've been off nicotine in quite awhile. I also find that caffeine helps me avoid migraines."

"Well then," said Molly, "We'll just have to make sure you have coffee every morning. Speaking of which, I guess we need to get up. Isn't our first appointment at ten o'clock?"

"Indeed it is," responded the sleuth, as he reluctantly slid out of bed. "I'm going to take a quick shower, hopefully the steam will help me get rid of the last vestiges of the migraine."

The shower did indeed help, and Sherlock felt he was almost back to his usual self. He could smell coffee and went into the kitchen. Molly had been busy, she had made them scrambled eggs and toast, along with the coffee.

"These eggs are great," the detective proclaimed. "What's your secret?"

Molly smiled. "A little bit of curry powder. I'm glad you like them."

After breakfast, Sherlock booted up his laptop, on a hunch. He did a quick Google search, then announced, "I'm cancelling our appointments."

"What?" asked Molly in confusion. "Why?"

Instead of answering, the sleuth turned his laptop towards his fiancée. "It looks like we can find what we need online. Why go out somewhere to look at samples when you can view them in the comfort of your own home?"

"Oh my goodness, I can't believe I didn't think of that before!" exclaimed the pathologist. "Call and cancel, then let's just go ahead and look at invitations online."

Sherlock made the calls and the couple sat together to peruse different websites specializing in wedding stationery.

After a half hour, Sherlock threw up his hands in despair. "There is just too much to choose from," he grumbled.

"Well, let's narrow it down then," suggested Molly. "First off, we are going with the wording where we are inviting people, rather than our parents, right? After all, we are not expecting them to pay for the wedding."

Sherlock nodded. He was content to let Molly take the lead with this incomprehensible plethora of information.
"Next, we decide on whether we want a certain font, if we want the invitations embossed, or with foil accents."

"What do you like? I an content to go with whatever you choose," said the detective.

Molly tapped on the laptop keys for several minutes, selecting different samples to view. "Guess what? We don't even have to include middle names if we don't want to," she announced. "I've found one I like. It isn't too elaborate, there's a bit of gold foil around the edge. I like the printing on this invitation because it is cursive, but the lettering isn't squished together, so it's easier to read. What do you think?"

Sherlock had been languidly leaning back in his chair with his legs crossed. He leaned forward to look at the invitation Molly had tentatively selected. To be honest, he didn't have any strong opinions on what the invitations should look like. "That seems fine to me," he said, trying to hide his lack of interest.

Molly shot him a glance. "You don't really care, one way or another do you?" She asked shrewdly.

"Nope," he popped his 'p'. "Whatever makes you happy, love."

"Alright then. You're okay with just using first and last names on the invitations? We will only need to use our full names during the wedding ceremony in that case."

"Yep," agreed the detective, popping the 'p' once again.

Molly laughed and kissed his cheek. "You are too adorable when you do that. So I can go ahead and order these? How many? Fifty? Sixty?"

"Fifty should be enough. You know I don't have many people whom I would consider a friend. Most of those invites will be going out to people you want to invite. I mean, the only people on my list are my parents, Mycroft, John, Mrs. Hudson, Lestrade and Anderson."

"Well, fifty will be ample then, in fact, I'm going to just order forty. I don't really want to invite a bunch of casual acquaintances to make up the numbers anyway. The invitations come with a standard RSVP as well, so I think we're all set."

Molly tapped on the keyboard for a few minutes, customizing the invitation to their requirements, and then placed the order.

"Ok, the invitations should arrive within ten business days. That won't give us much time to get them sent out though, but it can't be helped."

"When they arrive I'll help you to get them sent out. You can write out people's nanes and addresses and I'll lick the envelopes." Sherlock winked, which elicited another laugh from his fiancée.

"Now, what are we going to do with all the time we saved by not going out?" murmured Sherlock, rising to his feet and pulling Molly up so they were face to face. He threaded his hands through her hair, kissing her deeply, then guided her backwards to the sitting room couch.

When they finally paused in their embrace to catch their breath, Molly remarked, "You appear to be fully recovered from that migraine."

"Fortunately, yes," responded her fiancé.
"So, the great Sherlock Holmes has an Achilles heel then?"

"I guess you could say that. However, I have two - migraines and of course, you."

Molly blushed. "I hope that won't be used against you in the future, our relationship, I mean. Have your migraines ever affected you during a case?"

"Funny you should say that," answered the detective. "Just before my return to London, I had infiltrated a Serbian terrorist cell. I had a migraine attack one night, and of course I had no medication for it. As a result, I inadvertently cursed the timing of the migraine, and I did it in English. As soon as I realized my mistake, I ran, but I didn't get very far and I was captured and interrogated."

"Interrogated? How?" asked Molly.

For answer, Sherlock unbuttoned his suit jacket and laid it aside. He then unbuttoned his shirt and slipped it off his shoulders, turning so Molly could see his back. "You will find this out sooner or later, so I might as well show you now," he said quietly.

Molly's eyes widened and she gasped in horror as she saw the thin scars criss-crossing the sleuth's upper back. Her hands flew to her mouth and she expelled a breath. "Dear God, how did you endure that?"

Sherlock pulled his shirt back up, before saying, "I really don't know if I would have survived it, if Mycroft hadn't intervened. He rescued me. Fortunately, by that time, I had collected enough evidence to let Serbian authorities know about the terrorist activities being conducted under their noses, and the whole group of men was arrested. They were all part of Moriarty's wider network. I am confident that there are no longer any international affiliates of Moriarty's still in operation."

The pathologist stroked Sherlock's cheek. "You've suffered so much, my love. I'm so sorry for what you've been through."

The detective shrugged. "Physical pain is nothing compared to emotional pain. I've been meaning to tell you this, but it never seened the right time." The detective took both of Molly's hands in his. "I need to apologize to you."

"For what?" asked Molly in confusion.

"For leaving the way I did, after my so-called funeral. I should have left you a note at the very least, thanking you for your help. Instead, I took the coward's way out and just left. I knew you cared for me, maybe you even thought yourself to be in love with me, and I didn't want to give you false hope. I was confused about my own feelings for you, and I couldn't guarantee that I would ever be coming back to London. I thought it would be better to just make a clean break and let you move on with your life."

He paused, looking beseechingly into his fiancée's eyes. "I did think about you when I was away. I wondered what you were doing, if you had gotten over me. Thoughts of you comforted me during my darkest times. I convinced myself though that I was just thinking of you as a good friend, with a purely intellectual curiosity about you. Don't tell John this, but you were the one who occupied my thoughts most. I missed my best friend, but I missed you, the one who mattered the most to me, more."

Molly's eyes had filled with tears at his heartfelt words. "If I had known, if I had thought the was a chance with you sometime in the future, I would have waited for as long as it took, for you to come
Sherlock tenderly brushed away the tears that spilled from her eyes with the pad of his thumb. "I wish I hadn't wasted seven years of my life to get to this point, but better late than never, right?" He pressed a gentle kiss to his fiancée's lips.

They sat together for a time, with Molly's head leaning against the sleuth's shoulder. Finally she raised her head and said, "Would you play your violin for me? I haven't heard you play since John's wedding. In fact that is the only time I've heard you play, and it was utterly spellbinding."

"Of course I will, my darling." Sherlock got up and walked to his violin case, where it rested against the wall. He withdrew the violin and bow and played some of his own compositions for the woman he loved. As he played, he reflected on the fact that he needed to find time to work on the piece he was composing for Molly, for their wedding day.

Some time after commencing playing, Sherlock's audience increased by one. Mrs. Hudson, on hearing the violin music, walked up the stairs, knocked and popped her head in. She was not one to wait for a "come in," before entering, treating the flat as if it were an extension of her own.

Sherlock mused that once they were married, he and Molly would really have to make sure their front door was locked to protect Mrs. Hudson's sensibilities. He would be able to make no guarantees that their post-nuptial activities would be confined to the bedroom. He smiled a little wickedly at the thought, as he continued to play.

"What are you smiling about, Sherlock?" asked the landlady.

"Oh nothing, Mrs. Hudson," replied the detective, once he had finished the piece. "Nothing at all." He resolved to tell Molly after Mrs. Hudson had left, winking at his fiancée when the landlady turned towards her.

"So how are you getting on, dear?" She asked. "Are you recovered from your ordeal?"

"I'm doing very well, thanks for asking," responded the pathologist. She gave her fiancé a sidelong glance. "Sherlock has been very good at keeping me distracted from thoughts of that night."

Mrs. Hudson smiled knowingly at the couple. "I'm sure he has."

"Oh for God's sake Mrs. Hudson, I do wish you'd stop thinking I am taking Molly to my bed each night."

"Well technically I am, but it's not what you think!"

Mrs. Hudson merely shrugged. "Live and let live, I always say."

Sherlock rolled his eyes and Molly just laughed. "Never mind, Sherlock," she said. "Soon enough what she thinks will be true." She had the temerity to give him a broad wink.

"I'm just trying to protect your honour," he said weakly. "I don't want anyone to think I have been indulging in pre-marital activities when it isn't true."

At this, Mrs. Hudson seemed to finally recognize that the detective was telling the truth. "Well, what are you waiting for, anyway?" she asked in a curious tone. "You're already engaged and living together..."

"Is it so wrong that I should want to wait to take my wife to bed?" asked Sherlock with a little more acidity in his tone, than he had intended. "Molly is, actually, we both are Christians, and we want..."
everything to be right in the eyes of God."

There, he had said it aloud. He had actually professed his faith in front of someone besides Molly. He could see the shock on Mrs. Hudson's face, and the look of pride on his fiancée's.

As for himself, he realized he felt good. He had finally been brave enough to acknowledge what he believed, and he was not ashamed, not at all.

Molly's eyes shone as she got up and hugged him, taking care not to brush against his violin or bow.

The landlady expostulated, "I thought you didn't believe in God. At John's wedding you made it clear that you didn't."

"Mrs. Hudson," said the detective earnestly, "I hope that you, of all people, can see that I have changed. You've known me for many years. You've seen my arrogance and lack of tact. You've also seen what Molly has done for me, how her love has changed me." As he finished speaking, Sherlock returned his violin to its case, along with the bow, and closed it.

The landlady said, almost in a tone of wonder, "Yes, I see now you have changed a great deal. Sherlock. I'm so glad for you and Molly. I - I have a confession to make." The landlady hesitated, then said in a rush. "The other night, when you came home after rescuing your fiancée, I added a little, um alcohol to your tea and hers. I thought it might help you relax after such a trying evening. I hope there weren't any um, unexpected consequences. I do apologize."

"Oh, nothing we couldn't handle," assured the sleuth, with a glance at his fiancée, who was trying not to let the landlady see her blush. He steered Mrs. Hudson towards the door. "Molly and I do need to get back to doing our wedding planning now. We have a lot to do yet, and not a great deal of time."

Taking the hint gracefully, the landlady headed back downstairs to her flat.

As soon as the door to 221A closed, Molly said, "I can't believe it! You actually admitted to Mrs. Hudson that you were a Christian!"

"Well, I kind of 'outed you' to her as well, in case you didn't realize it," he responded.

His pathologist shrugged. "I don't mind. I've never been ashamed of my faith. I might not proclaim it to all and sundry, but I try to show people in the way I live my life. But that was a big step for you. Are you going to tell John and Mycroft? Your parents?"

"They already know I've reconsidered my previous position on the existence of God. John is at least Catholic, so has a measure of faith. Mycroft and I were brought up in the Anglican faith as children as well. He might not have continued to believe, but I don't think he will be too condemning. As for my parents, they will be delighted that I have 'come back to the fold,' so to speak."

"So, you were brought up in the Anglican church then? Does that mean you were baptized as a baby?"

Sherlock hesitated. "I guess so? Obviously I wouldn't have any memory of it and I don't recall seeing any pictures from my baptism. But then again, I remember practically nothing from my childhood, so it is quite possible. Perhaps I should call my parents."

Molly nodded. "I think that would be a good idea. If you were baptized as an infant, like I was, God's mark was already placed upon you, whether you went on to accept it or not. That of course is
still up to the individual. If you haven't been baptized however, the act of baptism is a public affirmation that you have come to a saving knowledge of Christ. Different denominations treat baptism differently, but baptism isn't what saves you. However, it is a sacrament and therefore something instituted by God, like taking Communion. So it is important in the eyes of the church to show your faith."

"You are quite the fount of knowledge," observed Sherlock. He was unused to someone knowing more than he did on a subject. Hastily he added, seeing Molly's pained expression, "I mean that as a compliment, truly I do. I'm glad you are helping me learn these things. I am a willing and able pupil."

Molly smiled at that, and Sherlock was relieved. He didn't want to come off as sounding pompous and better in any way than his fiancée. They both had their strengths, and faith was obviously one of hers.

"Well, no time like the present," he decided out loud. "I'm calling Mummy."

The detective got his phone out of his pocket and tapped the numbers to call his parents. Then he pressed the screen to enable the speakerphone.

When Mrs. Holmes answered, she immediately said, "Sherlock! I'm so surprised to hear from you again so soon. How is Molly doing? I hope you have been taking good care of her."

Before the detective could respond, Molly piped up with, "Your son has been taking wonderful care of me, Violet. I've all but forgotten my bad experience, due to his attentiveness."

"That is very good to hear," approved Mrs. Holmes, and Sherlock could tell by the tone of her voice that she was smiling.

"So," continued the older woman, "to what do I owe the pleasure of this call?"

"Well," hesitated the detective. "I was just wondering. When I was a baby, did you have me baptized?"

Mrs. Holmes was silent for a moment. "Well of course we did," she told her son at last. "That is rather out of the blue. Why do you ask?"

"Because, um, well, I've become a Christian," confessed the sleuth. "I wanted to know if I needed to be baptized."

"You have?" There was astonishment in his mother's voice. "Wait just a minute."

Sherlock and Molly could hear her voice in the background. "William, come here. You won't believe it. Our son has become a Christian, after all these years!"

Mr. Holmes' voice replied, "Why wouldn't I believe it? Haven't we been praying for him all this time? And didn't we ask God to send him a woman who could help him in that way? You heard that lovely young fiancée of his the other night. She is obviously a woman of faith, just the person we would want for our son."

Mrs. Holmes replied, still audibly to the couple listening on the other end, although she was obviously holding the phone some distance from her ear. "But, Sherlock, of all people. I would have been more inclined to think that Mycroft would believe. Sherlock was so adamant that there was no God."
"Violet, my dear," returned the older man, "You are the smart one when it come to you and me, but even I noticed how our son has changed since he got engaged. Don't tell me you haven't seen it yourself!"

Sherlock and Molly were both trying not to laugh as the older couple talked back and forth, seemingly forgetting Sherlock and Molly were on the other end of the phone.

Mr. Holmes' voice came on the line then. "Son, are you still there?"

"Yes, Daddy,"

"Your mother and I are so proud of you. We are so happy that you have made this decision that will affect your life in a positive way. Tell Molly thank you as well. I'm sure she played a big part in you coming to this decision."

"Indeed she did," agreed the sleuth, smiling lovingly at his fiancée. "She's standing right here with me."

"I didn't do much, Mr. Holmes, I mean William," said Molly modestly. "I just shared my faith with Sherlock. He was the one who took the steps to learn about the Bible and make that leap of faith."

"Well, may God bless you, my child," said the Holmes patriarch warmly.

"He already has," the pathologist assured him just as warmly. "He gave me your son."

Mrs. Holmes came back on the line then and chatted for a few minutes with the engaged couple, asking how the wedding plans were going and other such things.

Finally the conversation ended and Sherlock put his phone down. "Well, that was rather a marathon conversation," he remarked.

"A good one though," said Molly. "Do you realize we completely skipped lunch? It's a bit late for it now, I guess, seeing as I'm going out to eat quite early. What are you going to do for dinner? Would you like me to prepare something?"

"That won't be necessary. I'll just go out and pick up some chips after you leave."

"Alright then. By the way, why on earth were you winking at me earlier, when Mrs. Hudson asked what you were smiling about and you told her nothing? It was obviously something."

"Oh that," the detective said airily. "I was just thinking that we will need to keep that front door locked after we are married. We don't need her popping in at all hours. After all, who knows what we might be up to, and where." He gave his fiancée a look of clear intention for what the future held for them and was quite pleased with Molly's response.

"Uh, yeah," she said, colouring slightly, and biting her lower lip. "Good plan. Maybe we should start practicing that now."

"Practicing what we are going to be doing after we're married?" queried the sleuth with a sly grin. His pathologist pressed her lips together in mock indignation. "Of course not. I mean locking the door."

Sherlock pretended to be disappointed, although perhaps in reality he did feel a little that way. He gave a mock sigh. "Guess I'll have to be good then."
Sherlock walked to the kitchen and opened the container with ginger nuts. "I'll just have a couple of these to tide me over until you leave." He offered them to Molly, who took one. He took a second and with great resolve, closed the lid so he wouldn't be tempted to eat any more.

After their snack, Molly suggested they go back to looking at the wedding planner. "Want to make appointments at a couple of these bakeries?" She pointed to the page where Mary had written details on several of them. "We can't sample cakes online, unfortunately."

Sherlock pouted. "So tomorrow we definitely need to go out."

"We could do flowers too. Kill two birds with one stone. Hopefully Kaitlyn and Kayla will find dresses tonight and we will know the colour to coordinate with the flowers and cake icing."

Together they selected two bakeries and two florists, making appointments an hour and a half apart. The businesses were within walking distance.

Molly looked at her watch. "The girls will be here soon. When is John coming?"

"Ah, seven, I believe." He consulted his phone, looking up his text conversation with John. "Yes, seven."

"You should think about working on some cases next week. It's my week for night shift, so I won't be doing much during the day, besides sleeping."

"I like that idea. It will distract me from thoughts of you."

The doorbell rang and Molly went downstairs to answer it. Kaitlyn and Kayla were both there, having met some way down the street near the station. They had walked the rest of the way together and seemed to be getting along well.

The trio went upstairs so the girls could say hello to Sherlock, while Molly grabbed her handbag, phone and jacket.

Molly was about to slip past her fiancé with just a kiss on the cheek and a "Bye, Sherlock, have a good night, I'll text you later," when Sherlock shot out his arm and stopped her for a smouldering goodbye kiss.

He released her and said, "Have fun, love," then watched as the girls exited to the street.

Chapter End Notes

I am so sorry! This is an insanely long chapter with a huge amount of information. I thought about separating it into two, but it all takes place in a fairly short period of time, so I couldn't find a good spot.

First - migraines. I suffer from them, so I thought it might be interesting to give Sherlock a weakness, and then use it to explain what happened in Serbia. Believable? I had to look up those Migraleve tablets which are sold in England. I also researched sumatriptan, and it is not recommended for people who smoke or use nicotine patches.

I researched online sites for wedding invitations. There are many sites to buy them from.
What did you think about Sherlock professing his newfound faith to Mrs. H.? Did you enjoy the conversation with his parents?

As for baptism, Molly’s words (as usual) reflect my personal belief. Baptism, while an important sacrament, is not going to affect your salvation. Faith in Jesus Christ as your Saviour is the ONLY requirement. That is the foundation of the Christian faith.
Girls’ Night Out - Molly (Tuesday)

Chapter Summary

Molly and her friends go out to look for bridesmaid dresses and have a few cocktails.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The three women were no sooner outside and walking towards the train station, when Kaitlyn said, "I am so jealous, Molly."

Molly, who was still a little dazed by Sherlock's goodbye and open display of affection murmured, "What? Why?"

"You and Sherlock. You pine after the man for years, then the minute you get together you're engaged and planning your wedding. Here I am, two years of going out with David and still no engagement ring." The blonde pouted.

Molly laughed. "Well, let's put this in perspective. Sherlock and I have enjoyed a non-dating relationship for years, where we spent a lot of time together in the lab at least. So we've gotten to know each other pretty well that way. Also I'm ten years older than you. My fiancé turned forty a couple months ago. We're not in our first flush of youth. The biological clock is ticking."

"Shall we get a taxi instead of taking the Tube? It will be a lot faster, and we can talk privately," suggested Kayla, once Molly finished speaking.

At Molly and Kaitlyn's nod of agreement, a cab was duly hailed and presently the three girls were on their way.

"So Molly, let's get back to what we were talking about before we got the taxi," said Kaitlyn. "Enquiring minds need to know. You said your biological clock is ticking. Does that mean you and your gorgeous future husband are planning on having kids right away?"

Molly knew Kaitlyn was not one to mince words. She had a tendency to just speak first and think later. It was probably her American heritage. "Well," she said, flushing slightly. "We are not opposed to the idea."

Kayla who was sitting on the other side of the pathologist, patted her hand. "I think that's great. You should be a mother, I'm sure you'll be a great one! Now, are you going to tell me how you and Sherlock finally got together? I've been waiting for nearly two weeks to hear the whole story."

"I'm not sure where to start."

"I think you should go back to the beginning. You told me about the detective who did weird things at the lab, and who liked doing experiments on various dead body parts. You tried to make it sound like he was a superior git, but You talked about him so much it was obvious you liked him," said Kayla.

"Hell, yeah," agreed the blonde lab assistant. "I could tell you fell hard for him. It was funny
though. When we all thought he died, you didn't seem as broken hearted as I expected. So I thought maybe you had given up on him before it happened or..." She stopped suddenly and gave Molly an accusatory glance. "You knew, didn't you? You knew he wasn't dead!"

Molly stared down at her hands. "I knew, because I helped him plan it. I couldn't tell anyone though, for obvious reasons. The more people who know about something, the better the chance things will get leaked."

The brunette said cheerfully, "Well, that's all in the past now. But, whatever happened with Tom? I know the two of you got together after Sherlock died, or rather, faked his death. What exactly happened between you two?"

Molly glanced out the window of the taxi. They were almost at their destination. "It's a long story. I'll tell you over dinner. Let's get inside the mall and figure out where to eat."

The taxi stopped to let them out and Kayla paid his fare. "My treat, seeing as you have bridesmaid dresses to pay for."

Once inside the huge mall, the girls decided to go to Bill's, upon Kaitlyn's recommendation. The restaurant wasn't too crowded and when the waitress came by for their drink orders, the blonde said, "Let's splurge and get some special drinks. It's not every day you go out looking for bridesmaid dresses!"

Molly laughed and ordered a White Russian. She liked coffee liqueur. Her friends opted for Piña Coladas.

"Okay now, tell us about what happened with you and Tom," pressed Kayla, as the women sipped their drinks after placing their dinner orders.

"To cut a long story short, Sherlock returned to London only a month after Tom and I got engaged. I thought I could be happy with Tom. He was nice and all, but it was more of a comfortable relationship rather than passionate, if you know what I mean, although at times he got a bit possessive. Well, Tom and I were invited to John Watson's wedding, and Sherlock was the best man. You should have seen it. He was so awkward with all the best man duties, but so funny too, and that was where I realized I'd never gotten over him. Tom and I broke up right after the wedding."

"But that was over a year ago," pointed out Kayla. "I remember John writing in his blog about Sherlock solving a case on the day of the wedding. So what happened to finally bring you and your fiancé together?"

"I'm sorry, I really can't go into the specifics of what happened, because it is a family matter. Briefly, it was a phone conversation where Sherlock was supposed to make me tell him I loved him, it was sort of like a case he was on, but he had to do certain tasks. Anyway, I got upset with him and ended up telling him to say it first, so he did, twice. Sherlock told me that after he said it the first time, he repeated it, realizing it was true. So, here we are."

The two girls had been raptly listening to the story and Kaitlyn let out a sigh of contentment. "That's so romantic," she pronounced.

"Not so romantic during the three days after he called me, when I didn't hear anything from him. In fact, his brother called me to say Sherlock had been forced into making the call, and that he didn't mean what he said."
"How awful," sympathized the brunette. "So how did things get sorted out then?"

"Sherlock came to my flat three days later. I was under the impression of course that the call had been just a cruel trick played on both of us, but he finally convinced me he'd been telling the truth. Then he kissed me and proposed." Molly smiled as she thought back to that night only two weeks ago.

"You know, Molly," said the blonde. "I always thought of Sherlock as being a bit superior and kind of cold. When he kissed you goodbye tonight, I could see plain as day what a different man he has become."

"As for me," put in Kayla. "I had never met him before last week at your flat. You had told me about him over the years and it sounded like he could be pretty tactless. The man I met last week was nothing like how I expected him to be. He was really nice. Of course," she added with a flush of embarrassment, "I spent more time talking to John than your man."

The pathologist looked at her friend. "You really like John, don't you?"

"Is it that obvious?" asked Kayla, turning an even deeper shade of red.

"You should call him. Maybe go out for coffee or something."

"Well," admitted the brunette, "we did exchange phone numbers. I didn't have the nerve to call him though."

"You should text him," suggested Kaitlyn. "No pressure, just ask how he's doing and see what happens."

Kayla brightened. "I like that idea, I think I'll try that."

Speaking of John," remarked the pathologist, "he is coming to Baker Street tonight to talk with Sherlock. He's bringing our goddaughter too. I'm a bit disappointed I won't get to see her. Sherlock seems to think it is a competition as to who Rosie's favourite godparent is. He's gonna milk that time alone." She laughed ruefully.

Their dinners arrived and conversation changed to casual subjects until they were ready to leave. The girls had each ordered a second drink with their meal and were in a very good mood.

"I'm paying for dinner," announced Kaitlyn as the three of them rose from the table. "You have to pay for our dresses Molly, and you, Kayla, paid the fare in, so it's the least I can do." Her friends accepted graciously and the three of them linked arms as they left the restaurant.

The first clothing boutique they went into had a limited amount of bridesmaids styles. The only one that could be ordered in the peach colour envisioned by the pathologist was too plain in her opinion. Her friends agreed.

The next shop was much more promising. There was a wide variety of styles, most of which could be ordered in several different colours. Neither Kaitlyn nor Kayla was too keen on strapless gowns, so that immediately ruled out almost half of the dresses. Two styles in particular were agreed upon as the most promising. One of them had a v-neck with draping that went from one shoulder over the bust and to the waist on the opposite side, with the same draping on the other shoulder, making a very feminine criss-cross silhouette. The other dress had a sweetheart neckline with lace cap sleeves. They were both elegant, full-length gowns.

"I guess you should try them on and we'll see which style looks better," suggested Molly. Neither
dress style was peach, but they both showed as available in that colour as well.

The girls went into dressing rooms to try on the first style. While they did so, Molly decided to text Sherlock.

"Had a lovely dinner, but I miss you. Is John there yet with Rosie?"

The reply came back almost immediately. "Yes. He just took Rosie downstairs to visit with Mrs. Hudson for awhile. What are you up to now?"

"Waiting for the girls right now. They are trying on dresses."

"You think they will find the right one?"

"I'm sure of it. It's between two styles. Gotta go, they are coming out to show me. Love you."

"Love you too."

Molly turned her phone back off and observed her friends in the light green dresses, trying to envision them in peach. The chiffon style suited the girls very well.

"What do you both think?" She asked them.

"It's really pretty," said her church friend.

"I Like it too," pronounced the blonde, "but I could do with a little cleavage." She gave Molly a grin. "David really likes that."

The pathologist had to laugh at her outrageous friend.

"Well, let's see what the other dress looks like."

The duo returned to the fitting room to try on the second gown.

Molly thought about texting her fiancé again, but decided to let him not be distracted. He and John really needed to get back into the swing of things with detective work.

When Kaitlyn and Kayla emerged from the dressing rooms again, Molly knew at once that this was the dress for both of them. Although, once again she had to use her imagination to change the blue colour to peach in her mind, the dresses looked stunning. Kaitlyn was beaming from ear to ear, as the sweetheart neckline gave her the desired cleavage effect. Kayla's silhouette was a little less curvy, so the dress fitted her a little more modestly. Molly knew her friend preferred not to flaunt her assets too much.

"You both look gorgeous," the pathologist gushed.

"The best part is that the chiffon spreads out when you spin around," said her work colleague enthusiastically as she demonstrated with a twirl.

"I agree," said Kayla. "I wonder if John will like it." She blushed after she had spoken the words.

Molly giggled. "Of course he will, and so will David with that lovely cleavage of yours Kaitlyn!"

All three women laughed at that. Their choice made, they went to the counter to order the dresses.

While one saleslady was writing up the orders for their dresses in peach, Molly asked another, "Do
you have a crinoline I can hire for my wedding day?"

"Yes indeed," responded the woman. "We have several crinolines, depending on how full you want your gown to be. We also do alterations on site."

"Great," enthused the pathologist. "I am looking for a crinoline that will give me the fairy princess look. I already have my dress, so can I book a fitting with the crinoline?"

"You certainly can. We usually recommend a fitting two weeks before your wedding, and another a week later, to make sure any alterations have been done to your satisfaction. When are you getting married?"

"It will be eight weeks this Saturday," replied Molly.

"Let me look at our appointment book," the woman told her. "That would make it six weeks from Saturday, and again the following week. "She consulted the appointment book. "We can fit you in at eleven o'clock on both days, if that suits you."

"That would be fine." Molly took the two appointment cards the woman handed her, with the date and time for each, and put them into her purse. The other lady had just finished the order for her friends’ dresses so she took out her credit card and paid for them. Their dresses would be arriving in approximately two weeks. Someone from the boutique would call when they came in.

"Do you have a sample of the fabric in the peach my friends ordered?"inquired Molly. "I'd like to coordinate it with my flowers and the wedding cake."

"We certainly do," replied the young saleslady. She disappeared into the stockroom at the back of the shop and came back a couple minutes later. She was holding a swatch of the chiffon in the peach colour. "Here you go."

Molly took the swatch and thanked her, and the girls left the boutique.

Kaitlyn looked at her watch. "It's only eight-fifteen. Why don't we go and have a little celebratory drink before going home. We need to toast our success at finding the perfect dresses."

"Sounds good to me," replied the pathologist. She figured Sherlock would be busy with his best friend until nine-thirty at the very least.

"I'm in," said the brunette. "It has been ages since I've been out anywhere socially."

"I know the perfect place," said the blonde confidently. "David took me there on our two year anniversary recently. They make the most delicious cocktails. If you liked your White Russian, Molly, you'll LOVE the Blind Russian!"

Kaitlyn led the way to a fancy cocktail lounge. Being a weeknight, it was very quiet and the bartender was most attentive to the three ladies.

"What can I get you?" he asked them.

"Do you have a cocktail menu?" questioned the blonde.

"Of course." He produced three menus and the girls looked down at the list.

This one sounds lovely," commented Kayla. It's called Chi-Chi and has vodka, blue curaçao, cream of coconut, pineapple and ice cream."
"Mmmm that does sound lovely," agreed Molly. She continued down the list and saw the drink Kaitlyn had told her about. "The Blind Russian does sound really good." She read the list of ingredients: Bailey's Irish cream, Kahlua, chocolate liqueur, butterscotch schnapps and milk. "Ugh, which one do I choose?"

"Have one now, and the other later," suggested Kaitlyn.

"Well," Molly hesitated. She did want to try both of the drinks, and if they drank them slowly, she should be okay.

I'm going to try the Chi-Chi," decided Molly.

The bartender returned to them. Kayla also ordered a Chi-Chi, while Kaitlyn opted for a Tequila Sunrise.

Once the drinks were set before them, the women sipped them as they discussed men in general.

Kaitlyn complained once again that her boyfriend was dragging his feet on proposing.

"I felt sure he was going to propose this past weekend, when we went on a romantic getaway. But no." She pouted. "He is romantic and sweet, but he takes forever to make decisions."

"At least you have a boyfriend," remarked the brunette. "Every guy I've gone out with has turned out to be more interested in himself and bragging, than in me."

Molly thought about what Kayla had said. She supposed Sherlock had been that type of person before, although he most certainly wasn't that way now. "I guess you just haven't found the right one yet, Kayla. You deserve someone who will see you for the sweet and gentle person you are."

"Maybe John is the one for you and you just hadn't met him yet," suggested Kaitlyn slyly.

"I do really like him. He's such a good writer with his blog. I've been following it for years."

"You never told me that," said Molly in a tone of surprise.

"Why would I?" returned her friend. "He was married, and he had a baby only a few months ago. I would never even consider going after a married man, let alone one who has a child."

"Of course you wouldn't," assured the pathologist. "But he's a widower now, and I think you should go for it. You never know what might happen. Look at me, I never really believed Sherlock would love me back, and here we are, getting married." She smiled dreamily as she thought of the handsome detective waiting for her at home.

The girls had finished their drinks and the bartender asked them if they wanted anything else.

Molly consulted her watch once more. It was only nine o'clock, so she decided one more cocktail wouldn’t hurt. She was feeling a little light-headed, but happy.

"I'd like to try a Blind Russian," she told the man. Kaitlyn ordered another for herself as well. Kayla decided to switch to a non-alcoholic drink, and ordered a diet Coke.

Molly looked at her friend reprovingly after the mixologist went to get their drinks. "I seem to recall John telling you last week you how bad diet drinks are for you. You really don't need them, with your figure."

"It's hard to break the habit," confessed her friend. "Years ago, when I was a pre-teen, I was a bit
chubby, and some people teased me. I got kind of a complex about it. When I got taller, I lost the puppy fat, but still worried about getting fat. So I started working out and drinking diet drinks."

"Kayla, I wish I looked as slender as you. You definitely have nothing to worry about. I'm the one who has a tendency to indulge occasionally and pay the price." She patted her belly, which was a little rounded but in no way could be considered chubby.

The drinks arrived and conversation continued. The alcohol was definitely having an effect on Molly, loosening her up a little, and it was also the case with Kaitlyn. Kayla mainly observed the two of them, with a half smile.

"Well, at least you have really nice boobs," said Molly to Kaitlyn. "Mine are decidedly under-sized."

"David is definitely appreciative," confided the blonde with a wink. "But yours aren't that small really. I'm obnoxiously large. It's hard getting really nice Double D bras. You are in at least a B cup aren't you?"

"Usually," nodded the pathologist. "Occasionally a C, depending on the brand."

"I'm a B cup too," piped up Kayla.

"I'm sure Sherlock wouldn't care what size your boobs are anyway," said Molly's colleague solemnly. "He's probably more concerned with how many body parts he can convince you to smuggle out to him for experiments." She laughed at her own joke.

"Oh my goodness, how did you know I used to do that?" asked Molly. "I only did that when we got those bodies in occasionally that had been donated for science. When students were done with the bodies, sometimes I would furnish Sherlock with some body part or other, upon his request."

Kaitlyn laughed again. "You are so naïve, my friend. Even Mike knows you did that for Sherlock. Do you really think you could have done it if he didn't let you? Mike has been a longtime admirer of your fiancé's sleuthing abilities. He has always said Sherlock is a genius, and would probably end up accidentally finding a cure for cancer one of these days."

Kayla, who had been listening to the conversation in open-mouthed astonishment, managed to say, "Body parts? For experiments?"

"Oh yes. His landlady told me he often kept them in his fridge." She laughed. "I made him promise not to do that anymore. From now on, no more experiments in the flat, only at the lab."

By the time the girls had finished their drinks, Molly was definitely feeling a bit intoxicated. Perhaps she should not have had the second drink, but oh, had it been delicious!

Kaitlyn was also a little unsteady on her feet, but obviously had a higher tolerance for alcohol. "She'll be fine, Kayla," she said. "We'll just get a taxi and drop her off first. The driver can take you home next, and me last, because I live the furthest away. I'll pay for it, because you paid for the ride in."

The women left the mall as the shops were closing. It was ten o'clock. Taxi cabs were waiting at a stand just outside the mall and the girls got in. Kaitlyn told the driver to take them to Baker Street and they settled back in the cab.
"Thank you both so much," said Molly sincerely, trying to push away the fog clouding her mind. "It has been a lovely evening, and I'm so glad to check off another thing on my to-do list."

"How is the planning going?" asked her church friend.

"Pretty well. We ordered the invitations online today. Tomorrow we are going to visit a couple florists and bakeries."

"If you need help with anything, let me know," Kayla told her, and Kaitlyn echoed the sentiment.

Molly was feeling decidedly light-headed when the taxi arrived at Baker Street.

"You had better have Sherlock put you to bed as soon as you get inside," suggested Kayla. "I think you might have had a little too much to drink."

"Okay, I'll tell him," giggled the pathologist as she got out of the taxi.

As the cab pulled away, she called, "Bye Kaitlyn, bye Kayla." Then she fumbled in her handbag for her key. Where was the darn thing? She rummaged around the bottom of the handbag and finally found it. With an "Aha!" she tried to insert the key in the lock, but missed and dropped her keys. She picked them up and was about to give it another try when the door opened.

Her gorgeous fiancé stood in the doorway with an amused smile on his face.

"Sherlock, I'm home!" Molly exclaimed happily and unnecessarily as she threw her arms around his neck and gave him an ardent open-mouthed kiss.

When Sherlock's arms came around her, to help steady her she said, trying to remember what Kayla had told her to tell him.

"Kayla told me to tell you to take me to bed when I got inside," she pronounced.

Chapter End Notes

I looked up cocktails online and picked a couple ha ha. Did you enjoy her interaction with her friends? Do you like the description of the bridesmaid dresses? I looked those up online as well.

Oh dear, poor Molly is rather tipsy. What will happen next?
John’s Visit and Molly’s Homecoming- Sherlock (Tuesday)

Chapter Summary

Sherlock books his wedding night venue and has to deal with temptation from a drunk Molly.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

After Molly had left with her friends, Sherlock could feel and hear the rumble of his stomach. He realized he was quite hungry, especially now that his fiancée was not around to distract him.

He took his Belstaff from its hook and strode down the street to the fish shop on Marylebone Road. It was only a five minute walk, and extremely convenient.

Joe, the owner was on hand and happy to serve him personally.

"Hello there, Mr. Holmes," he said. "I haven't seen you in awhile. I hear you've gotten yourself engaged."

"Indeed," said Sherlock, with a smile.

"Well, my congratulations. You'll have to bring your fiancée in here sometime. You want the usual?"

"You know how I love your chips."

I'll have them ready for you shortly, with a bit extra as usual. I'll never forget how much you helped me with those blasted heavy shelves. It's such a tragedy having only daughters and no strong sons."

Joe turned then and went to prepare the detective's order.

A short time later, the chips were ready, perfectly crisp on the outside and soft on the inside, with chicken salt. Joe had told him in confidence that the salt was an import from Australia, and it was the secret ingredient which made his chips so popular. The only other place in London you could find something similar was at the Australian Shop in Covent Garden. Out of curiosity, Sherlock had Googled chicken salt and discovered it to be a mixture of salt, sugar and Monosodium Glutamate. MSG was a natural flavour enhancer, so it was easy to see why the chips were so tasty.

The detective munched contentedly on his chips as he walked back to 221B Baker Street. He remembered how he had asked Molly if she wanted chips, the day he had realized she was engaged. He definitely had to take her to meet Joe sometime soon, now that she wore his ring instead.

When the sleuth had eaten his fill, he put the remaining chips in a container in the fridge. They could always be warmed up for a snack later.
It was only a quarter past six, which meant he still had three quarters of an hour until John was due to arrive, so he decided to use his laptop to find a hotel for his wedding night. Any Marriott Hotel was obviously not going to be a consideration, it would dredge up too many bad memories for his fiancée.

The detective decided the Ritz London was the best option. The rooms looked luxurious from the online photos, and he decided to book a Superior King room. He was sure Molly would like it, and he wanted things to be as romantic as possible for their first night together as husband and wife. The late noon check-out time was a bonus as well. He suddenly had an idea. A room like that would need to be booked well in advance for special holidays. Why not book it as well for Valentine’s Day the following year? Perhaps it was a little premature to be thinking of it, but it would be their first Valentine’s Day together. Sure, it was an over-commercialized holiday, but what the heck, Molly deserved to be spoiled.

Sherlock wondered idly if she would be pregnant with their child by then. He hoped that would be the case, but he remembered Molly saying, “God’s timing is not ours.”

After booking the room for the two nights, paying in advance with his credit card, Sherlock set the laptop down and relaxed back in his chair, well-satisfied with himself. He still needed to find a suitable honeymoon destination, but he could work on that the next time his fiancée was absent.

A few minutes after seven o'clock, the doorbell rang and the detective went downstairs to answer it himself. He opened it and greeted his friend, who was holding a sleeping Rosamund in his arms.

Once inside the flat, Sherlock held out his arms. "May I hold her?" He asked John.

"Of course," replied the doctor, handing over his baby to the detective.

Sherlock sat himself in his chair, ushering John to the armchair across from him. The detective looked at the sleeping baby in his arms. She was so perfectly formed, with her tiny hands and feet, her sweet baby features. He marvelled anew at the miracle of life. Even as he did so, the thought came to the sleuth that he would very much like a daughter of his own to spoil and cosset. In the meantime though, he could spoil this sweet little angel.

John's voice interrupted his thoughts. "I see you've been busy. Booked your hotel then for your wedding night?"

Sherlock realized his laptop still lay open on the coffee table, the booking confirmation page displayed.

"Excellent deduction, my friend."

"The Ritz, eh? That's certainly an elegant and romantic choice. I would never have thought you to be a romantic," observed the doctor.

"Nothing is too good for my Molly," retorted the sleuth, a little hurt by his friend's words. "And you know I'm not the man I used to be."

"I do," agreed his best friend. "I keep waiting for the old Sherlock to return, but that really isn't going to happen is it?"

Sherlock shook his head. "The old Sherlock is gone forever. I've changed on the inside. Life is different now. Too many things have happened for me to deny the existence of God any longer. In fact, you will probably think it illogical, but I've become a Christian."
John stared at him, speechless for a moment. "Now that is a turn for the books," he said at last. "I would never have expected those words to come out of your mouth."

"Well, I hope you won't judge me for my newfound faith."

"You know I won't," assured John. "I go to church myself once in a while, and as you know, we had Rosie christened at Mary's church."

"Well, I now understand properly what the responsibilities are of a god-parent, and I hope to live up to them."

As Sherlock said this, Rosie's eyes opened and she reached up her tiny hand to grab at Sherlock's curly hair. She proceeded to tug on it, as if she was demanding his attention.

"Well now," said the detective in a voice pitched higher than his usual deep baritone, "how is my little goddaughter today? Are you being good for your daddy?"

As if in reply, the infant made a cooing sound. Sherlock laughed delightedly and stood up with her. He raised her up over his head and back down again, provoking another coo of delight. "Don't forget who your favourite godparent is, it's Uncle Sherlock. Remember that. Auntie Molly is nice, but not as nice as me. Can you say 'Sherlock'?"

The baby burbled and the detective kissed her soft cheek.

"You and Molly had better get to work in making a baby of your own really fast," remarked John dryly. "I'm half afraid you may just kidnap mine in the meantime." His eyes twinkled as he spoke, and the sleuth knew his friend was just teasing.

"I can't help it," he admitted. "Every time I see Rosie, it makes me think about being a father myself. It's a terrifying thought, but I have this overwhelming desire to find out what it would be like to have a child of my own. I just hope I can do a good job of being a father. I certainly wouldn't allow her, or him," he corrected, "to repress their emotions the way I did for so many years."

"Sherlock, I can't believe I am saying this, but I think you will make a great father. You have gone through things that will most likely give you the insight to prevent the same from happening to your own children."

"I certainly hope so," said the detective.

"I'm going to take Rosie down to Mrs. Hudson now to watch her for a bit," announced the doctor, retrieving the changing bag from the floor where he had dropped it, and taking his child out of Sherlock's arms.

The baby let out a huge wail.

"Hush now, Rosie," the sleuth told her. "I'll see you some more later."

Rosie stuck out her bottom lip as if she were pouting, and her father took her downstairs.

Sherlock's phone pinged with an alert from Molly. After their text conversation, he settled back once more in his chair to wait for John to come back upstairs. He was glad Molly was having a good time with her friends. He missed her, but she needed to have some fun. Anyway, she was too much of a distraction to him these days. He really needed to try and solve a case or two with John's help. Bearing that in mind, the detective retrieved his laptop and typed in the address for John's blog.
There were many requests to sort through and he assigned a scale of one to ten for each email he perused. Cases on the lower end of the scale were usually ones that he was able to solve them without leaving the flat. They usually involved several back and forth emails, where he asked for various details on the matter.

Sherlock had already sent off three emails requesting certain information. He was perusing another one when John came back upstairs.

"Getting busy already, eh?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, I have been terribly distracted of late and have sorely neglected my sleuthing."

"Well that's understandable. You did just get engaged, after all."

"I know, but I have only left the flat for a case once since then. I really must get back to work. If you have some time next week, I would like your assistance with some crime-solving."

"Why next week?" queried his friend.

"Molly will be working night shift, so I will need to make sure she can have uninterrupted sleep during the day."

John raised an eyebrow. "And you think if you are around, she might find herself too distracted to sleep?"

"Something like that," came the rejoinder.

"By all means then, I shall try and keep my schedule to morning appointments, so we can have some afternoons free. Have you found anything of interest yet?"

"As a matter of fact, this one seems rather interesting," commented the detective. "It involves the disappearance of a prized racehorse named Silver Blaze, and apparent murder of his trainer. There is a race scheduled for next weekend. I thought we might go out to the site and check it out early next week. Perhaps we will be able to discover what happened before the race. If the horse has been taken, rather than killed, we should be in time."

John nodded. "That sounds good. Where are we headed?"

"Dartmoor."

"I guess that will entail an overnight stay then. It's almost four hours away."

"Most likely," agreed the detective. "Possibly more than one. Can you clear your schedule for that long?"

"I can always get someone to fill in for me," the doctor assured his friend.

Sherlock sent off an email to the Colonel who had sent the email and was the owner of the horse. He wrote that they would arrive the following Tuesday. Sherlock thought it would be interesting to see how he and Molly would handle a separation of a day or two. They had spent so much time together in the past two weeks, but the detective did not at all feel like it had been too much time. His body was in a constant state of longing for his fiancée, whether she was with him or not. Her presence calmed him, reinforced his new faith and emotions. He had a feeling they would be spending a lot of time texting. Perhaps they could even FaceTime.
"You're miles away," observed John, breaking into the detective’s thoughts.

"Just thinking about being away from Molly," admitted Sherlock honestly. "I am unused to feeling this way, to feeling like I am less of a person when we are apart."

"Ah, the first flush of love," teased John. "It does get easier, you know. The separation, I mean."

"I suppose you are correct. That doesn't really help me right at this moment though." Sherlock ran his hands through his hair in frustration. "I do appreciate the wedding planner you gave us. We have appointments with a couple florists and bakeries tomorrow, so things are progressing well on that front."

"Glad it is helpful. Have fun trying different cakes. Mary and I tried so many samples we couldn't tell one from the next by the end of it. Well, I had best be going now. I told Mrs. Hudson I'd be back downstairs for Rosie before ten o'clock and it's almost that now."

"Thank you for coming over, John. I'll try and spend some time catching up on emails from your blog. If something small comes up that we can do in the space of a few hours I'll text you."

"I won't hold my breath," the doctor said with a grin. "You should enjoy this unexpected week of freedom with your fiancée." With a nod of farewell, he set off back downstairs to pick up his baby.

A few minutes later, the outer door closed behind John and his daughter.

Sherlock had left his front door open. He wanted to listen for when Molly came home. It surely couldn't be too much longer. His instincts were correct.

A few minutes later, the detective heard the sound of a vehicle door being closed, and Molly's voice calling goodbye to her friends.

He immediately set off down the stairs. He was halfway down when he heard the sound of keys falling to the pavement. Reaching the door, he opened it to see his sweet fiancée, obviously three sheets to the wind, by the unsteady way she was standing.

At Molly's greeting and enthusiastic kiss, Sherlock put his arms around her. Her mouth tasted of a mixture of coffee and chocolate liqueur.

"Kayla told me to tell you to take me to bed when I got inside," said his fiancée, and he felt his stomach twisting in a knot. He was tempted to do just that, he had missed her so much. He assumed Kayla would not have used those exact words, she went to Molly's church and most likely had the same opinion when it came to pre-marital sex.

As the pathologist seemed disinclined to walk unassisted, clinging to him, Sherlock moved her away from the door, closed and locked it. Then he picked his fiancée up in his arms and carried her upstairs to their flat. As he held her against him he contemplated whether to deposit Molly on the couch, or on the bed. He opted for the latter, deciding it was late and time to get ready for bed anyway.

The detective set his fiancée gently down on the bed, but she continued to cling to his neck and wouldn't let go.

"Don't leave me," she begged. "I missed you so much."

He decided to placate her by lying next to her. "I'm not leaving," he told her. "How much did you drink tonight anyway?"
Molly let go of Sherlock's neck and counted on her fingers. "Two with dinner and two later. That's not so much is it?"

"I presume they were not simple mixers. Were you drinking cocktails?"

Molly thought about this and the sleuth could see she was struggling to focus on the question. "Yes," she said at last. I had two White Russians. Then later I had a Cha-Cha or something like that and a Blind Russian. They tasted just lovely."

"Moly, my sweet, surely you are not ignorant of the fact that cocktails usually are equivalent to at least two regular drinks, because of the use of more than one type of alcohol? That means you have imbibed at least eight drinks worth."

"But I'm not drunk," protested the pathologist weakly.

"Oh, really?" questioned the detective with a quirk of his lips. "What if I were to do this?" He put his hands under her blouse and jumper and felt her warm back, as he kissed her deeply. "Or this?" He reached up and, with some effort, having only done it once before, when he had helped Molly undress after her horrific experience at the hands of Moran, unclasped her bra as he kissed her again, gently rubbing her back in a circular motion.

Molly gasped into his mouth and arched towards him, her hands sliding up to caress his curls.

Sherlock pulled away from her and said in a voice that was even deeper than his usual rich baritone, "If I were to seduce you, would you say no?"

"No," she whimpered, her breath coming fast between her lips.

"No, as in you would tell me no, or no as in you would be unable to tell me no?" he whispered, knowing he was torturing himself as much as her.

"I- I wouldn't say no to you Sherlock. I love you. I don't care anymore about waiting. I want you to...to make love to me." Her eyes were dilated, whether from desire or the alcohol, he couldn't tell.

With a huge effort, the sleuth pulled away from the woman he loved. He knew her desire was mirrored in his own eyes. God knew how much he longed to be with her, to love her as she deserved to be loved, to make love to her as his body was crying out for him to do. He drew in some deep, steadying breaths.

"It is because I love you, that I am not going to take advantage of you. I am only a man, Molly. As a man, I want more than anything to be with you in that way. But I am not going to have you do something you will regret in the morning. To be honest, I don't think I'd regret it. This is about you, and the values you have held dear for so long."

Molly's eyes closed and tears slipped down her cheeks. Sherlock watched as her hands clenched and unclenched, then as she struggled to calm her own breathing before she opened her eyes. "I'm sorry," she managed as she began to tremble. "Why was I so foolish as to drink too much?"

Sherlock gathered her up in his arms and held her, rocking her gently. "It's okay my love. You are here with me, and you will always be safe with me. I would never take advantage of you in this state. Why don't you go have a nice, hot shower? It might clear your head a bit. I'll get you clean pants and your chemise. How does that sound?" He let go of his fiancée as he spoke.

"Okay then," agreed the pathologist, rising too quickly from the bed. She clapped her hands to her mouth then and made a dash for the toilet, murmuring, "I think I'm going to be sick."
Sherlock followed Molly to the bathroom, and before she could lean forward over the toilet bowl to be sick, he had pulled her hair back from her face, keeping it well out of the way while she retched. He turned his head away, feeling bile rise in his throat as his sweet fiancée threw up the contents of her stomach and the alcohol she had consumed. He was rather glad she had gotten sick, it was the quickest way to reverse the effects of alcohol.

The detective handed Molly some toilet paper to wipe her mouth. She did so and then flushed the toilet.

"Feeling better?" he asked, as she closed the toilet lid and rose to her feet. He let go of her hair then.

The pathologist covered her face with her hands. "Oh my gosh, Sherlock, what was I thinking?"

"Never mind that now," he told her, turning on the taps for the shower. "Get undressed and hop in. I'll get your stuff for bed."

He closed the bathroom door, then hunted in a drawer for some clean pants for his fiancée. He observed with interest that she seemed to favour bikini style knickers and thongs. He decided to be conservative, not wanting to think of her wearing just a thong under her chemise which was skimpy enough, thank you very much. Picking up the blue chemise which she had discarded that morning on her side of the bed, he carried her things to the bathroom and knocked on the door.

He had heard the shower curtain being pulled along the tub and knew Molly had gotten into the shower. At her call of "come in," he nudged the door open, not wanting to alarm her by opening it wide.

"I'll just put your stuff on the lid of the laundry basket." He walked to the basket and deposited the clean garments, then turned to leave. The shower curtain was a solid beige colour, but he was able to catch a shadow of Molly's form beyond it, as the light for the bathroom was directly above the bathtub. Sherlock could see her arms were raised as she washed her hair, and the enticing curve of her chest. He gulped and hastily left the bathroom, cursing at himself for even looking. He was such a masochist. As it was, he was still trying to convince his body to stop aching for her, and that glimpse had certainly not helped.

Sherlock sighed and went to the kitchen. He filled a glass of water for his fiancée and returned to the bedroom to put it on her nightstand. He unbuttoned his suit jacket and hung it up, then removed both shirt and trousers. He contemplated putting on the pyjamas, but opted to stick to just the boxers. While he waited for Molly to get out of the bathroom, the detective decided he had time for some reading, so he borrowed Molly's Bible once again from her drawer and settled in to read the book of Matthew. He got into bed and propped himself up with his pillow.

The shower turned off and a few minutes later, the sleuth heard the toilet flush. He hoped his fiancée hadn't been sick again.

The detective had just finished reading The Beatitudes in chapter five of Matthew, when Molly opened the bathroom communicating door and entered. He caught the scent of black currant vanilla as she came towards him.

"I thought you might like some water," he told his fiancée, gesturing at the glass. "You are probably dehydrated after being sick. Did you get sick again a few minutes ago?"

Molly took the glass and drank its contents quickly. "Thanks," she said. "I didn't get sick again, just had to used the loo for the usual reason." She kissed his cheek. I am so embarrassed. You held my
hair while I threw up, it's mortifying."

Sherlock shrugged. "I guess we're even then. You saw me when I was off my tits on drugs."

Molly slipped under the covers and scooted so that their bodies were touching. "I remember. You behaved very badly. I said I was stressed and you were dying. Do you remember your words to me?"

"Not really, I was high at the time."

"You said something like, 'Well, I'm ahead then; stress can ruin every day, dying can only ruin one,' or something like that. It was horrible."

Sherlock cringed. "That was an awful thing to say, you're right."

"Maybe God's hand was upon me then too. When Culverton was preparing to kill me, he asked me how I was feeling. I admitted I was scared. Although I felt guilty over Mary's death, and felt I deserved to die, I realized finally that I didn't want to die. I thought of everything I'd be leaving behind - my family, John, you. I thank God that John arrived in time to save me. I know now it was the hand of God. So often, Molly - so often I've been saved from death, and now I've been saved by the blood of Jesus."

Molly squeezed his hand. "Who would have thought me coming home after having too much to drink, would lead to a conversation like this?"

She added, "I still don't understand why you felt it necessary to go to such extremes for a case," she said. "Although I have to admit, you do look rather sexy with a three day growth." She traced her hand over his jawline, which was just beginning to show the signs of stubble.

The sleuth deliberately did not comment about what his fiancée had said about not understanding. If she knew it had been because Mary asked him to, she might be angry. Instead, he turned his face slightly to kiss the palm of the hand Molly was using against his face. "So you like a bit of stubble, eh?" he asked.

"I like it to look at, not necessarily to feel it. I think I prefer you clean-shaven when you are kissing me but," she added, "I am willing to experiment with that."

Sherlock laughed. "Perhaps I will accidentally on purpose forget my razor when John and I go to Dartmoor next week."

"Dartmoor? Whatever for?"

We are going next Tuesday to investigate a missing racehorse."

"Oh. Dartmoor is a few hours away. I suppose you can't just make a day trip?" She seemed disappointed at the thought of him leaving.

"I'm sorry, love. It will only be two days, three at most. I thought it would be a good time, seeing as you will be on night shift and needing your sleep during the day. That way I won't be around to distract you. Well really it's more so that I won't be tempted to distract you when you should be sleeping."

"I'll miss you," said his pathologist.

"Well, I'm not gone yet," the detective told her, with a grin. He closed up the Bible and put it on his nightstand. He put his arms around the woman he adored and kissed her tenderly. She tasted of
spearmint toothpaste, and the body wash emanating from her skin prompted him to nuzzle his nose against her neck, before kissing it softly as well. She smelled so good, and she felt so right in his arms, but he released her.

"I need the loo," he told her, as he got out of bed. "Get some sleep; we have a busy day tomorrow.

When the detective returned from the bathroom, it was to find she had fallen asleep. Getting back under the duvet carefully so as not to disturb Molly, Sherlock decided he wasn't tired enough to sleep. He picked up the Bible and continued reading. He marvelled at the many accounts of miracles Jesus had performed. How could anyone doubt He was the Son of God, when He performed extraordinary acts that nobody else could do? He healed diseases, fed multitudes of people with a few loaves of bread and fish, even raised people from the dead. The detective also found it interesting the way Jesus used parables to talk about specific things. When the disciples did not understand the similes, Jesus would explain what they meant.

The detective began to yawn once he got to chapter 17. By the end of it, he decided it was time to turn in for the night, so he bookmarked his place and returned the Bible to his bedside table. Turning off the lamp, Sherlock moved under the duvet so he could hold Molly close to his body. Her steady breathing in sleep soon helped him do likewise.

Chapter End Notes

Author’s note : Sorry, sorry! Another insanely long chapter. That means a lot of notes.

Chicken salt is a popular flavouring ingredient in Australia. I must ask my mum to bring some over next time she visits me in America. Don’t be fooled by the furore about MSG. That was blown apart on “Adam Ruins Everything.”

I researched the Ritz and the rooms look very romantic and beautiful. Check it out for yourself. When Valentine’s Day comes, I will be publishing a story about Sherlock and Molly’s second night at the Ritz!

If you have read ACD’s Sherlock Holmes, you will recognize Silver Blaze as a case. I will be basing this one on that case.

What did you think of Sherlock’s reaction to Molly’s intoxication? Wouldn’t you hope all men were like that? Sherlock is a man of true integrity.

A lot to ponder on with this chapter. What are your thoughts?
Chapter Summary

Sherlock and Molly are able to check off some things on their wedding to-do list.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Molly woke before Sherlock. She had a slight headache, which she attributed to the after-effects of the alcohol she had drunk the previous evening.

She tried to recall exactly what had happened, but it was a bit fuzzy. She had a vague notion that she had acted reprehensibly while intoxicated.

Sherlock's arms were around her and the pathologist tried to gently extricate herself from his grasp without waking him. She had only moved a few inches when strong arms pulled her back against his chest and Sherlock's deep baritone purred in her ear.

"Not so fast, my love."

She wriggled around to face his blue-green gaze. "I didn't want to wake you. I was just going to put on the kettle and take a couple of tablets for this bit of a headache."

"Gee, I wonder what brought that on," her fiancé teased, as he cupped Molly's face with his hand to bring her lips to meet his in a sweet good morning kiss.

The touch of his lips on her own was electrifying as usual, and she wanted to keep kissing him, but she stopped herself, saying instead, "That is why I didn't want to wake you. It makes things much more difficult to get out of bed."

Sherlock hooked a leg over her, trapping her to his body. "Why is that so bad?" he murmured, moving in to kiss her again.

Molly succumbed for a minute or two, losing herself to exquisite sensation. As the couple paused to catch their breath, Molly quickly slid out of her fiancé's reach.

"You don't play fair," she complained. Even s she spoke the words, she knew she didn't really mind Sherlock's little advances. It was a very satisfying feeling to know he was as besotted by her as she was by him.

The pathologist got out of bed and picked up the empty glass from her nightstand, taking it to the kitchen. She filled the glass with water, then took two headache tablets and washed them down with the water. She turned on the kettle to boil water for coffee, then put some bread into the toaster. There was butter in the fridge that had come from her own fridge at her flat. This was fortunate, because the fridge at Baker Street had been woefully understocked. At least it now held a few more items. Molly put the butter on the table and found some strawberry jam in the cupboard. There was also raspberry jam from her own flat, so she took that out too.

Molly heard the shower running, so knew her fiancé was up and about. Had she taken a shower
lately? Then she remembered having one after getting home. She felt her hair. It was still slightly damp and, she realized in mortification, unbrushed. She must look a fright. How could Sherlock stand to look at her when her hair was in such disarray.

Molly hurried to the bedroom to dress. After doing so, she took her hairbrush off the dressing table and began to yank through it vigorously.

Sherlock came out of the bathroom clad only in a towel. Molly loved looking at him when his hair was damp from the shower. It rioted around his head and made her long to comb it into place with her fingers. She discarded her own hair brushing and moved towards him, intent on doing exactly that.

"Don't come any closer," he warned with a glint in his eye.

"I was just going to brush those gorgeous locks of yours into place," she pouted.

"Moly Hooper, if you come any closer, I will not be held responsible for what happens. Remember, I am currently naked except for this towel, and you are looking entirely too beautiful for me to resist you if you don't get out of here right now so I can get dressed."

Reluctantly, the pathologist complied. She didn't know how he could think her beautiful with only half her hair brushed, but she dared not go back to retrieve the brush.

In the kitchen, Molly prepared their coffee and put another two slices of bread in the toaster. The first two had gone cold, but she didn't mind. She preferred her butter to mix with the jam instead of melting. Molly spread the butter and jam on her toast.

When Sherlock appeared a few minutes later, fully dressed in dark blue shirt with his usual jacket and trousers, she asked, "How do you like your toast? With just jam or butter and jam?"

"We have butter?"

"Yes. I brought it over from my flat. Don't you ever use it?"

"When I remember to buy it. You've probably noticed I'm rubbish when it comes to shopping for groceries."

Molly laughed. "We'll just have to change your habits. You can't live on take-away indefinitely, you know."

"Really?" questioned the detective with his eyebrow raised. "I seem to have survived so far."

"Well, that might be fine for a bachelor, but not a man who is going to be married. I'm here now, and I will take care of you."

"Really?" Sherlock put his arms around her from behind. "Are you going to take care of me in other ways too?" he murmured into her ear, before pressing his lips against it.

Despite herself, the pathologist felt a little tingle of anticipation. She only responded though with, "Everything has a double meaning with you, Sherlock Holmes! Now do you want butter on your toast or not?"

"Yes ma'am," answered the detective meekly.

She spread butter on his toast but allowed him to spread the jam himself, not sure how much he
Surprisingly, the sleuth put a generous dollop of strawberry jam on one slice, and the same amount of raspberry jam on the other. At Molly's look, he said defensively, "what? I like my jam."

Molly just laughed. They ate their breakfast and drank their coffee. Molly returned to the bedroom to finish brushing her hair. It was after nine-thirty and time to head out to the first florist appointment.

"Do you want to ride the Tube?" asked Molly.

"The Tube?" Sherlock scoffed. "Too many people. My mind palace gets overwhelmed with all that unnecessary information about them. Besides, it's hard to travel incognito in a crowd when you are famous."

"Modest, aren't you?" teased the pathologist.

"Just stating a fact." He hailed a passing taxi and soon the couple arrived at their first destination.

The florist was quite crowded and it had a big city, impersonal feel to it. It was also one of several florist with the same name, so part of a franchise. They had selected it, thinking there would be a wide variety of flowers and bouquet types to choose from.

The lady who met them for their appointment proceeded to tell them what "their brides" usually chose for wedding flowers. When Molly inquired about peach coloured roses and showed the peach fabric sample she had received the previous evening, the woman looked doubtful.

"I'm not sure we have roses in that colour. Wouldn't you prefer chrysanthemums? They are very popular with our summer brides. We also have a special right now on dahlias. If you order today, we can give you a ten percent discount."

"Thank you, but we have only just started looking at flowers today," said the pathologist. She did not at all like the pushy attitude of the saleslady. She liked even less the way she was trying to coerce them into ordering immediately.

Sherlock's eyes met hers, and he shook his head slightly.

"Thank you. I think we are going to have to discuss our options some more," Molly told the lady, and the couple made a hasty exit.

When they were walking to their next destination a few blocks away, Molly couldn't contain herself any longer.

"Can you believe that woman?" she asked Sherlock rhetorically. "She was just so pushy, and not willing to listen to what I wanted."

"I dislike intensely the method in which some companies try to do their business, by intimidating their customers into making hasty decisions," agreed her fiancé.

Molly nodded vigorously."I knew you were on the same page when you looked at me in the shop."

"Indeed. Let us hope we have better luck at our next appointment." Sherlock took Molly's hand and interlaced their fingers as they walked.

Molly noticed a glance of recognition from time to time. Sherlock had certainly not been used.
exaggerating about his fame. At one point, a little boy ran up to them in excitement, pulling away from his mother's hand.

"Mr. Holmes, Mr. Holmes," he said excitedly. "Can I have your autograph?"

Molly was sure the old Sherlock would have brushed off the little boy with a disdainful wave, and said he was too busy. Her Sherlock however, leaned down to the little boy and said, "Well, certainly young man. Does your mother have a piece of paper and a pen I can use?"

The little boy ran back to his mother, who produced pen and paper from her handbag.

Sherlock took the items from the child and asked, "What is your name, young man?"

"It's Robert, sir," said the little fellow.

The detective wrote, "Dear Robert, make your parents proud of you. Sherlock Holmes."

As the boy walked back to his mother, clutching his prize, Molly distinctly heard the mother ask, "How did you recognize him without his hat?"

They did not hear Robert's answer, because they had walked out of earshot.

"Hmm, perhaps I should be wearing the hat," mused the detective.

"Don't you dare," said Molly fiercely. "We don't need any more attention and besides, I hate the hat."

"As a matter of fact, so do I," confided the sleuth. "Why do you hate it?"

"Because it covers up your best asset, your incredible, gorgeous curly hair."

"You talk about my hair a lot," observed the detective. "Are you obsessed with my hair, Molly Hooper?"

"Maybe," said his fiancée, winking at him.

"I must admit, I'm a little disappointed if you only love me for my hair," said the detective, so obviously fishing for compliments.

"Oh, what a shame, I don't have time to tell you what else I love about you, we've arrived at our next appointment," said the pathologist, grinning at her pouting fiancé.

The second florist immediately looked more promising. There were displays of gorgeous bouquets in the front window, and it looked to be less crowded.

"This is the florist John and Mary used, isn't it?" asked Sherlock. "It is. I have a much better feeling about this place."

A sales lady bustled up to them. She was short, plump and had a big smile on her face. "Good morning Mr. Holmes. I recognize you from all those newspaper articles. You are a credit to our city." Turning to Molly, she said, "You must be Dr. Hooper. My name is Diane and I will be glad to serve you today."

Diane ushered them to a small office in the rear of the shop. "First of all, do you have any ideas about the flowers you would like to use in your wedding?"
"As a matter of fact I do," said Molly, glad to have been asked the question. "My bridesmaids will be wearing gowns in this peach colour." She showed the saleslady the peach chiffon swatch.

She continued. "I was thinking of maybe having roses in that peach colour, and also roses in a colour that would contrast well."

"I'm sure we can get that colour for you. My suggestion would be cream roses as a contrast, along with orange roses. Let me see if I can find those colours for you and put them together."

Diane left the small office and Molly looked over at Sherlock. "So far, so good," he said, answering her unspoken question.

The saleslady returned a few minutes later. "Here you go," she said. "I found these colours. I believe the peach is an almost exact match with the fabric sample." There were three roses of each colour bundled together, forming a small posy.

"They look beautiful together," said Molly, holding the little bouquet in front of her. She closed her eyes and tried to imagine a bigger bouquet, and felt sure it would work out well.

"We can add some greenery and tiny flowers like gypsophila if you would like, although personally I think the roses need no embellishment," said Diane.

"I think so too," agreed the pathologist. "How many roses do you recommend in a bridal bouquet?"

"We usually do two dozen. It's a nice number to evenly split different colour combinations. For instance, with three colours you would usually get eight of each. Of course, you can have more of one colour if you prefer. For your bridesmaids I would suggest eighteen flowers instead. Yours should obviously be larger, as is customary for the bride."

Molly was very pleased with the way things were going. She looked over at Sherlock, who was leaning with elbows on his knees, fingers steepled.

"What do you think, Sherlock?" She didn't want him to feel left out of the decision-making process.

"Any flowers will look good if you are holding them," he said. "I am here as your support, and whatever you decide is fine with me. Plus, I'm here to pay for them when you've made your decision."

"You've got yourself a keeper there, Dr. Hooper," approved the saleslady.

"I know," smiled the pathologist. "Could I have a price for three bouquets in the amount of roses you have suggested? I will go with having even amounts of each."

"Certainly. Would you also like boutonnières for the groom and his groomsmen? If so, I recommend cream for your husband-to-be and peach for the groomsmen, however many there are. We always add a little greenery to the boutonnières as well."

"Yes please. Sherlock has only his best man and one groomssman, so we would be needing three."

"Let me go and check prices for the flowers and I will be right back with a quote for you." Diane left the office once again.

Sherlock immediately said, "Whatever the quote is, even if it's outrageously high, don't give it a second thought. This shop deserves our business. The saleslady has been very helpful."
"I agree," said Molly. "One more thing we'll be able to check off the list."

Diane returned with a quote that was very reasonable. "Would you like to think about it and come back?" she asked.

"That is not necessary," Sherlock told her, taking charge of the conversation. "We would like to go ahead and order the flowers now."

"Wonderful," enthused the saleslady. "When is your wedding? We offer free delivery in the London metropolitan area on the morning of your wedding. Our drivers will contact you when they are on the way. If you are having a morning wedding, we can arrange earlier delivery."

"The wedding will be at three o'clock, so morning will be fine," said Molly, giving Diane the details of their wedding date and the address in Baker Street.

"August is a lovely month for a wedding," remarked the saleslady with a smile. "Let me just get the details of your order into the computer and you can check it before I print it out, to make sure it is correct. Oh, I almost forgot. Would you like corsages as well? Is there a mother of the bride and groom?"

"Indeed. Our mothers will both be there. Any suggestions for corsages?"

"We usually use the same flower as the bridal party for the corsage. When you have roses, there is also the option of using matching miniature roses. We could do an arrangement of a miniature rose in each colour, with some greenery around it. Would you like a quote on that?"

"No need," the detective told the woman authoritatively. "Just add it to the bill."

"Please give me a minute, said Diane. "I'm going to turn on the computer in here and write up the order on it."

Several minutes later, the flowers were ordered and the delivery scheduled. Sherlock paid for them and was handed a receipt with the details of the order.

"Thank you very much for your business. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to call me and I will do everything I can to make sure everything is perfect for your wedding day. May God bless you both as you prepare for your special day."

"Thank you so much," said Molly, as the lady shook hands with both of them.

The couple left the shop, well pleased, and began walking in the direction of their next appointment which was supposed to be in twenty minutes.

"I think Diane is a Christian," remarked Molly.

"I deduced that quite quickly myself. I am certain of it."

"You knew before she said 'God bless you'?"

"Molly, my sweet, you see but you do not observe," remarked the detective, using his usual catch phrase. "I observed upon meeting Diane that she wore a cross necklace. When we were shown to her office, there was a framed phrase on the wall that said 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Luke 6:31.' Of course, that is a well known saying, but the fact that it attributed the saying to a Bible verse was a clear indicator of her personal beliefs. In fact, I was not aware of the saying's origins until I saw that text in the frame. It seems a lot of them are direct quotes from the
"Yes, they are. But would you tell me how you knew the office belonged to Diane, and that she
was not just an employee?"

"Elementary my dear fiancée." There was a plaque on the desk with her name, Diane Carter. In
fact, I would hazard a guess that she is either the owner, or related to the owner. I'm sure you can
tell me why."

"Yes. 'Carter's Flowers for Every Occasion,' of course," said Molly.

"I felt it was important to support the business of a fellow believer. The fact that her quote was not
excessive was yet another indication of her genuine and fair-minded nature. Her whole manner was
polite and not at all pushy."

"It all seems so obvious when you have explained it," commented the pathologist.

"I have been told that before. Perhaps I should not be so forthcoming with explain my deductions.
It makes me seem completely ordinary."

"You will never be ordinary, Sherlock. You are extraordinary, remarkable and a hundred other
wonderful things all tied up in one adorable, curly-haired package."

"And we are back to the hair yet again," said the detective with an exaggerated groan.

"Always," teased his fiancée as they reached their next destination.

The bakery had a constant stream of customers coming in and out. The front counter held a wide
selection of delicious pastries and other sweet confections.

The couple was a few minutes early for their appointment, but they went to the counter to
announce their presence.

An older lady was summoned from the back of the shop. Like Diane, she greeted Sherlock and
Molly and showed them to an office.

"So, you are looking for a wedding cake today. Are you looking for a traditional fruitcake or
something else? We also do sponge cakes and individual cupcakes."

"Cupcakes?" queried Molly in surprise. "That just doesn't sound like something for a wedding, at
least to me."

"You'd be surprised how many young couples are choosing that route these days."

"Well, not me," said the pathologist firmly, looking at Sherlock to see if he agreed.

"I too, find it inconceivable that someone would choose cupcakes for a wedding. However, I am
also not a fan of traditional fruitcake."

Molly looked at her fiancé in surprise. She absolutely detested fruitcake, but had figured they
would have one, because that was the tradition.

"In that case, seeing as I also don't like fruitcake, let's break with tradition on that one. After all, it
is our wedding."

"I agree completely," the detective said.
"Well, let's go for a sponge cake," decided the pathologist as Sherlock nodded his agreement.

"One thing about sponge cakes, we obviously do not use fondant on them, so it is impossible to do lattice work and other fine detail. Instead we use whipped cream between all the layers and you can have fruit decorating it, or flower accents."

The woman, whose name was Margaret, produced a book and showed the engaged couple some pictures of various decorated sponge cakes.

After turning a few pages, Molly realized to her disappointment that she just did not like the look of the sponge cakes. She sighed. "They just don't look like wedding cakes to me," she told Sherlock.

"I have to agree," he responded.

"I guess we go back to," she started and they both finished, "fruitcake."

That decided, the couple was shown another book with traditional cakes.

"Well, at least we can have a cake that looks good even if it tastes terrible," quipped the detective.

"Bit Not Good, sweetheart," murmured Molly.

Margaret seemed a little offended at his words and Sherlock quickly apologized.

"I am sorry. Just because we do not personally care for fruitcake, I am sure there are people out there who really like it."

"I have an idea. It is really the candied peel in the fruitcake I have never cared for."

Sherlock stared at her. "That is what I object to as well. I hated it when my mother would put it in our Christmas pudding."

"So, Margaret, perhaps we could have the candied peel omitted from the fruitcake?"

"Oh, that is no problem at all. You are not the first couple to ask for that modification."

"Great! Problem solved." Molly gave her fiancé a bright smile, which he returned, squeezing her hand.

Leafing through the sample book, Molly's attention was caught by a three tier cake. There was a beautiful latticework design around it and fondant flowers that cascaded down the layers, from small ones, to larger ones. She envisioned her roses as the flowers, instead of the ones shown.

"Sherlock, if they could do these flowers as roses instead, would you like something like this?"

"The detective gave her an easy smile. "I do like it. Quite elegant, in fact."

Molly showed the picture to Margaret. "My bridal bouquet has peach, orange and cream roses. Would it be possible to substitute those for the ones in this picture?"

"Easily done," replied the saleslady. "Do you have any way to show me the exact colours of your roses, so we can try and match them as closely as possible?"

"I didn't think of that," said Molly, disappointed. "I should have thought to take a photo."

Unexpectedly, Sherlock spoke up. "I did."
As he produced his phone, Molly stared at him in surprise. "When did you take a photo? I didn't see it."

"When your eyes were closed and you were holding the posy," responded the detective. He found the photo and showed both Molly and Margret. It was actually a very pretty picture, even with Molly's closed eyes. She looked dreamy and content with the posy in her hands and the flowers were clearly shown.

"Can you send that picture to our business email?" asked Margaret. She told the sleuth the email address and Sherlock sent it off immediately.

"Perfect," the saleslady declared. "Let me work up a quote for you. We do deliver on the day of the wedding to the place of your reception."

"Yes, I am aware of that," said Sherlock. "Your business did the cake for my friend's wedding a little over a year ago."

"Oh really? Who is your friend?" the woman asked curiously.

"Dr. John Watson," responded the detective.

"I remember him. He and his fiancée were a lovely couple. Wasn't her name Mary?"

"That is correct,"

"How are they getting on with married life?" asked Margaret.

"I am sorry to say Mary died accidentally soon after they had a baby." said Sherlock as a shadow of sadness passed across his features. Molly could tell he was uncomfortable with the train of conversation.

The sales lady put her hands up to her mouth and said, “Oh, I am so sorry to hear that.”

Before the lady could say anything else, Molly quickly said, "We'd appreciate it if we can get the quote for the cake. We are expected at another appointment shortly."

"Of course." Margaret left the office to talk with her cake decorating team.

"Are you okay Sherlock?" questioned the pathologist with concern. Her fiancé looked miles away.

He blinked several times, then looked at her. "I'm okay. Sometimes it's just hard to think about, how she died in front of me, saving my life."

"You never did tell me exactly what happened. If it would help to talk about it, I'm here for you."

"I will bear that in mind. Thank you, my sweet."

Molly smiled at the endearment and took his hand, squeezing it comfortably.

Margaret returned with a reasonable quote for the cake. The engaged couple accepted the quote and made the arrangements for the cake to be made, then delivered on the day of the wedding to the reception hall. Sherlock, as usual, used his credit card to pay the bill.

They bought some currant buns and coffee for a late lunch, then left the shop.
After sitting down to eat at an outside table, Molly said, "We should call and cancel our appointment with the other wedding bakery."

Sherlock brought up the phone number on his phone and made the call. "My phone's almost dead, so I'm going to turn it off. I meant to put it on the charger last night, but I was rather, uh, distracted. Remind me to do that when we get home." He powered off the device and returned it to his pocket.

"Okay. I still can't believe you took that picture of me at the flower shop."

Sherlock shrugged. "I wanted to have a picture of you that I can put on my home screen, like you have of me."

"Surely a photo with my eyes open would be better? You could have taken one when we were dressed for the opera."

"I didn't think of it at the time. I was too busy admiring your beauty," flirted the detective, and Molly laughed.

Having finished their buns and coffee, Sherlock said to his fiancée, "I guess we have the rest of the afternoon free. Should we go home now?"

"Yes. I think we've done enough walking around for one day. It has been a productive one, hasn't it?"

"Most certainly. I am ready to put my feet up and just relax." The detective hailed a cab and soon the couple was on their way back to Baker Street.

Chapter End Notes

More wedding to-do list things accomplished. When I researched cakes, I was surprised that England, like Australia, primarily uses fruitcakes for weddings. Alternatively there are cup cakes and sponge cakes. I, like Molly did not think they looked like wedding cakes. In America we have lovely cakes with buttercream icings and the like, and different fillings. So yeah, it's gonna be fruitcake sans the mixed peel. I hate mixed peel haha. What do my readers think of fruitcake?

What do you think of Molly’s choice of flowers?
A sigh of relief escaped Sherlock's mouth as he closed the door of the flat behind Molly and himself. It was good to be home. He had enjoyed his time with his fiancée, but the appointments had not held much interest for him. However, having a traditional wedding with all the bells and whistles was important to Molly and he wanted to support her. She deserved it.

All that talk of flowers and the right colours, then the damned fruitcake they had to settle for, was arduous. He was happy just to foot the bill and let Molly make the decisions.

Molly looked at her him suspiciously, after hearing his sigh. "You weren't bored today were you?"

"What? No, no," he assured her. "I could never be bored when we are together, it's just...well I thought I was done with weddings and everything that goes along with them, after John and Mary got married."

"Poor Sherlock," she sympathized. She led him to his chair to sit down, then seated herself on his lap. Sherlock was a little surprised. He was usually the one to initiate their kissing. This time it was Molly who threaded her hands through his dark curls as she proceeded to kiss him ardently. He was only too glad to respond to her advances, holding her tightly with one arm, as his other hand caressed the side of her face.

When they paused, he asked, "To what do I owe the pleasure of your delightful kisses?"

Molly snuggled against him. "Because you are so sweet and thoughtful. You didn't really want to do all that wedding stuff today, but you didn't complain once."

"I have no reason to complain when I am spending quality time with the woman I love. So, now that we are home, are you going to tell me what you said you didn't have time for earlier today?"

"And what, pray tell, was that?" Molly asked him playfully.

"Minx," he said, taking her left hand and threading it through the fingers of his right one. "You were going to tell me what else you love about me, besides my incredibly sexy hair."

"I did not say incredibly sexy hair," she laughed, "although it is true. You are a total package, Mr. Holmes."

When Molly seemed disinclined to say anything else, Sherlock pouted at her. "I need details, woman."
"Why," she questioned. "So I can give you a bigger ego than you already have?" she teased.

"I do not have a big ego. Maybe I used to, in regards to my sleuthing abilities, but I've never considered myself to be any better looking than other men."

"Alright, I'll tell you then." Molly raised her right hand to his lips, because her left was still caught in his. "I love your full lips, their curve and softness." She traced a line along the length of the detective's lips, which made his skin tingle. Then she kissed them softly.

"I love the amazing colour of your eyes, the way they change colour from blue to green, depending on the light around you." Molly brought her face closer and he instinctively closed his eyes as she kissed one, then the other.

"Then there are your incredibly high, aristocratic cheekbones." She pressed a kiss to each of them. "And your elegant hands with their long fingers, just made for playing your violin, and for holding me."

She continued. "There is so much to love about you, Sherlock. There's your sharp intellect, the way you care about your friends even when you don't realize it. You are so full of life and vitality, and you always want to do what is right."

She paused for a moment, then said in a different tone, "Would you tell me what happened last night when I got home? I really don't remember anything until after I was sick. I suppose that act was what removed enough alcohol from my system to get my faculties working again. I remember saying 'What was I thinking?' to you, but not why I said it."

Sherlock contemplated whether he should tell her the truth, then decided he did not want to lie to her, ever. "You insisted that you were not drunk, so I, um, decided to prove that, in fact, you were."

Molly looked at him cautiously. "How?"

"Well, I started kissing you..."

"Kissing me is not a test. We are always kissing," broke in Molly.

"Let me finish. I kissed you and asked what you would do if I did this." Sherlock demonstrated his actions of the previous night, pulling up her blouse with his left hand and sliding it up to gently rub on her back.

"Well, that isn't so bad," said Molly. "I quite like feeling your hand on my skin."

"Still not finished," Sherlock told her. "I confess, I did something I should not have done."

"What?" Molly's eyes were wide and questioning.

"Well, I," he flushed slightly at the remembrance, even though it brought a wave of desire rushing through him,"I unclasped your bra and rubbed your back some more." To his utter shock, Molly burst out laughing. "You rubbed my back," she shorted between bouts of giggles.

Sherlock felt rather offended. "I unhooked your bra," he reminded her, "and it was no easy feat either. I have no idea how you women put those things on every day."

"You get used to it," said Molly, still laughing. "Maybe I had better let you start practicing now. I..."
can guarantee it will be ten times harder with a whole long row of those hooks and eyes to undo, when I buy a longline bra or corset to go under my wedding dress."

Sherlock looked at her in trepidation. "You will be expecting me to unhook them?"

Molly giggled again. "Unless you want Kaitlyn or Kayla to help. One of them will undoubtedly help me fasten the bra before I put on my dress, but I'm not sure you'd want a third party present to attend to removing the bra on our wedding night."

"Certainly not," replied Sherlock instantly. Then to himself he muttered, "so practice is key."

"Tell you what," offered Molly helpfully. "At night, I will make sure I am wearing a bra under my nightie, and you can practice unhooking it."

"That would be acceptable."

"Well, that's all good then. And you just rubbed my back last night, so that's all good too." She grinned with relief.

"Er, not quite." was the serious reply.

Sherlock heard the nervous prickle of apprehension in Molly's voice. "There's more?"

"Nothing happened, it was just words. No need to rehash it," he hedged.

"I want to know what was said," Molly told him in a tone that brooked no further argument on the matter.

"Very well," he sighed. "I...I asked you if you would say no if I were to seduce you." He flushed.

"And?" she pressed, her brow furrowing apprehensively.

"You said you didn't want to wait anymore, and you asked me to make love to you."

Molly clapped her hands to her mouth. "What was I thinking?" Then she gave a wry smile. "I just used the exact same words I used last night."

"Don't worry my darling. I would never have taken advantage of you when you were under the influence of alcohol. In my eyes, consent while intoxicated is invalid. It would have been tantamount to rape if I'd gone through with it."

Molly looked at him and said seriously, "I'm not sure if I agree with you entirely. There is a whole world of ethical debate when it comes to that, but ultimately, I was the one who drank too much. Therefore, I would at least have had to admit to partial responsibility."

"I guess it is a lesson learned for both of us then. You need to keep away from cocktails, and I need to keep away from you when you don't," teased Sherlock, trying to lighten the mood.

"Very funny. I seem to recall you implying that I liked a drink when you were asking me to figure out how much you and John could drink without getting ill, when you took him out for his stag night. Furthermore, judging from the pictures Greg showed me later of you and John in the overnight lock-up, you don't hold your liquor any better than I do."

"Touché, my sweet. In my defense, I did say I lacked the practical experience."

Molly slipped off of her fiancé's lap. "All this serious discussion is making me restless, and I've
probably crushed your poor legs, sitting on your lap for so long."

"I'd tell you if I was having a problem," he assured her.

Molly walked over to Sherlock's violin case and brought it to him. "Will you play for me?"

"Any requests?"

"Something soothing, maybe classical or your own composition?"

Sherlock took out his violin and bow, then proceeded to play.

The music was so beautiful, and Molly recognized the tune. When Sherlock finished, she asked, "What was the name of that piece? I've heard it, but can't place it."

"It is Bach's 'Air on a G String'. It isn't usually done as a violin solo."

"It was exquisite, nonetheless. You have such a gift for music. It's really quite extraordinary. God certainly blessed you with an abundance of talents."

"If you like my playing, you should hear Eurus play. She is better than I am."

"I find that hard to believe," she remarked.

"Maybe someday, you will be able to hear us play together if she ever comes back to reality," Sherlock told his fiancée gravely.

"I'd like that," she responded.

Sherlock put his violin away while Molly turned on the television and started idly flipping through channels. Nothing caught her interest.

Sherlock sauntered over and led her to the sofa, pulling her next to him. "Nothing worth watching?" he queried.

"Not unless you are into "Say Yes to the Dress" marathons. It's the New York version they are showing."

"I am more into 'Say Yes to the Kiss' quipped her fiancé, as he proceeded to do just that.

As the couple wrapped their arms around each other, they were absorbed in their own little world. Their lips combined fiercely, hungrily, demonstrating their mutual need. It was quite a shock therefore to hear the sound of a throat being awkwardly cleared in the room with them.

"You might endeavour to lock your door if you intend to indulge in constant displays of affection."

Sherlock and Molly sprang apart immediately and Sherlock narrowed his eyes at his older brother.

"What on earth are you doing here? Even if the door wasn't locked, it is customary to knock. Did you even ring the doorbell?"

"As it happens, brother mine, your landlady happened to come home with some bags of shopping at the same time I arrived. When I told her I was here to see you, she let me in."

"Knocking would still have been the polite thing to do, Mycroft."
The older Holmes just shrugged. "I've never been required to do so before. You've always been able to tell when I was coming up the stairs. Besides, I tried to call you first, but it went straight to voicemail. I even texted you with no response."

Sherlock lifted his hands in surrender at his brother's implacable logic. "My phone was dying, so I shut it off. I was going to put it on the charger when I got home, but I forgot."

"Apparently," Mycroft flicked a glance over at his future sister-in-law, and gave her a slight nod of acknowledgement.

"So, why are you here then?" queried Sherlock.

"Have you deposited your cheque yet?"

"What does it matter to you if I have or haven't?" demanded the younger Holmes querulously.

"I assume from your tone that you have not," Mycroft said matter-of-factly.

Molly laid a soothing hand on her Sherlock's arm. "Sherlock, your brother is just asking a question. Remember, he went to a lot of trouble to procure that money for you." She was obviously aware Sherlock was being belligerent to hide his embarrassment at being caught in a passionate embrace with her.

Smart woman, he reflected to himself, then realized he had said the words out loud when Mycroft looked puzzled and Molly's hand tightened on his arm.

He flushed and said, "I have the cheque here somewhere."

"You left it in your pocket," Molly told him. "I found it when I was putting some clothes in the washing basket. It's over on the mantelpiece."

"Nice to know you hold such a high regard for your future financial comfort," said Mycroft dryly.

"I've been busy," retorted Sherlock.

"Nevertheless, I suggest you venture to deposit the cheque tomorrow."

"I shall do so. I think I shall use it to open a joint account with Molly." Sherlock looked at her. They had not discussed combining their finances, but he felt it important that they should share everything, including their assets. He was pleased to see a smile and slight nod from his fiancée, indicating that she was not opposed to the idea.

"A joint account? How - traditional of you." Mycroft looked at Molly and said, "I suggest you keep some of your finances separate. That way, when my brother drains the account in order to finance his drug habit once again, you will not be left penniless."

Molly gave the older man a quelling glare. "How dare you insinuate that Sherlock would fall back into old habits. I believe in him absolutely. He will never be tempted again to return to that dark path. He has me now."

Sherlock looked at his sweet fiancée standing up for him like a tigress defending her cubs. He felt such a wash of adoration come over him, for the faith she had in him. He wrapped his arms around her from behind, dropped a kiss on the top of her head and whispered, "Thank you, my love."

Mycroft seemed rather discombobulated by both Molly's words and his brother's subsequent
actions. "Apologies," he muttered. "It seems I have rather underestimated the depth of your feelings towards one another."

"Do you really believe Molly would have consented to marry me if she thought I might revert to those dangerous habits? She has seen me at my worst, and she is no fool."

"Undoubtedly not," agreed Mycroft. "You are to be commended Dr. Hooper for your faith in my brother. I'll admit, I had my doubts about your relationship, but it seems you bring out the best in him."

"Molly has done more for me than you know. Thanks to her, I have become a Christian."

"Mummy mentioned that to me when she called me earlier today. I must confess, one of the reasons I came over to see you, was to find out if it was true. I suppose it must be, seeing as you have been forthcoming about it. You do seem different somehow," he said with a note of surprise in his voice.

"I am," agreed Sherlock. He was still holding Molly against his body protectively. "Well, if there's nothing else...?"

"Actually, there are a couple more things I need to talk to you about. First of all, I wanted to let you know that I made arrangements for your young friend Victor's remains to be buried in a cemetery near Musgrave Hall. As you know, he was an orphan, so I took care of the arrangements and paid for a gravestone to be made as well. I thought you would want to know, seeing as you were adamant the body not remain in the well."

"Of course I wanted his body to be buried properly. He was my friend. If you will furnish me with the details of where he is buried, I would like to pay my respects."

"I'll do that, but the gravestone will take at least two more weeks until it is put on the grave site. These things take time."

"And yet, you arranged a headstone to be ready and laid on my own burial plot only days after my 'funeral,'" remarked Sherlock dryly.

"I also paid an exorbitant amount for it to be done quickly, because we needed to show the 'proof' of your death. A headstone with your date of death is rather hard to argue with."

"At least you didn't have my date of birth on it. I was able to keep my birthday a secret until this year." At Mycroft's raised eyebrow he said, "Don't even ask how it came out. Suffice to say, Molly insisted on taking me and John out to celebrate with cake."

"Going back to the subject of Victor, I will let you know once the gravestone is in place, and the location in the cemetery."

"Thank you, Mycroft. I do appreciate that you took care of everything. So, what was the other thing that was so urgent you felt compelled to visit me?"

"I'd like you to check your bank account to make sure your first payment from the Crown Estate has gone through. It is past the first of the month and I want to make sure there have been no delays in processing the transaction."

"very well," said Sherlock, reluctantly releasing Molly. "It still irks me that you know my bank account number."
"One of the benefits of my position. I will be happy to change your monthly deposit to a joint account once you have set it up for yourself and your future wife."

"Fine. I will give you the number once the account is created." Sherlock went over to his laptop, which was on the coffee table. He really needed to buy a new desk. It was the one item of furniture Molly had not owned to replace his destroyed one. Opening up the laptop, he went to his bank's website, put in his login ID and password and checked the account. There was indeed a deposit which had been made on the first of the month for £10,000.

Molly, in the meantime, had asked Mycroft if he would like some tea, and had disappeared into the kitchen to make some for the three of them.

"The money is there," Sherlock told his brother. "Although I'm sure you could have checked it for yourself."

"Just because I know your account number, does not mean I would go into your account without just cause. The only time I have done so has been when I have been looking for signs that you have been withdrawing money to furnish your drug habit," said Mycroft with a trace of indignation in his tone. "While your fiancée is absent from the room," he added in a softer tone of voice, "have you decided on a honeymoon destination yet?"

"Not yet," responded Sherlock. "I have booked our wedding night though. Next week, when Molly is on nightshift, I plan to book the honeymoon. Most likely I will do it on Monday, as John and I are headed to Dartmoor on Tuesday for a case."

"Very well. Please let me know when you have decided on your destination and I will make all the arrangements. Incidentally, where will you be spending your wedding night? I will have to make sure I have a vehicle waiting to transport you to the airstrip the following day, providing you wish to fly."

"The Ritz," responded Sherlock.

"Quite the romantic venue," commented his older brother.

"You've been there?" There was surprise in Sherlock's tone.

"Brother mine, I am not the cold fish you always suppose me to be. I have had my fair share of mutually beneficial liaisons. The Ritz has been my choice on more than one occasion."

Sherlock raised an eyebrow. "My big brother, the closet romantic," he quipped. "I am sure Lady Smallwood is most appreciative, being used to a certain type of lifestyle," he added shrewdly.

Mycroft flushed. It was obvious Sherlock had hit the nail on the head. "My relationship with Elizabeth, I mean Lady Smallwood, is not the issue at hand," retorted the older Holmes sibling.

"So, the ice man has a heart after all," grinned Sherlock, remembering the words of Irene Adler from a few years before, giving his brother's arm a friendly punch.

"As does the virgin," countered Mycroft with a faint smile.

"Well, those titles will not fit either of us for much longer then," commented Sherlock without thinking, then mentally kicking himself immediately after the words were spoken.

"You really are one, then?" asked his brother, in an interested tone. "I mean, you were a university student once. Then there was that schemer, Janine, and now of course you are engaged."
"Mycroft, my world does not revolve around sex." Even as he said the words, he thought that was not entirely true; his thoughts had turned to it quite frequently over the past two weeks. "I was far too busy with my studies to be interested in women. Janine was a means to an end, as you well know. She was Magnusen's personal assistant. She definitely wanted things to go further, though. As for Molly, we are waiting until we get married."

"I suppose that makes her a virgin too," mused Mycroft.

"Not that it's any of your concern, but yes, that's what Christians have a tendency to do, to wait for marriage."

"Well if you need any tips..."

"I am quite well acquainted with the basics and much more. The internet can be quite illuminating, and I have, in the past, studied such things from a strictly intellectual perspective. You know, pheromones and the sex drive. I do not think I shall be lacking in that department."

"Lacking in what department?" asked Molly, as she came into the room, carefully balancing three cups of tea, which she set on the coffee table.

"Never mind," said Sherlock, shooting his brother a warning look. "Ginger nuts?" he asked hopefully.

"You mean you are willing to share them with your brother?" teased Molly.

"Of course," replied Sherlock magnanimously.

Molly returned to the kitchen to get the biscuits.

Mycroft took his tea cup and sipped it thoughtfully. "I must say, brother mine, you are surprising me a great deal today. I don't remember the last time we had such a-" he paused then continued, "filial conversation."

"You've surprised me too, Mycroft. I would like to develop our relationship to a closer one. It would make Mummy and Daddy happy. Besides, if Molly and I are to have children one day, I would like them to have a close relationship with their only uncle, seeing as Molly is an only child."

Molly returned with several ginger nuts on a plate. "Biscuits," she announced unnecessarily.

Sherlock immediately grabbed two, then began to eat them as he picked up his own cup of tea.

Mycroft selected a biscuit and munched on it. "These are delicious," he proclaimed to Molly. "Did you make them?"

"I certainly did," she responded with a smile. "My first effort too, I might add."

"Well, you are quite the baker," the older Holmes told her.

Sherlock could see Molly was pleased by the compliment, as she offered Mycroft a second biscuit which he accepted. The detective thought a bit grumpily that one biscuit should have been enough for his brother, then he stopped himself. How uncharitable I am, he thought to himself with chagrin. Wasn't part of being a Christian being more willing to give than receive?

After the trio had finished their tea, Mycroft announced his intention to leave.
"I must be going,"he said. "I have a dinner date."

"Lady Smallwood?" asked his brother with a sly grin.

"Perhaps," the older sibling said, as he took his leave, shaking Sherlock's hand and surprisingly, giving Molly a kiss on the cheek. "Take care of my brother," Sherlock heard him murmur in her ear.

"You know I will," she responded. "Goodbye Mycroft."

Chapter End Notes

What did you think of Molly’s response to Sherlock with the seduction conversation and who would have been to blame if they had actually made love?

Did you enjoy the “sex” conversation between Sherlock and Mycroft? I thought it would be funny if Mycroft had a bit of fun with the fact that his brother was a virgin.

Thanks to Ashblood, I added in talk about Victor and his body receiving a proper burial.

Updated for better flow and corrections 7/17/18
Evening Experiment - Sherlock (Wednesday)

Chapter Summary

The engaged couple discuss children and French kissing, among other things.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“So, what were you and Mycroft talking about so intently?” Molly asked, once the older Holmes brother had exited the flat.

“Oh, family stuff,” the detective told her evasively. He wasn’t about to tell Molly about their sex conversation. He decided to share his thoughts on Lady Smallwood instead. “I rather think Mycroft is more serious about Lady Smallwood than he likes to admit. He even slipped up and called her by her name, Elizabeth.”

“Really?” asked Molly with interest. “Who is she?”

“She is a colleague of his. Magnussen was blackmailing her over some photos of her husband and an underage young lady he had been seeing, years before he met his wife. He apparently had no idea the young lady was underage.”

“I think I saw something in the newspaper a few months ago about the suicide of a Lord Smallwood, come to think of it. That was quite a scandal. Is this Lady Smallwood his widow then?”

“Indeed she is,” affirmed the detective.

“Well, I hope Mycroft is able to open his heart to love the way you have done.”

“I shall be interested to see if he asks Lady Smallwood to be his guest at our wedding. Enough talk of my brother anyway. I’d rather talk about us.” He moved as if to take Molly in his arms.

“Hang on,” she stalled him. “You need to put your phone on the charger. We don’t need any more uninvited guests.”

“Yes. That was a little awkward when Mycroft just turned up. I’m glad we were only kissing.” He gave Molly a sultry look. “Not that I’d be opposed to rubbing your bare back again.”

Molly laughed at him. “Just get that darned phone on the charger before you forget again, while I lock the door.”

The detective did so, plugging his phone into the charging port attached to an outlet in the kitchen. He heard Molly locking the door of the flat as he did so.

The pathologist came into the kitchen and asked, ”Should we put the leftover chips in the oven to reheat? I saw them in the fridge. It looks like there is enough for us to share.”

He nodded. “As I told you on that fateful day when I found out you were engaged to that poor
substitute for me, I always get extra portions from that fish shop. Joe would like to meet you, by the way.”

Molly turned on the oven, got the chips from the fridge and spread them on a tray she had pulled out of the cupboard. Then she placed them in the oven, setting a timer for fifteen minutes.

Sherlock watched her as she went about her task. He was a bit embarrassed when, after putting the chips in the oven, his fiancée said in a tone of rebuke, “You really shouldn’t talk about Tom that way. He had his faults, but he was there for me when you weren’t. I hope he finds another woman, someone who will love him for himself and not because he reminds her of someone else. I know it hurt him when we broke up, but really, it was going to happen sooner or later. Our last conversation didn’t end well, but of course, that’s to be expected.”

Sherlock briefly wondered what she meant by that, but instead said penitently, “I’m sorry, my love. You’re right. I’m just being a jealous git. When I saw your engagement ring, it was a shock, and even more of one when I saw what the fellow looked like. You probably would have been perfectly happy with him, if I hadn’t returned.”

She came to him then, putting her arms around his waist. “He wasn’t my soulmate - you are. He didn’t make my heart race the way you do. You have no need to be jealous. That said, I guess it’s human nature. I feel pangs of jealousy when I think about you and Janine.”

”Not quite the same thing. I wasn’t engaged to her.”

“John told me you were planning to propose to her, the night you got shot.”

“Just part of the plan to get into Magnussen’s inner office. I would never have married her, of course. Anyway, she was a schemer herself.”

“I still can’t believe the person who shot you was never caught.”

Sherlock felt uncomfortable with the way the conversation was going. He didn’t want to lie to Molly, but he also didn’t want to destroy his fiancée’s perception of her late friend. He decided distraction was the best way to deal with things. “And I can’t believe we are just standing here in the kitchen, when I could be making your heart race.” With that, the detective put his hands to his fiancée’s face and gave her a fiery kiss that made both of their hearts race, as well as effectively putting an end to the dangerous turn of conversation.

Sherlock continued to kiss Molly, pressing her back against the counter as they entwined themselves closely.

The sound of the timer going off reminded them it was time to eat. “Do you want tomato sauce?” asked the pathologist.

“I’m fine with or without.”

‘How about we share a plate and I’ll put the tomato sauce on the side if you want to dip your chips?’ suggested Molly.

“Fine by me, love. We can eat in front of the telly and watch random crap.”

Molly laughed and got the hot chips onto a plate with the tomato sauce while Sherlock grabbed a couple cans of Coke from the fridge. “I hope Coke is okay with you?”

“Sure thing. Look at us being all domestic,” teased his fiancée.
The detective turned on the television and flipped channels. “‘Big Bang Theory’ is on if you want to watch a repeat episode,” he told Molly as she brought in the chips.

“I love that show,” said his fiancée. “Sheldon reminds me of you. How ironic, he just proposed to his girlfriend at the end of last season.”

“I’ve heard you and Kaitlyn in the lab talking about the show. Not sure if I should be flattered or insulted by being compared to Sheldon.”

“Well, there are definitely some parallels,” Molly laughed. ”He’s brilliant, for one thing, but not like you. He doesn’t do things to help others the way you do. He is very superior in his manner too.”

Sherlock pouted. “So you think I act superior?”

“Well you certainly used to, and don’t pretend you didn’t. Making your deductions even when nobody asked you to, like that Christmas.”

“I’m never going to live that one down, am I? I did apologize.”

“I’m long past the hurt from that time, just citing an example of the way you used to act.”

“I was a jealous moron, I admit it, and totally wrong about you needing to compensate for the size of your mouth and breasts. From personal experience, I have to say your lips fit mine perfectly. As for your breasts, well, I have not had the opportunity to feel them, but they look beautiful to me.”

Molly flushed with embarrassment.

“Sweetheart, don’t feel embarrassed about something over which you had no control. At least I was the only one who saw you that way after that bastard ripped your shirt open.”

“True,” Molly said reluctantly. “If Greg had seen me that way, I would never have been able to look him in the eye again.”

Sherlock decided it was time to get back to what they had been discussing. “So, how else am I like Sheldon?”

“Well, he was very repressed in the beginning. I think it took him three seasons to get a girlfriend and two and a half years after that to kiss her. One thing he’s ahead of you in though is that he finally slept with Amy on her birthday almost two years after their first kiss. Then we come to his proposal which just happened recently, a year and a half after they slept together.”

“Wow, how long has that show been going on?”

“Ten years,” laughed the pathologist. “So I’ve been getting to know the character of Sheldon for longer than I’ve known you.”

“Do you still think I’m like him?” asked Sherlock, popping a chip in his mouth.

“Of course not. Besides, you are much better looking,” grinned Molly as she also took a chip and ate it slowly.

“Yeah, yeah, my gorgeous curly hair, I know,” the detective deadpanned.

Molly laughed again and then said, “Wow, these really are fantastic chips. They don’t even need tomato sauce.”
“It’s the chicken salt Joe uses,” the detective explained. “Imported from Australia, but don’t tell him I told you. He made me promise not to tell his secret.”

The television show played in the background but Sherlock was not paying attention to Sheldon or any of the other characters. He picked up a chip and fed it to his fiancée, who did the same to him. They continued in that fashion, until the plate was empty, and all that was left on it was the tomato sauce.

“Mmm,” sighed Molly contentedly. “So now I know to not put any sauce on Joe’s chips. I’ve never had better.”

“Told you it was a fantastic chip shop.”

“Perhaps if you hadn’t left me standing in the hallway that day, I might have been so impressed that I would have ended my engagement sooner.”

“Never say that I would be the type of person to be the cause of a breakup,” the detective said, shaking his head.

“I know, I was just teasing. I mean, you were the cause of our breakup, but it wasn’t your fault.”

“Enough talk about past loves,” growled Sherlock. “I need to do an experiment with you.”

“Experiment?” questioned the pathologist as the detective put his arms around her.

“Mhm,” he said, his lips only a few inches from hers. “I need to test what your lips taste like, after they have become salty from those chips.”

He proceeded to give his fiancée a lingering kiss before proclaiming, “Delicious,” and kissing her some more. Molly’s mouth opened beneath his and he flicked his tongue inside experimentally, tasting the salt tang that lingered on her tongue. Satisfied with his “experiment,” he withdrew his tongue and returned to the open mouthed kissing they had been doing.

When their lips parted, Molly asked a little breathlessly, “So, were you satisfied with the results of your experiment?”

“Well, your tongue had the taste of salt as well as your lips, if that’s what you mean. Was the use of my tongue offensive to you?”

The pathologist grinned at him. “Not at all. I like that you didn’t just plunge it right in there and start a big French kissing session. Tom tried doing that and it was not at all enjoyable. Less means more In my opinion.”

“I did actually do some research on that,” confessed Sherlock. “I read that it is better to introduce the tongue slowly, and see what your partner’s reaction is.”

“So you never tried it with Janine then?” questioned Molly playfully.

“God, no,” exclaimed her fiancé. “It was hard enough to kiss her without keeping my lips closed.”

“Are we establishing some new parameters then for our kissing? Like occasional use of the tongue, but not too much?”

“That sounds acceptable to me. Just so you are clear, Molly Hooper. I would not be opposed to your initiating said actions if you feel so inclined.”
“Do you think anyone else in the world would be having a conversation like this?” asked Molly, with a giggle.

“Probably not. But then, how many detectives marry specialist registrars who do post-mortems for a living?”

“Good point.”

“Well, we still have the rest of the evening ahead of us,” said the sleuth. “What do you propose we do with it?”

“We already missed watching ‘The Big Bang Theory’ and I don’t feel like watching the telly. I think I would like to unpack the rest of the boxes still in the corner of this room.”

“Ah yes, good idea. I shall help, so we get it done faster. Then we can return to more pleasurable pursuits as a reward.” He gave Molly a wicked grin.

“More kissing experiments?” She asked, raising her eyebrow.

“Possibly, yes.” he returned with a wink.

The couple worked together to empty the cartons, placing Blu-rays once more below the television unit that had been in Molly’s flat. Her books were returned to the bookcase which had found a new home in the upstairs second bedroom. There were a few miscellaneous kitchen items that they found room for, and various toiletries and makeup which Molly put on the mirrored dressing table that was now situated in the master bedroom. The bedroom seemed a bit cluttered with the extra furniture, but that wasn’t to be helped, now that there were two occupants sleeping in it.

“One day,” Sherlock told Molly, “we will have to buy a bigger place and leave Baker Street as my official consulting agency.”

The pathologist looked at him in surprise. “I’ve always thought of you as being a fixture here.”

“I can commute if necessary,” responded the detective. “Of course, if you remained at St. Bart’s, you would also have to commute if we moved away from central London. Unless of course you wanted to stay at home and raise our brood of children.” He gave Molly a hopeful look.

“Brood of children? How many exactly were you hoping for?”

“Oh, no more than six, but at least one of each.”

“Sherlock Holmes, if you think I am of an age to produce six children you will have to think again. An expectant woman is already considered to be a geriatric mum when they are over thirty-five, as I am. Two children, maybe three.”

“Well, I suppose you are the one who has to carry them,” conceded the detective reluctantly. “Will you want to keep working? You won’t have to, with my new status of £120,000 a year without even working myself.”

“I don’t know,” replied his fiancée. “I guess we will have to cross that bridge if and when we come to it.”

The last of the unpacking was finished and the couple sat on the sofa to take a break. “It is fortunate you are not a hoarder,” commented Sherlock. Noticing that Molly was rubbing her neck with weariness he offered, “Would you like me to massage your shoulders?”
“That would be lovely,” said Molly. “Have you ever massaged anyone before?”

“No,” responded her fiancé. “It is something I have researched in the past however, how to reduce muscle tension. Let’s move over to my chair. I will sit back in the seat and you can sit in front of me.”

They moved to the leather chair and the sleuth, after sweeping Molly’s hair aside and removing her jumper, Sherlock proceeded to ably demonstrate that he was able to successfully find the knots of tension in her shoulders, and massage them away. Judging from the little moans of contentment made by his fiancée, he was quite successful.

After about ten minutes, the pathologist leaned back against him with a, ”Thank you Sherlock. I feel much better now.”

In response to her movement, the detective dropped his arms downward, linking his fingers together in front at his fiancée’s waist and kissing her neck and shoulders softly through the fabric of her blouse.

Molly made a little sigh of contentment and twisted her body so the couple could fuse their lips together. As the kiss deepened, Sherlock felt the tentative touch of Molly’s tongue against his, and they explored the new intimacy briefly before returning to using just lips and mouths.

Eventually Sherlock released his fiancée with a groan. “I could stay like this all day, holding you, kissing you, but we have to stop now before I lose control.”

Molly nodded in understanding. “I really need to read my devotional before bed. It will help me focus on something besides how you make me feel when we are kissing. Do you want to borrow my Bible?”

“Yes, please,” responded the detective. “I really need to get my own at some point.”

Molly got off the chair and fetched her Bible for Sherlock as well as her “Our Daily Bread.”

She curled up on the sofa to read, using her phone to find the Bible reading for the day.

Sherlock continued reading Matthew. He still had a few chapters to go and wanted to complete it before bed.

The pathologist finished her devotional and departed to take a shower. When she returned, she took the empty plate to the kitchen and called, “Tea?”

Sherlock looked up from his reading, he was almost through the book of Matthew. “Thank you, yes.”

When the pathologist reappeared, holding tea for both of them, the detective closed the Bible. He had just finished reading the last chapter.

Sherlock took his tea with a “Thanks, love,” and commented, “Reading about the end times in Matthew is a bit disturbing. It seems a lot of those things are happening now.”

Molly sat on the floor in front of him, with her legs crossed. “Yes, most Christians believe we are living in the end times. With the wars in various countries and persecution of Christians, it seems to point towards it. But Jesus said nobody knows the day or hour when he will return. So, I’ll just try to live my life as if He could come back anytime.”
“Is it okay for me to hope that doesn’t happen until after we are married?” asked the detective with a grin.

“I think things on earth will have to still get a lot worse, so we can probably assume we have time.”

“Are you sure? We could still elope,” teased the detective.

“If you think we are going to do that after we just paid for the flowers and the cake, Sherlock Holmes, you are out of your mind.” His fiancée rolled her eyes.

“It was worth a try.”

After he had finished his tea, Sherlock got up and went to take his shower. When he came out of the bathroom, it was to find Moly already in bed. He slipped into bed beside her. “Are you still awake?”

“Mmm,” she murmured drowsily. “Long day.”

“But a productive one.”

“Mhm.” The pathologist positioned herself so Sherlock could spoon against her and turned her head to welcome his goodnight kiss. “I put my bra back on for you. Remember your lesson in unhooking.”

Sherlock obediently slipped his hands beneath her chemise and reached up to work at the clasp, grunting with satisfaction as he finally released the two hooks.

Molly wriggled one strap out along one arm past her elbow and slid it off. Then she pulled the other strap off and tossed the bra to the side of the bed. “That was a chore,” she complained.

Sherlock chuckled. “Maybe next time you take off your chemise first?” he suggested helpfully. “You can keep your back to me so that I don’t get another glimpse of your, um, womanly figure.”

She turned to look at him. ”We’ll see.”

“Goodnight my love,” he whispered.

“I love you Sherlock. Goodnight.”

To the sleuth’s surprise, she pulled his arm so it was wrapped around her, entwining their fingers. Her body was so warm and she smelled of that exotic jasmine scent he so loved. He wanted to kiss his fiancée again and again, but he restrained himself, knowing she was tired. Her quiet, steady breathing finally lulled him to sleep as well.

Chapter End Notes

What did you think of Sherlock’s experiment, and their conversation about using the tongue when kissing? I know, I’m totally weird, but hey, Sherlock is all about analysis haha.

Do you think we are living in the end times?
With intense discussion comes intense emotions.

She was caught in a nightmare from which she couldn’t wake up.

Sebastian Moran was pinning her down and his hot foul breath was on her face as he tried to kiss her.

Molly twisted her head from side to side, desperately trying to avoid his rough caress.

He ripped at her blouse and mocked her. “This time your precious fiancé won’t be able to save you. You will be mine.” He laughed manically.

“No, no,” she wept. “Sherlock, save me.”

A deep baritone cut into her nightmare, slowly bringing her to consciousness. “Molly, sweetheart. Wake up. You’re safe. Nobody is ever going to hurt you again.”

Molly opened her eyes into semi-darkness, to see the anxious face of the man she loved hovering over her. She promptly burst into tears, great wrenching sobs erupting from her as she trembled.

Sherlock’s arms were around her, holding her close. “It was just a nightmare, my love. I’m here.”

Delayed shock had obviously set in as the pathologist realized how close she had been to being violated by the criminal a few days earlier. She had managed to repress most of the memories by distracting herself with all the wedding planning. In sleep however, there was no distraction.

“I’m sorry,” she wept. “The nightmare brought it all back, what Moran almost did to me. If you had arrived just a few minutes later...”

“But I didn’t,” the detective soothed. “You know God led me to you in time. He answered your prayers.”

Molly clutched him. “Why am I so weak? This happened days ago. I thought I was over it, had moved on from it.”

“Sweetheart, shock from a traumatic event doesn’t have a set time limit. I’m just glad I can be here for you, to reassure you.” He kissed the top of her head, where it leaned against his shoulder. “Don’t forget, I managed to repress memories for over thirty years before they came back to haunt me.”

Molly’s tears slowly subsided as she regained control of her faculties. “How can I stop having nightmares though? I can’t control that from happening.”
“I don’t know, love. I hope you won’t have any more, but I will be here for you if you do.”

“Except when you are out of town on a case,” she said, holding her fiancé tightly, as if to prevent him from leaving her.

“I promise you I will endeavour to get through any out-of-town cases as quickly as possible, and I won’t take any that will take me away from you for over a week. Now that Mycroft will no longer be enlisting my help for international cases that would keep me from you for weeks, I will be here most of the time.”

“I don’t want to get in the way of your sleuthing pursuits. You’ll end up bored and hating me for it.”

“I am never bored with you. You fulfill me in a way no case ever could. The beauty of being the world’s only consulting detective is that I have the ability to pick and choose my cases.” He stroked her hair and Molly relaxed her convulsive grip.

“Thanks for letting me breathe again,” joked the detective, and Molly gave him a wobbly smile.

“No,” replied the pathologist. She glanced over at the bedside clock to see it was past seven o’clock. “Will you just hold me for awhile before we get up?”

“Of course,” the sleuth assured her.

The couple lay in bed, Sherlock gently rubbing Molly’s back in soothing circles as she reciprocated with her hands at his back. She could feel the faint ridges of the scars on his back, and remembered the torture he had endured himself, in the past. He had had nobody to help him afterwards. Had he suffered nightmares as a result of that beating? After awhile, they exchanged several tender kisses, enjoying the comfort of their close embrace. Molly felt protected and safe. She would have liked nothing better than to stay in bed all day, in the arms of the man she adored, but she knew that wasn’t possible.

With a sigh of reluctance, the pathologist was the first to make the move to get up. Sherlock lay there languidly, putting his hands behind his head and watching her as she gathered clothes for the day. “Sherlock,” she said, once she had clothes in hand, “does your washing machine work?”

“Hmmm? I suppose so. I don’t know the last time it was used. I use a dry cleaning service. Once in a while Mrs. Hudson does a few things for me.”

“You can keep using a dry cleaning service, but I intend to take care of your regular laundry,” asserted Molly. “I have washing powder that I brought over from my flat. I did see my radiator clothes airer and regular airer are up in the spare bedroom, so I can use them.”

“You don’t need to do the laundry. We can afford to send everything out for cleaning,” remarked her fiancé.

“That isn’t the point. I want to take care of you.”

“Well, if you change your mind, I won’t be offended.”

Molly leaned over the bed to kiss him. “We’ll see. I’ll try putting in a load before we leave the flat for the bank.”

“HSBC isn’t far from here and it is open at eight o’clock today, so we can walk there shortly.”
“Okay,” Molly agreed as she went into the bathroom to get dressed. When she reappeared, Sherlock was just buttoning his suit coat over a white shirt. He always looked so devastatingly handsome, she thought. He was definitely not the average type of man who wore jeans. The detective was impeccably dressed any time he left the flat, his only concession to being casual was the lack of a tie and leaving the neck of his shirt open. The pathologist looked at her own shapeless attire.

“Can I buy some clothes after we’ve been to the bank?” she asked.

“I have no objection, but what’s wrong with your current wardrobe?”

“Have you ever looked at the two of us side by side? You are so dignified and elegant. I just look dowdy next to you.”

Sherlock took Molly’s hand and kissed it, then drew her towards him and kissed her lips. “I think you make everything you wear look beautiful.”

She smiled at the sweet compliment. “Nevertheless, I would feel better if I had some nicer clothes to walk around in. If any photographers were to snap a picture of us when I look like this, I’d be embarrassed.”

“As you wish, my love. Bank, then shopping. Anything else on the agenda for today?”

Molly laughed. “I think by the time I’ve dragged you to a few clothing stores, you’ll be glad to get home and rest.”

The couple had just sat down for breakfast, when Molly got a phone call. After a brief conversation, she hung up. At Sherlock’s questioning look she said, “It was Mike Stamford. He wanted to make sure I was okay to go back to work for night shift on Sunday night. I am the one who is usually the acting supervisor in Mike’s absence, you know. My shift starts at midnight on Sunday.”

“I did not know that, but I am not surprised. You have been at the hospital for many years, so I can understand why he considers you to be his second in command.”

“Too bad the extra responsibility doesn’t come with a pay raise,” quipped the pathologist. “Of course, it does mean I get to sit in his office and spend most of my time on the computer, rather than in the lab, when I’m acting supervisor.”

“Does that mean you can authorize the release of body parts to me for experiments?”

“I hope you are joking,” said his fiancée sternly.

“Yes, yes of course. I know. No more experimenting outside the lab. But perhaps I might have just cause to work inside the lab on things, and it might happen to coincide with times when you are the ‘boss’ perhaps?” he suggested hopefully.

“Sherlock Holmes, you are incorrigible.” Molly stood up to clear away the breakfast dishes as Sherlock stood also.

“You wouldn’t have me any other way,” he said in his sexiest baritone, helping her put the plates and utensils in the sink, before taking her in his arms and kissing her tenderly.

“I’m going to test out the washing machine,” Molly told him when he released her. She went to the bathroom and pulled several blouses and jumpers from the laundry basket. Returning to the
kitchen, she placed them in the machine, added washing powder from under the sink and turned the
machine on. She was pleased to discover it seemed to be working.

“Well, we should probably get going now. The sooner we leave, the sooner we get back home,”
proclaimed the pathologist.

The couple gathered their things. Molly reminded Sherlock he needed to bring the cheque, which
he retrieved, as well as his phone from the charger.

Molly saw the detective glancing at his missed messages. “Anything important?”

“No,” he replied. “Just the missed call from Mycroft and his text. Let’s go.”

They walked the short distance to the bank. Once inside, the manager himself came up to Sherlock.
It was apparent that the detective was well-known at the bank.

“Mr. Holmes,” exclaimed the bank manager. “It’s so nice to see you. This must be the lovely
fiancée I saw on the news when you announced your engagement. I’m Eric.” He extended his hand
to Molly.

She shook it and smiled at him, grateful the manager hadn’t made any reference to her last
television appearance from the other night, after the kidnapping ordeal.

“So, how can I help you today?” asked Eric, after he had ushered them to seats in his small office
cubicle.

“My fiancée and I would like to open a joint current account and savings account. I have a cheque
here with which to open the savings account. For the current account, I would like to close the old
one and transfer the balance to the new one.”

“That shouldn’t be a problem. Do you have any current cheques outstanding which need to be
paid?”

Sherlock shook his head. “I rarely write cheques.”

Molly realized her mouth was open in surprise, and she quickly closed it. She had not expected
Sherlock to be ready to completely close an account in favour of opening one with her. She was
touched that he was ready to share so much with her.

The couple provided their driver’s licenses when asked, and the process was completed within a
half hour. As they were finishing, the manager said to Molly, “Once you are married, just bring in
the marriage certificate and we will change your name from Molly Hooper to Molly Holmes.”

As they left the bank, the pathologist couldn’t help smiling at the thought of her future name.

“Why are you smiling like you won the lottery?” questioned her fiancé.

“Can’t you deduce it?” she countered.

“I suppose it is because of the last thing the bank manager said to you. You really are looking
forward to taking my name?”

Molly slipped her hand into his. “Of course I am,” she assured. “I’ll be the envy of thousands of
women when I become your wife. Being Molly Holmes will mean that we belong to each other in
the eyes of God and everyone else.”
The couple spent the rest of the morning visiting various boutiques and department stores. Molly purchased several new ensembles, including two new evening dresses. Sherlock offered to put the purchases on his credit card, but Molly declined. She was grateful, however, for the extra pair of hands to carry the various bags of clothing.

It was after two o’clock when the pair arrived back at Baker Street. Mrs. Hudson happened to see them arrive and commented, "Busy day?"

“Yes. I dragged Sherlock all over London to do some clothes shopping,” grinned Molly.

“Did you have lunch? I made some of my special scones, if you’d like to come over and have some,” offered the landlady.

Molly looked over at Sherlock, who nodded. “That would be lovely. We’ll just take these things upstairs and be back down in a few minutes.”

As soon as the bags were deposited on the bed, Sherlock took Molly in his arms. “Do I get a reward for letting you drag me all over London so I could carry your purchases?”

Molly lifted her lips to his and offered him a passionate kiss before saying, “Thank you.” She paused a moment, then added with a twinkle in her eye, “next time you can buy me some lingerie.”

The detective shook his head. “Oh no. I am not going into a store to buy lingerie for you. I’d rather shop online for that.” He caressed his fiancée’s face.

“We had better go downstairs now or Mrs. Hudson wil wonder why we are taking so long,” said Molly, a little breathlessly. She rather liked the idea of Sherlock buying lingerie for her. It would be interesting to see what he liked.

In Mrs. Hudson’s flat, the engaged couple enjoyed scones still warm from the oven. When the landlady inquired as to whether they would like tea, Sherlock asked a little suspiciously, “Will it be just tea this time?”

Mrs. Hudson looked a little embarrassed. “Of course it will be just tea. The other day was a special circumstance.”

“Very well, then, I will have some tea.”

“Me too,” chimed in Molly.

Sherlock’s phone pinged and he took it out of his pocket to glance at it. Setting it on the table, he told Molly, “It’s just John letting me know his sister can babysit while we are in Dartmoor next week.”

After the late lunch, it was time to go back upstairs. Immediately, Molly went to the washing machine and pulled out the clothes she had washed.

“Sherlock, would you mind helping me set up the airers in the spare bedroom?”

The detective took the armload of laundry from her and suggested, “Why don’t you do that while I carry the clothes? I’m a novice when it comes to using a clothes airer.”

In the small upstairs bedroom, Molly positioned the radiator airer correctly, and then set up the regular one next to it. Taking the clothes one by one out of Sherlock’s arms, she placed them on the racks, saving the thicker jumpers for the radiator airer.
“That’s my favourite jumper,” commented Sherlock unexpectedly, when Molly took the final jumper from him, a multicoloured horizontally striped one, and placed it over the airer.

“This old thing? I’ve had it for years.”

“I know. You were wearing it the day we went out to solve crimes, when we had such a good time together, until I found out you were engaged.”

“Then why on earth is it your favourite jumper?” asked Molly.

“Because you were wearing it the day I told you I loved you, when I finally realized what I’d been denying for a long time. I was afraid that opening my heart to it would make me vulnerable. It’s amazing what you come to understand after the fact.”

“Opening your heart does make you vulnerable, admitting it out loud even more so. When you were pushing me to say the words, it was like a cruel trick. I felt like my soul was being ripped open. Even though I figured you knew I cared for you deeply Sherlock, I knew that things were going to change once I told you I loved you out loud. That’s why I asked you to say it first. Even if it weren’t true, I could salvage my pride somewhat.” Molly looked down, embarrassed.

Sherlock put his fingers under her chin and lifted it, so she could meet his turquoise gaze. “Making me say it was the smartest thing you ever did. Who knows if I would ever have acknowledged it otherwise? How many more years would we have gone on, pretending our friendship was enough? I’m just grateful it wasn’t too late for us to have a future that includes having a family of our own.”

He kissed her then, a tender kiss of such devotion and love that Molly felt tears forming even as she closed her eyes to savour the touch of his lips.

Without quite knowing how it happened, Molly found herself laying on the small bed next to her fiancé, being thoroughly kissed by him. He had removed his suit coat and was kissing her lips, her cheeks, her neck. His arms were around her, holding her against him as he murmured, “I love you my sweet Molly, more than you will ever know.”

Her hands reached to pull his shirt from his trousers, so she could put her hands on that warm, scarred back. Her fingers traced the slightly raised lines even as his hands reciprocated. He reached beneath her blouse to caress the skin of her back. Waves of passion spread through Molly as her heartbeat quickened and breath became shallow. She knew Sherlock was experiencing the same as he clasped her even tighter, his own breathing ragged.

Suddenly a voice from the floor below interrupted their embrace.

“Yoo hoo, Sherlock,” called Mrs. Hudson from the sitting room. “Where are you? You left your phone on my kitchen table. I didn’t notice it until I heard one of those dings.”

Sherlock released Molly and took a few steadying breaths before answering. “I’m just upstairs right now, putting some laundry onto the clothes airer Molly brought from her flat,” he called to the landlady. Softly, so only Molly could hear, he muttered, “Damn, forgot to lock the door again.”

Molly had to stifle a laugh. Sherlock’s voice did not sound as composed as usual, he sounded like he had been exercising.

Mrs. Hudson however didn’t seem to notice anything amiss with his voice as she called back, “I’ll just leave your phone on the coffee table then. Bye now.”

After they heard the door close behind the elderly woman, Molly said, “It’s just as well she didn’t
take it upon herself to come upstairs to this room. She might have thought she was interrupting a rather delicate moment.”

“She was,” growled the sleuth.

Molly looked at her fiancé closely. “So, to what do I owe that rather remarkable display of passion? It was really quite intense.”

Sherlock raked his hands through his curls. “Memories of that phone call. I honestly thought you were going to die. When I was begging you to say ‘I love you’ back to me, the counter my sister had running on the screen was ticking down. I had just realized I was in love with you, and you took a lifetime to say it back.”

“It was only a few seconds. I was just taking it all in, that you said it twice.”

“Well, it felt like a lifetime. There were two seconds left on the timer after you said it. Until my sister said there was no bomb, I thought I had won her game, had saved your life.”

“You know, I did believe you meant the words the second time. They sounded sincere, but when the phone went dead I was so confused. Then of course Mycroft called me later to ‘explain things’ as he termed it. I was a complete emotional mess for the three days that passed between the phone call and your stopping by my flat.”

Sherlock laced his fingers with hers. “I’m sorry you had to go through that. I didn’t know Mycroft had called you to say I had only been playing my sister’s game. If I had known that, I would have gone to you sooner and proposed to you without a ring.”

“Well, it’s all water under the bridge now. We’ll certainly have quite the story to tell our children.” Molly smiled at the man she loved with her whole heart. “We’ll tell them how it took Daddy seven years to realize he loved their Mummy.”

The detective chuckled. “But only eleven weeks after that to marry her, once he did. That has to count for something.”

“If you say so,” teased Molly.

Chapter End Notes

Finally the delayed shock happens for Molly.

I think sharing finances displays a lot of trust between a couple. It shows a commitment to sharing a life together.

Oh, the small washing machines in England make me glad to have my big one in America!

What did you think of the phone call discussion and subsequent passion? In the movies, often intense discussions lead to intense encounters. I think heightened emotions definitely play a part in passionate encounters
Chapter Summary

Sherlock and Molly set some guidelines for their relationship, to help them with their resolve to wait for their wedding night to be intimate.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sherlock retrieved his suit jacket, put it on and buttoned it. Then he followed Molly downstairs to the sitting room.

Despite his muttering about the unlocked door, he was glad Mrs. Hudson had interrupted his kissing session with his fiancée. He knew he had been dangerously close to losing control. The feelings had overwhelmed him, the terror he had felt at almost losing her, not once, but twice, and then the devotion he felt for her, knowing she was in his arms. His desire had been overwhelming. If they had continued much longer, the only thing that would have stopped him from making love to her then and there would have been if Molly had been strong enough to say no. Even now he had to clench his hands together and force his mind palace to regain control.

_Breathe, Sherlock,_” he told himself silently. _You are in control, you can do this._

Forcing a light tone to his voice, the detective said, “Why don’t we work on our wedding list, get it up-to-date? Do you know where it is?”

Molly seemed a little flustered at his quick recovery from their passionate encounter (little did she know how difficult it was for him to act natural), but she responded in as casual a tone, “Yes, it’s in my bedside drawer. I’ll go fetch it.”

While the pathologist was gone, Sherlock picked up his phone from the coffee table, then sat on the sofa. He checked to see the text that had alerted Mrs. Hudson to his phone’s presence in her flat. It was just from Mycroft.

“Brother mine, did you remember to deposit that cheque?”

He shot off a rather irritated response. “Surely your ever present camera surveillance could have told you I did that this morning with Molly?”

Molly walked back into the sitting room with her list and a pencil as Sherlock heard his text alert ping again. Mycroft’s response surprised him.

“Your camera surveillance has been deactivated. I thought you and your fiancée deserved some privacy. Besides, you are her problem now.”

Sherlock couldn’t help laughing as he showed Molly the text. “It seems my brother has released me into your tender care. Do you think you are up to the challenge?”

“I’ll do my best,” she promised with a grin. Seating herself on the sofa next to the detective, she showed him the list. “I’ve put a line through what we’ve done this week - invitations, flowers and
cake. That leaves photographer/videographer and guest list.”

“I’d say we are doing pretty well then. I believe our wedding rings are supposed to be ready tomorrow as well. I’ll call the jeweller then and we can pick them up if they are ready.” At Molly’s nod of agreement, he continued. “Do you know where the wedding planner is?”

“I put it on the shelf under the coffee table, right here.” She pulled it out and set it on top of the table.

Sherlock leaned forward and went through the pages until he found the one with photographers and videographers. “I think we won’t use the one John and Mary used for two reasons. Firstly, they do not offer a video service. Secondly, they employ potential killers.”

“What?” gasped Molly.

“Do you recall how erratically I was behaving at the wedding?”

“Well, yes. You were still adorably awkward though.”

“Do you remember me talking about a crisis that arose, but was averted?”

“Of course.”

“To cut a long story short, the photographer was there to ensure the death of John’s former, I mean ex-commanding officer. I won’t bore you with the convoluted details.”

“Okay then,” Molly accepted his statement and moved on with, “so should we look at this one?” She pointed to a business that offered both photography and videography. “They have a website we can look at.”

Sherlock retrieved his laptop from the edge of the coffee table and turned it on.

Together, the couple looked at the website for the business and found some favourable reviews as well.

“This looks promising,” said the sleuth. “Do we want to check out any other places?”

“According to the planner Mary made, the prices she wrote seem comparable to other businesses. I’d say we just go with this one if they have people available for our wedding day. If not, we try a different one.”

“Sounds good to me,” concurred Sherlock. “It’s getting a bit late to make phone calls now, so I’ll call them in the morning as well as the jeweller.” He paused for a moment. “There is one other thing I am not certain about. Do we need to register our impending nuptials?”

Molly laughed at his quaint terminology. “Oh, we should look that up online.”

The couple found the website about registering for marriage and discovered they needed to give at least twenty eight days notice. They would have to make an appointment and provide certain documentation. The closest office was the Westminster Register Office.

“Proof of address. It looks like the landlord/landlady can write a letter confirming where you live. We’ll have to do that, seeing as I have no proof of living at Baker Street. Everything I have is under my old address. So we’ll have to ask Mrs. Hudson for that tomorrow,” commented Molly.

She continued, “Do you know where your birth certificate is? I put the folder with my important
documents into the wardrobe in your, I mean our bedroom, after we moved my stuff here. It’s on top of another box you have in there.”

“That box happens to contain all my documentation, including my birth certificate also. There is plenty of room in there if you want to add all your papers.”

“Okay. At least we know where they are when needed. Maybe we can set up an appointment tomorrow. Yet another thing to get done. If we are able to make an appointment at such short notice, I can let Pastor Briggs know it is done when we are at church on Sunday. Do you want to go with me?”

Sherlock looked at her in surprise. “Why Wouldn’t I want to go to church with you? As far as I am concerned, when you go, I go. If you are working, I may not, just because I’d feel awkward with so many strange people.”

“I’m glad. This is still so new for you, and I didn’t want to just take things for granted.”

“You aren’t. I am looking forward to developing my newfound faith. It’s one thing to read the Bible myself, quite another to gain insight from people who have more knowledge and discernment than I do.”

“Have I told you lately how much I love you, Sherlock Holmes?”

Sherlock smiled at his fiancée. “I’d rather you show me.” The instant the words left his mouth, he wished he could take them back. All he was doing was torturing himself.

When Molly leaned towards him to kiss him, he gently put a finger to her lips and said, “Let’s take care of writing down some names for the guest list for now.” He could see the hurt and confusion in his fiancée’s eyes at his turn around in behaviour and could have kicked himself. The last thing he wanted to do was hurt her in any way.

“Sherlock?” She started to question hesitantly.

“Look, let’s do our lists, and then we need to talk.”

“Tell me what’s wrong,” said his fiancée in the same exact way she had said it on that fateful day in the lab, when he had needed her help.

“Nothing’s wrong,” he tried to reassure her, but he could see by the start of tears shimmering on her lashes that she was afraid something was very wrong. He squeezed her hand. “I love you. Let’s do this wedding stuff and then I promise I’ll tell you what I need to say.”

“Okay,” she gave him a tremulous smile, then tore off a sheet of paper from her pad for him.

Sherlock stood up and went to a drawer in the kitchen which held miscellaneous small objects, including pencils. He got one out and started to make up his pitifully small guest list, leaning the paper on the closed lid of his laptop.

The list consisted of his parents, John, Mycroft, Mrs. Hudson, Lestrade, Stamford and Anderson. Wow, eight people. He realized what an isolationist he had been, how unwilling to get to know anyone well enough to invite them to his wedding. He leaned back on the sofa and waited for Molly to complete her list.

Molly’s list, when it was finished, was also not a long one. She had written five names that coincided with Sherlock’s list - John, Mycroft, Lestrade, Mike Stamford and Mrs. Hudson. Then
she had added her mother, Kaitlyn (+ David), Kayla, Pastor and Mrs. Briggs, Nancy and Bill Schmidt. There were a few other names, probably church people. He saw Caleb and Abigail listed, who had been singing at church on Sunday, and some names he vaguely recognized as being hospital colleagues of Molly’s. The name Meena rang a bell too. He was pretty sure she no longer worked at Bart’s, though.

“We need to tell Mycroft he can bring a guest, in case he wants to invite Lady Smallwood,” said Molly. “I’ve accounted for everyone who has a spouse or significant other and we are still below fifty people, including ourselves.”

“So our forty invitations will definitely be enough then?”

“Yep,” responded the pathologist, copying the way he popped the “p” at the end. She was so adorable, he wanted to just take her in his arms right then and there. He restrained himself however, bracing himself for the talk they needed to have.

Molly put both lists together on the coffee table, and took the lap top off Sherlock’s lap. “So, are you ready to talk?” she questioned.

“Let’s have some dinner first,” he hedged.

“I’m not hungry,” she asserted. “Please, just tell me what is going on. My stomach is in knots over this, Sherlock.”

Defeated, the detective turned and took her hands in his. “Very well.”

“Is this all moving too fast for you? Are you having second thoughts about us getting married? Are you getting overwhelmed with all the wedding decisions we are making?”

“No dammit,” he ground out. “Things aren’t moving fast enough!”

He saw the look of surprise on his fiancée’s face and continued. “Look, earlier, when Mrs. Hudson interrupted us, I was glad she did so.”

“Why?” asked the pathologist in a small voice.

“Because I love you too much. Because I was about to lose control. I, who have prided myself on my ability to put intellect above any type of sentiment, was losing my grip on it. Any time I have felt emotional, I have always been able to retreat into my mind palace to reassert control. Well, except for when I smashed the coffin Eurus had put in that room that I had deduced was meant for you.”

He took a breath, and continued. “You are my weakness. My mind palace doesn’t work with you. God, Molly, I don’t think you have any concept of what you do to me. I’m trying so hard to be strong, to be respectful of your wishes, but my body betrays me at every turn.”

He saw the dawning light of comprehension in his fiancée’s eyes. She seemed as though she was about to speak, but he stopped her with a “Let me finish.”

Her mouth snapped closed and Sherlock went on with his monologue. “Every time I look at you, I think of what it will be like to truly be with you, in every sense of the word. I don’t know if I’m feeling it so strongly because of the years I repressed my emotions, and I hate not knowing. Maybe I’ll gain some perspective next week, when we are apart for a day or two, maybe not. All I know for sure right now is that my heart hurts. It hurts because I want to love you and be loved by you, to make love with you. You need to be the strong one, Molly Hooper, to say no when I overstep.
You have to tell me when I cross the line, because I am not able to see it anymore, do you understand?” He looked at her pleadingly, relieved to have finally confessed the depth of his emotions to her.

“Sherlock,” she said gently. “Do you think, would it be better if I slept in the other bedroom?”

“No. I want you, need you near me. But I need you to be the one in control, to yank me back to reality if I go too far. Can you do that for me?”

“I think I can,” responded his fiancée. “I’ve always thought it would be no big deal to wait until my wedding night, to be with my husband. I certainly had no problem with it, when I was engaged to Tom, despite his attempts to change my mind, but with you, it’s different. Maybe it is because I’ve loved you for so long, that it’s so much harder to remember my values. I think the best thing to do here is get more information. Research the whys of abstinence before marriage, and gain perspective. If you are willing, maybe we can research it together.”

Sherlock was floored by Molly’s words. She had a deeper understanding of things than he had expected. “I really like that idea. Maybe it is because this is all so new to me, and I don’t really understand the Bible’s teachings on it. Thank you.” He kissed Molly on the cheek.

“I don’t think we need to put our emotions that much on hold,” she laughed, putting her hands on his face and kissing him lightly on the lips. “I must confess, that now I am hungry after all. Do we have anything to eat around here?”

“Ginger nuts,” suggested the sleuth helpfully.

“Real food,” said Molly. “I’m going to look in the fridge.”

In the end, Molly found enough ingredients (mainly ones that had been transferred from her own fridge) to make omelettes for Sherlock and herself. “I hope you don’t mind eating breakfast food for dinner, we really need to add food shopping to our expedition tomorrow.”

The detective agreed with her statement. Then he helped himself to a couple ginger nuts for dessert.

“So, Sherlock,” asked the pathologist, “are we gonna do this?”

“Do what?” mumbled the detective through a mouthful of biscuit.

“See what the web, and the Bible have to say about abstinence before marriage?”

“Yes,” he responded. “I’d really like some perspective and maybe some help.” He got his laptop and put it on the kitchen table so he and Molly could both read anything they found.

Molly did a search about abstinence during engagement for Christian couples. There were plenty of different articles, and they read them together.

There was a lot to be said for waiting, reflected Sherlock, besides avoiding any possible pitfalls like unplanned pregnancy. Obviously STD’s weren’t an issue in their case. Reading the various articles, as well as referencing Biblical passages that supported the idea of waiting until marriage finally convinced the detective.

He sighed. “Forget everything I said earlier. I’ve been a fool. I won’t say it is going to be easy, but I will say it is up to me as well as you to stick to our principles. We need a plan of action.”
“I’ll grab my notepad and we can write down some guidelines,” said his fiancée.

She brought in pad and pencil and they set to work.

“According to one source, we need to keep away from the bedroom as much as possible,” the detective stated.

“I can sleep upstairs, like I said before,” offered Molly.

“No. I think our main issue is too much passionate kissing in bed. Solution, chaste kisses only in bed. Agreed?”

“Agreed.” Molly wrote on her notepad. “How about we spend more time in public places, or visiting friends?” she suggested.

“That would certainly reduce temptation if we are not alone,” Sherlock said as Molly added that to the paper.

“I guess no more practicing unfastening my bra.”

“Definitely not, but you might not want to write that one down,” grinned the detective. He was glad they were working on a plan of action. Maybe this could work after all. “Should I go back to wearing pyjamas?” he asked.

“Hmmm,” Molly pondered the question. She finally made a decision. “No. If we stick to the chaste kissing, we should be fine. If we start breaking the rules, we’ll revisit that.”

“Sounds fair. I suppose kissing you in places other than your face needs to be nixed as well.”

“Unfortunately yes. We’ve already seen how easy it is to start making little compromises,” asserted the pathologist. She wrote again on the pad. “Sitting on your lap and kissing you is also going to have to be a no.”

Sherlock pouted. “Are you sure?”

Molly looked at him sternly. “What always ends up happening when I am on your lap?”

“Too much lovely kissing, followed by me taking a cold shower,” he said with a wry smile.

“Exactly.”

“Why do I have the feeling this next eight weeks is going to drag on forever?”

“We just need to fill it with fun stuff. Go back to the light romantic dating type of things. Maybe catch a movie.”

“Oh, I like the sound of that. A little back row kissing.”

Sherlock Holmes, you are not taking this seriously!” the pathologist exclaimed a little indignantly.

“Sorry, love. Just trying to keep it light and fun. So no back row for us, but maybe a mid-section little kiss?”

“I can agree to that,” she laughed. “When we are home, let’s keep the door unlocked after all. Next time a show is on television to watch, it might be a good idea to actually watch it, rather than get carried away.” She wrote again on her paper.
Sherlock nodded. “It’s like we are writing our own pre-nuptial agreement.”

“It is, rather,” agreed his fiancée. “Another thing, no drinking cocktails for me. I don’t think I need to tell you that because you are not one to drink anyway.”

“True. Oh, do we need to adopt using a timer for kissing sessions?”

“Really?” Moly raised her eyebrow. “Let’s just keep it at no marathon sessions. I think we have a pretty good amount of guidelines for now, don’t you think?”

Sherlock looked at the page, which was almost filled with writing. “Okay, if we run into any ‘trouble’ we can add more. Where shall we keep this ‘abstinence guide,’?” he asked.

“Oh, I like that, I’m going to write that at the top.” She did so, then said, “I think we should keep it in the bedroom. We don’t need Mrs. Hudson seeing it.”

“Perfect.”

“And now, I am going to take a shower. We have had a very long day.” Molly kissed Sherlock lightly and left the sitting room.

Sherlock stared at the list. He had to admit, he felt a lot better. He felt calmer somehow, more resolved. He could get through these next few weeks and then, boy was it going to be a spectacular wedding night!

Chapter End Notes

This was a pretty heavy chapter. I felt Sherlock did not really understand the whole ‘waiting until marriage’ thing, despite his respect for Molly’s feelings on the subject, so this was the perfect opportunity to explore what the Bible says about it. And yes, I researched it as well. You can search the web with the words Molly used.

What did you think about the first impassioned speech Sherlock made, followed by the one after they spent time researching abstinence? Do you like their abstinence agreement?

I also researched the registering for marriage. Sorry folks, you can’t just go get married.. There are procedures to follow.
Sherlock and Molly discuss some things from the Bible. 

After she finished her shower, Molly sorted through the basket in the bathroom for all the small items that needed to be washed, including Sherlock’s boxers and socks. She put them in the laundry basket she had brought from her flat and took them to the kitchen. 

Sherlock looked up as she came in. His elbows were on the table, fingers steepled in their usual manner, and he had a faraway look on his face.

“Are you in your mind palace?” asked the pathologist, as she deposited the clothes into the washing machine.

“Nope,” he responded. “Just thinking about how amazing our wedding night is going to be, and thinking of how I can stay busy over the next few weeks.” He stood up as he spoke. “Don’t turn that thing on until I’ve had my shower. I have no clue whether it would affect the water pressure.”

“Duly noted,” Molly said, adding the washing powder to the machine. “I’ll turn it on later and put the clothes on the airer tomorrow morning. By that time, my jumpers and other things should be dry. I’m going to make some tea. Would you like some for when you get out of the shower?”

“Yes please.” The detective took his fiancée’s hand and kissed it, before leaving the kitchen for his shower.

Molly turned on the kettle to boil the water, then grabbed the list she and Sherlock had made, setting it down on her bedside table. She picked up her Bible and devotional and returned to the kitchen.

After the tea was ready, Molly sipped hers while looking at the daily reading. This time she was able to look up the Bible passage in her actual Bible, because Sherlock wasn’t using it. The day’s devotional was, she felt, a definite sign from God. It talked about the body being a temple, and about purity. It was remarkable how often God spoke to her through these readings, how appropriate they happened to be.

When the detective returned to the kitchen, hair still damp from the shower and wearing a dressing gown, Molly thought as she often did, how handsome he was. “Take a look at this,” she invited, as he sat beside her to drink his tea. She slid the devotional over to him.

When the sleuth finished reading, he said, in a voice of wonder, “How is it that so often things are relevant to the exact situation at hand?”

“It’s the way God speaks to us,” replied his fiancée. “We can’t see or hear God physically, so this is the way we can communicate best with Him. I have so often gotten answers to questions just through reading my daily devotional, or the Bible in general. It happens too often for it to be
coincidental. This reading today just reinforces to me that we are doing what God wants us to do, and that He will bless us because of it.”

“You’re right. I do feel this peace about things right now. I’m sure it is still going to be a struggle at times, to hold onto those values, but I do believe it will be worthwhile.” He took Molly’s hand and looked intently into her eyes. “I love you.”

She smiled. “I love you too.”

“Can I borrow your Bible again?”

“Of course. You don’t need to ask.”

“Yes I do. You might be wanting to read it yourself.”

“I can use my app. I’d rather you use the real thing. I’m going to put on the washing machine now and check the clothes upstairs.”

“Okay.” Sherlock took the Bible and found the next book, Mark. He began to read.

Molly turned on the washing machine, then went upstairs to the small bedroom to check the status of her clothes. A couple of the thinner blouses were dry, but the jumpers were still slightly damp. She took the blouses and hung them in the wardrobe in the master bedroom. Noting the new clothes still on the bed, the pathologist went to work, making room for the two dresses and rest of the clothing. When she had finished, the wardrobe was full to bursting. After some contemplation, Molly removed a few of her older clothes she hadn’t worn in a long time. They could be donated to charity. She contemplated putting on one of Sherlock’s dressing gowns over her chemise, but figured there was no point. She had already been in and out of the kitchen in her nightie, so modesty was rather moot at this point.

Returning to the kitchen, the pathologist began to do the dishes.

Sherlock was still reading. Without looking up from the Bible, he said, “It really is remarkable how the different accounts of Jesus have so many parallels. The book of Mark seems to be one of the shorter books. I’m almost done with it.”

“You are doing so well,” Molly told him as she dried the dishes. “I’m glad you are making the effort to keep reading.”

“It’s fascinating, like a part of life I missed before. It gives life new meaning, especially now that I know this life isn’t all there is.”

“I know you’ve already read through John, but I was thinking I should have pointed out what is considered one of the most important verses in the New Testament.”

Sherlock looked at her curiously. “Which verse?”

“It’s John 3:16. I think it’s the first verse we memorize as children.”

“Do you want me to look it up?”

“No. I’ll just tell you. The verse says, ‘For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.’ Mind you, I prefer to say everlasting. Eternal indicates no beginning or end, which only can be ascribed to God. Everlasting life suggests a starting point, but with no ending. That verse really is the cornerstone of the
Christian faith - belief in Jesus and what he did for us.”

The detective smiled at her. “That’s one of the things I love most about you. You really know and understand your faith. I have so far to go.”

“But you are learning, and that is what is important, gaining knowledge.”

“I feel like my eyes have been unveiled, like the words from that song last week at church., in ‘The Power Of your Love.’”

“You remember the lyrics to that song?”

“Yes, I didn’t delete them, because the words spoke to me, even before I made the decision to accept Jesus as my Saviour.”

“Hearing you talk like this Sherlock, it’s such a miracle, such an answer to prayer.”

“Well, I guess your prayers and my parents’ must have counted for something.”

“I guess so.” With the kitchen back in pristine condition, Molly plopped down on the seat beside Sherlock. She picked up her “Our Daily Bread,” then watched her fiancée as he read. He had such a lovely profile. She gave a little sigh of contentment.

The detective flicked his gaze across to her. “What’s with the sigh?”

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to disturb you. I just like looking at you.”

He smiled. “I like looking at you too, Molly Hooper. I’m going to just finish these last three chapters, then go to bed. Are you ready for bed too?”

“Yes, I think I’ll head there now. It has been a long day, physically and emotionally.” She stood up and kissed his cheek, then made her way to the bedroom and got under the covers.

She was still awake when Sherlock came in ten minutes later and he settled into bed beside her. “Molly,” he whispered. “Are you still awake?”

She turned to face him. “Yes.”

“Can I kiss you goodnight? Can I still hold you?” He sounded uncertain, and Molly loved him even more for his willingness to let her set their guidelines.

“Yes, and yes.” She moved close to him and kissed him gently on the lips. Turning her back, she fitted her body against his and pulled his arm around her. “Goodnight, my love.”

She felt Sherlock kiss the back of her head before his arm tightened around her and he said, Sweet dreams, my darling.”

Chapter End Notes

This was a bit of everyday, domestic stuff. One reader on another site made the comment about it being mundane, but sometimes real life is that way. This is not fluffy fiction. It’s intended to be realistic fiction, with some drama in it. I apologize if
people find that boring.

I do try to put some interesting stuff into each chapter too. Like the way God speaks to us. My daughter has that happen so often when she needs encouragement—her devotional, or Bible verse for the day speaks to her.

It breaks my heart when I hear of people who are atheists. If there’s nothing beyond this life, what is the point to it? I have nothing against people who believe in nothing, but it still makes me sad.

John 3:16 - Read it, believe it and be glad of it.
Getting Things Done - Sherlock (Friday)

Chapter Summary

Sherlock and Molly go to the registry office to register their intent to marry. They also pick up their wedding rings.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Sherlock opened his eyes, it was to discover he was alone in bed. He felt both disappointed and glad. He was disappointed, because he liked waking up next to Molly and cuddling with her. On the other hand, he was glad, because he really didn’t need that temptation. Despite his resolution of the previous night, he knew it wasn’t going to be an easy thing to pull their relationship back to a point where passion did not rule their hearts and minds.

He could hear Molly in the kitchen, singing along to a song she was obviously playing through her phone. He could also smell bacon and his stomach rumbled in response. He looked at his alarm clock and was amazed to see it was already nine o’clock. He couldn’t remember the last time he had slept for so many hours. Hastily, he got dressed and went to the kitchen.

Molly came up to him and kissed him. “Good morning sleepyhead,” she greeted. “I was just about to wake you. “Breakfast is almost ready and coffee is already made. Take a seat.”

Obediently the detective sat down at the table. “What is that music you were singing to?”

The pathologist blushed. “I didn’t know you could hear me. It’s my favourite band, Paramore. I was listening to their self-titled album. There’s this one song, ‘Still into you’ I can really relate to.”

“How so?” questioned the sleuth.

“Well, it talks about being together for a long time and how she should be over all the butterflies, but she’s still into him. Yeah, I know we haven’t been together like that, but I have loved you for a long time, and you do give me butterflies every time I look at you.” She turned away and put their eggs and bacon on plates, then brought them to the table.

Sherlock was touched by her words. “Just so you know, Molly. I feel the same way.”

As they ate, he discovered Molly had not been idle while he slept. She had taken the damp laundry items upstairs and hung them on the airers, after taking off the now-dry items. She had also made an appointment with the registry office for eleven o’clock.

“I heard Mrs. Hudson puttering about downstairs at eight, so I asked her if she would write a letter confirming our address. She also put her details, as it said was needed for the letter. “With a flourish, she pulled the letter from the middle of the table and waved it in front of her fiancé. “We just need to get our birth certificates.”

“Impressive,” remarked Sherlock. “You have been busy.”

“Don’t worry. I left stuff for you to do,” grinned the pathologist. “You need to call the jeweller and
the photography business after breakfast.”

Sherlock called the jeweller first and was pleased to discover that the rings were ready to be picked up. Then he called the photographer. He was able to book both photographer and videographer for the day of the wedding.

“Done,” he told Molly. “You can put a line through photographer on your list. I just realized we haven’t discussed music for the reception. Are we going to use a DJ? I think Mary may have had a friend do it for her wedding to John, which would explain why it isn’t in the planner she made.”

“Maybe we can use the same one. Perhaps you should ask John about that?” suggested the pathologist.

Sherlock took his phone off the charger and sent a text to John. He knew if he didn’t do it right away, he would forget. He was collecting the breakfast dishes when Molly’s phone rang. He started doing the dishes while his fiancée talked on the phone.

“Kaitlyn is inviting us to go out to Ribon tonight with her and her boyfriend David. She is suggesting we meet there at six-thirty and she can make the reservations. Is that okay with you?”

“I don’t see why not,” responded the detective. “I was thinking of taking you out for dinner this evening anyway.”

“Great. I’ll tell her six-thirty is fine then.” She spoke for another couple of minutes then hung up.

Sherlock had finished with the dishes by that time. He walked over to Molly and kissed her, making sure he did not linger too long. It was not easy when the touch of her lips against his always made him yearn for more.

“What was that for?” she asked, smiling up at him.

“Am I not permitted to kiss my fiancée whenever I feel like it?” he asked her in return, with a smile of his own. “If I have to keep our kissing to shorter lengths of time, I need to compensate in some way, by making them more frequent. Does that fit in with our guidelines?”

Molly reached up and gave him a brief kiss of her own. “I have no objections to that.” She went to the bathroom to get ready for their outing. Looking in the mirror, she was pleased to note that the faint bruising on her face from her kidnapping was now entirely gone, and the cut Moran had inflicted with his ring was also almost completely healed. That was welcome news. No more need to use concealer on her face to hide the discolouring. She returned to the sitting room and her fiancé.

Sherlock’s phone pinged at him. John had answered his text, giving him the name of the DJ as well as his phone number.

“Great, I’m going to call this Andrew now and see if he’s available,” he told his fiancée. When the call went to voicemail, Sherlock left a message and his number.

“Damn,” he grumbled. “I was hoping to get that done and out of the way as well.”

“We have plenty of time,” laughed Molly. “Let’s get our birth certificates and then we can head off to our appointment.”

After retrieving their birth certificates and the letter of tenancy from Mrs. Hudson, Sherlock placed them in a folder to carry the documents without creasing them.
“My handbag is big enough for the folder, I’ll take it,” offered Molly.

The couple retrieved their phones. Molly put on her jacket and Sherlock his Belstaff. Then they were out the door and hailing a taxi to take them to the registry office.

The appointment went smoothly. The documentation was recorded and wedding date noted. Sherlock wrote a cheque for the filing fee. As the couple left the office, he remarked, “Well, that wasn’t too painful, I guess.”

“Did you expect it to be like a trip to the dentist?” Molly teased.

“Well no, I just thought it would take longer and that we would be kept waiting.” He put out his hand to hail a passing taxi, and then they were headed to Westfield London. During the twenty minute drive, Sherlock held his fiancée’s hand tightly. He would have liked to spend the whole taxi ride kissing her, but he was determined to be on his best behaviour.

Molly was the one who unexpectedly leaned into him and brushed his lips with hers. “I know you are keeping a tight rein on yourself, but you don’t have to cut off the circulation in my hand,” she laughed.

“I’m sorry,” he apologized. “Controlling emotional responses used to be second nature to me. When I am around you however, I have to exert all my willpower into restraining myself from taking you into my arms.”

Molly leaned her head against his shoulder. “We can survive a few more weeks.”

“Weeks that will feel like years,” he grumbled.

Upon arrival at the mall, the pair immediately headed for the jeweller. The clerk brought out the rings and Sherlock inspected them closely, to make sure the engraving was done correctly. Satisfied, he paid the balance on the rings. “Let’s just check them for size.” He tried on his ring and then slipped Molly’s onto her finger. Both rings fit perfectly. The detective felt a surge of emotion course through him as he looked at the rings on their fingers. In a few weeks, they would be the outward sign of the vows he and Molly were going to make.

“I know, I feel it too,” said his fiancée, and he knew she understood by the look of devotion she gave him.

Reluctantly, he took the ring off his finger and then pulled off Molly’s, so they could be placed in their individual boxes until the wedding day. He gave Molly the bag containing the rings, which she tucked into her voluminous handbag.

“Anything else you want to do while we are here?” inquired the sleuth.

“I guess we could have some lunch.”

They found a small casual restaurant which wasn’t too busy. Towards the end of the meal Sherlock’s phone rang. He answered it to discover it was the DJ he had left a message for earlier. Andrew was available to do the music for the reception. The detective noted with satisfaction how things were falling into place.

“Well, my love, we have a DJ for the reception,” he told Molly, in case she had not been paying attention to his side of the conversation.

“So, we don’t have too much left to do, besides wait for the invitations to arrive and send them out
next week. Then we have to wait for the responses in order to do seating arrangements.”

“What about the dinner at the reception?”

“Our church uses a catering service. I just need to set up an appointment to discuss what we want for the meal. I’ll give the church secretary a call about that or speak to her on Sunday.”

Sherlock nodded and stood up. He offered his arm chivalrously to the pathologist, who also stood. Having paid for the meal, another taxi took them to a supermarket near Baker Street.

The couple walked the short distance back home, arms laden with shopping bags. Once inside the flat, they worked together to restock the fridge and cupboards.

“I don’t think this fridge has ever held so much actual food,” remarked the detective.

“Yes, well most people do use their fridges to keep food cold, rather than body parts,” said Molly crisply.

“I didn’t need to use it for food before. I lived on chips, take-away food and Mrs. Hudson’s scones and biscuits.”

“It’s a wonder you weren’t grossly overweight.”

“Probably because I also skipped a lot of meals, especially when I was on a case.”

Molly reached up and threaded her fingers through his curls, drawing his head down to hers. “Well, you have me now, and I will take care of you properly.”

Having Molly’s face so close to him was too much. He wrapped his arms around her waist and kissed her, a long lingering kiss that left them both breathless before they drew apart.

“I have been wanting to kiss you like that all day,” confessed the detective.

“Me too,” she said softly. “See, we can still enjoy this level of intimacy without things getting out of hand. I think our problem has been allowing ourselves to discuss a lot of deeply personal matters that intensified what we were feeling.”

“It does seem that way. Yesterday, when things were uh, heating up before Mrs. Hudson came upstairs, I had been thinking about how I felt at Sherrinford. Perhaps revisiting the past is not the best idea, at least, not until we are married and it won’t matter if we get carried away in the moment.”

“Well, we have some time before we are meeting up with Kaitlyn and David. Why don’t you find something to watch on the telly? I’m going to go upstairs and see if the clothes are dry.”

Sherlock went into the sitting room and turned on the television. He flicked through the channels without much interest and finally threw the remote down in disgust. Restlessly, he rose to his feet and turned on his laptop, then retreated to his chair. He decided to go through emails and check out if there were any interesting cases he could solve without travelling too far. There were a couple return emails from the ones he had sent days earlier. Two in particular seemed promising, not as exciting as murder, but mysteries nonetheless.

Molly entered the room with a “Nothing worth watching then?”

“Nope,” responded her fiancée. “How would you like to go on a crime solving expedition with me
“Well, as far as I know, I have no specific plans for tomorrow. Are you sure you want me to tag along?”

“It’s always good to have an assistant, and you’ve demonstrated you can keep up with me on the day we worked together. I don’t want to bother John when he has Rosie to worry about, and is already coming on the road with me on Tuesday.”

“In that case, if you really think I can be of use, I’ll come.”

“Good. I’ll just send off these emails to let them know I will be heading their way tomorrow. I think one before lunch, and the other after lunch.”

“Fine. I’ll go have a shower now, before we head out for dinner,” the pathologist remarked.

“Mhm.” Sherlock was absorbed in reading. He still was way behind on his emails. It seemed he was always being inundated with the most trivial concerns. Some of the scenarios seemed contrived, almost as if they were just excuses to meet the famous London detective. He was usually able to sort through the “spam” cases as he called them, to find legitimate ones.

When Molly came back in again, he had just closed his laptop. He whistled when he saw her in one of her new dresses. She had braided her hair into a twist at the top of her head with a few tendrils of hair framing her face. She had put on some makeup, not a lot, but enough to accentuate her lovely brown eyes and the curve of her lips. He felt his heartbeat quicken as he looked at her in appreciation.

“You look stunning,” he breathed. He placed his hands on his fiancée’s shoulders and kissed her. It was as well that she was wearing lipstick, because it forced him to kiss her more gently than he would have otherwise. He didn’t want to ruin her makeup.

“There’s still time for you to shower as well if you want, although you look perfectly fine in the clothes you are currently wearing,” she said.

“I think I will take a shower,” he decided out loud and went to the bedroom to select a change of clothes, including his aubergine shirt. Molly had put the bag with the wedding rings on his bedside table, and he took the ring boxes out of the bag and into his top drawer for safe-keeping.

Upon reentering the sitting room after his shower, the detective saw that Molly had taken out her wedding list and was studying it. She glanced up at him and smiled.

“You’re wearing my favourite shirt. That shade of purple is lovely.” Then she indicated her list. “We have almost everything organized, thanks to me not working this week,” she said. “I kind of feel like I should not have been given a whole week off from work, though.”

“I disagree,” countered the sleuth. “You had a terrible nightmare only two nights ago, and there is no guarantee you won’t have occasional relapses into those traumatic memories in the future. This week has been a very good distraction for you because we have been busy.”

‘I disagree,” countered the sleuth. “You had a terrible nightmare only two nights ago, and there is no guarantee you won’t have occasional relapses into those traumatic memories in the future. This week has been a very good distraction for you because we have been busy.”

“Perhaps so. In any case, there is not much else for us to do right now. I must remember to email the list of our wedding party to Nancy tomorrow, for the wedding bulletin, and we need to select a front cover for it.” She indicated the pamphlet with sample covers Pastor Briggs had provided the previous week. “I’ll leave this on the coffee table for now and we can check it out later tonight or tomorrow.”
Sherlock agreed. “Well, my beautiful love, are you ready to get going?” he asked.

‘Yes, let’s go,’’ she answered, and they exited the flat to get a taxi to the Japanese restaurant.

Chapter End Notes

Things are moving along well with the wedding arrangements. What did you think about the way they tried on their wedding rings? I think it would really make everything more “real,” seeing them actually on their fingers.

I researched the requirements for the registry office as well, and the Westminster one is indeed the closest to Baker Street.
Dinner With Friends - Molly

Chapter Summary

Sherlock and Molly go out on a double date.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The duo arrived at the restaurant a few minutes early. When Molly said they had reservations under the name Kaitlyn Martin, they were shown to a table. While waiting for the other couple, the waitress asked if they wanted something to drink. They declined, wanting to wait for the other couple’s arrival.

A few minutes later, Kaitlyn appeared with her boyfriend. David was close to Sherlock’s height and was quite good looking, with blonde hair of a similar colour to her friend’s, Molly thought, although not nearly as handsome as her drop dead gorgeous fiancé.

Kaitlyn immediately gave Molly a hug and then hugged Sherlock, who was again bemused by the familiarity with which Kaitlyn acted towards him, in her usual friendly manner.

“Molly, Sherlock, I’d like you to meet my boyfriend, David,” she said.

David extended a hand to shake Sherlock’s, before saying to Molly, “It’s nice to meet both of you. Kaitlyn has been talking non-stop lately about being in your wedding. She is very excited about it.”

Molly liked him immediately. The young man was friendly, yet polite in his manner.

The four sat down and the waitress reappeared to ask if they wished to have anything to drink, and handed them menus.

“Should we share a bottle of champagne?” suggested Kaitlyn.

“Only if you let me pay for it,” Sherlock told her. He ordered the more expensive bottle of Moet.

“Oh goody,” enthused Kaitlyn, “now we can really celebrate your engagement!”

When the waitress returned with the bottle of champagne, she poured some into each glass, before asking if they had decided on their meals.

“Sherlock, would you have the sukiyaki with me, or would you prefer something else?”

“I’m happy to have the sukiyaki. It has been several years since I have had it.”

Kaitlyn and David opted for the same.

As the couples waited for their food to arrive, they sipped the champagne and talked. David had heard of Sherlock’s fame as a detective, and asked him about some of the cases he had read from John’s blog. Sherlock seemed to enjoy recounting the details of some of his more notable cases.

Molly listened with interest as the men talked animatedly about Sherlock’s cases, and the
deductions he had made which led to their solutions. She was glad to see her fiancé making an
effort to be friendly with the younger man. He even asked David some questions about himself,
instead of making deductions to show off how smart he was. She was certain Sherlock could have
easily deduced David’s occupation. The blonde-haired man worked at a law firm, helping people
with civil lawsuits.

“Are you currently working on a case?” asked David.

“Actually, I have two that should be fairly simple to solve, which Molly and I will be looking into
tomorrow. On Tuesday, I will be going with my colleague John to Dartmoor, to look into the case
of a missing racehorse and his dead trainer.”

The sukiyaki pots were brought to the table, along with the beef and vegetables that were to be
cooked in the sauce at the table.

Sherlock immediately picked up a piece of beef expertly in a pair of chopsticks and held it in the
simmering sukiyaki liquid to cook. Instead of eating it himself, Molly was surprised when he
offered it to her. She opened her mouth and took the delicate piece of meat. It was delicious.
Sherlock then cooked a piece of the meat for himself.

Molly picked up a small mushroom with her chopsticks and held it in the sauce. When she tried to
take it from the pot, the chopsticks slipped and the mushroom fell into the liquid. “Oops,” she
laughed. She was not an expert by any means when it came to chopsticks.

“Here, let me,” said her fiancé as he retrieved the mushroom and held it out to her waiting mouth.

“Thank you,” she said, after chewing and swallowing. “Apparently you have a lot more experience
with using those things than I do.”

“Many years of Chinese take-away,” he grinned.

Kaitlyn seemed to be having the same issues as Molly, and both men ended up doing the work with
chopsticks, then taking it in turns to serve a piece to their ladies, and then themselves.

Molly thought it was rather fun, being taken care of that way. It could have been embarrassing if
Kaitlyn and David were both using their own chopsticks, but as this was not the case, the
pathologist decided to just enjoy the experience. By the way Kaitlyn was giggling, she too was
having a good time being fed by her boyfriend.

The waiter came around and refilled their wine glasses from what remained in the bottle on the
table.

Molly was not a big fan of champagne, preferring a sweet wine, but it was refreshing nonetheless.

David insisted on buying a small bottle of sake for the four of them to share as well. Molly had not
tried it before. The rice wine had an interesting taste, but it wasn’t something she would consider
buying for herself.

After finishing their sukiyaki, the four decided to have Japanese ice cream for dessert.

“So, how did you and David meet? You’ve never told me the story,” said Molly as they waited for
their dessert to arrive.

“Oh, it was a surprise birthday party for one of my friends. David is her older brother.”
“And when I saw Kaitlyn, I thought she was the most beautiful woman I’d ever seen.”

The blonde beaned at her boyfriend. “We’ve been together ever since, over two years now,” she said.

“How long have you two been together?” asked David.

Sherlock gave Molly a tender smile and then said, “Technically, not very long. We’ve known each other for over seven years, though. It just took me a long time to recognize that I felt more than friendship for Molly. When it finally hit me, I didn’t want to waste any more time. So we um, kind of did things in an unusual way. I proposed to her before we went out anywhere officially as a couple.” He looked directly at the younger man. “It was the best decision I’ve ever made. I almost lost her to someone else, and I wasn’t going to let that happen again.”

“Their story is so romantic,” sighed Kaitlyn to her boyfriend. “I’ve known how Molly felt for a long time, and I am so thrilled they are getting married.”

“David, I do hope you will be able to come to our wedding, even though you won’t be able to sit with Kaitlyn.”

“I am looking forward to seeing my girl all dressed up that day,” grinned the lawyer.

Kaitlyn punched him playfully. “You are supposed to be there to support the bride and groom.”

“Oh, that too,” he nodded.

“I am sure Kaitlyn will be lovely, but I will probably have eyes only for my bride,” remarked Sherlock, leaning over to kiss his fiancée.

Molly was a little surprised at his public display of affection. She supposed he was enjoying the slight, pleasant buzz provided by the champagne and sake.

After the four of them ate their icecream, Kaitlyn stood up and said, “I need to use the loo.”

“I’ll come too,” said Molly, and they went to the toilets together.

Molly was in front of Kaitlyn as they returned to the table. The men were standing close together. They appeared to be having a deep conversation, which ended when they caught sight of the ladies. Molly noticed David slipping something into his pocket.

The men decided to visit the toilets as well, and Molly and Kaitlyn chatted as they waited.

“Thanks for inviting us,” said the pathologist to her friend. “Sherlock is not one to spend time in asocial setting, but I think he enjoyed himself.”

“I think he enjoyed the sake as well,” winked her friend. “You had better keep an eye on him tonight. He and David seemed to get along well. Hey, you and I are on nightshift this week, so we can have some fun when it is quiet, and talk about our men.”

“Midnight to eight in the morning is a pain, but it has its perks when things are quiet,” agreed Molly.

When the men returned, they paid the dinner bill. The two couples said goodbye and parted ways. Sherlock hailed a taxi for the return to Baker Street, after allowing Kaitlyn and David to take the first one that came along.
This was a more fluffy chapter than most. I wanted Sherlock and Molly to have the opportunity of having a little fun with another couple, and I also wanted to develop Kaitlyn’s character a little more, because she is Molly’s best friend, after all.

I thought a bit of romantic “feeding each other” was in order LOL

How do you like my OC? What do you think Sherlock and David were up to when Molly and Kaitlyn returned?
Sherlock and Molly were sitting in the taxi, on their way back home. The detective looked over at his fiancée and thought for what must have been the tenth time how lovely she looked. He was surprised to discover that he had actually enjoyed spending time with her along with another couple.

He felt slightly light-headed; he probably should not have had the second little glass of sake David had offered him. The sleuth knew he wasn’t drunk, not like the night he had planned John’s stag night, but he was definitely feeling a bit happy, and it made him want to have a little fun. With that in mind, he moved closer to his fiancée and put his arm around her.

“Did you have a good time tonight?” he asked, turning Molly’s face towards him.

“I did,” she responded, just before his lips descended on hers. He kissed her deeply, enjoying the familiar sensation of warmth that flooded through him. Her lips were always so soft, they moulded perfectly with his. In the back of his mind, the still, small voice reminded him he must not go too far, so he released her and said, “You really do look beautiful. I mean, you always look beautiful to me,” he amended, “just even more so this evening than usual.”

“Thank you Sherlock. You look amazing as always, and your hair...” she reached up to tousle his curls.

“Yeah, yeah, always the hair,” he pouted and rolled his eyes, grabbing at her hand. “You only love me for my hair.” He kissed her palm.

“You know that’s not true. I also love your lips.” She traced her finger along his lower lip.

“Enough,” he growled. “Behave yourself, Molly Hooper.”

Molly giggled. “You started it, Sherlock Holmes.”

She switched to a different subject. “So, what were you and David talking so intently about while Kaitlyn and I went to the loo?”

“He was asking my permission for something, but it’s a secret from Kaitlyn.”

“Really? Did it have something to do with what he was putting back in his pocket?”

“Very observant of you, my love. He wanted me to make sure it’s okay with you as well as me.”

“Make sure what’s okay?”
“David wants to propose to Kaitlyn during our wedding reception.”

“Oh my gosh, Kaitlyn will be so thrilled! She was just saying the other night she was disappointed he didn’t propose on their two year anniversary. How perfectly lovely. She won’t be expecting it at all.”

Sherlock looked at his wonderful fiancée. He had known she would not be upset about sharing her special day with someone else.

“You are the sweetest, most unselfish woman I’ve ever met,” he declared, kissing Molly again.

She seemed surprised at the compliment. “Why are you saying that?” she inquired when their lips parted.

“Not too many women would be unconcerned about someone else stealing their thunder on their wedding day.”

“Why would I care? Once we are married, I’ll have everything I’ve ever wanted. If someone else wants to share our happy day to make their own happy memory, I think it’s wonderful. Besides, I know Kaitlyn will be over the moon.”

“That’s my girl. I told David I was sure you’d be okay with it. He gave me his number to text him as to whether you were okay with it. He showed me the ring. That was what he put back in his pocket.”

The taxi arrived at 221B Baker Street. Sherlock paid the cabbie and the couple went into the building and upstairs into their flat.

“So, what was the ring like?” asked Molly once Sherlock had closed and locked the door.

“It was a round solitaire, with smaller stones around it.”

“Sounds lovely,” the pathologist commented, twisting her own ring. “It doesn’t sound as good as the beautiful heart shaped one you gave me, though.”

“I did wonder if it might be too plain, with no other diamonds around it. I didn’t want diamonds along the band though. That would have been too much like your previous engagement ring.”

“This ring is perfect just the way it is,” asserted Molly. “The heart says it all.” She reached up and drew his head down to hers, kissing him.

That telltale flame started to course through Sherlock’s body once again; he mentally counted to ten, just ten seconds to allow himself to enjoy the sensations he felt, then he counted to ten again. Okay, he had to stop. He could do this. His phone pinged, rescuing him from needing to make the decision to pull away without an external motivation for it.

Pulling out the phone from his pocket, the detective looked at the message. It was from David.

“Did you ask Molly if she was okay with what we discussed?”

“Yes.” Sherlock texted back. “She’s totally fine with it.”

“Fantastic!” was the response. The detective decided there was no need to continue the conversation for now and turned the device off. At Molly’s questioning look, he said, “It was David. He was just checking to see whether you were okay with his plan, and I told him you were
fine with it. I’m glad he texted, it was the distraction I needed. It’s not easy for me to stop kissing you once I’ve started.”

“Shall we take a look at that pamphlet then, with the order of service covers for our wedding? That should serve further as a distraction. Maybe allow that sake and champagne buzz to go away. I’m sure that doesn’t help our willpower.”

“That sounds like a good idea.” They went into the sitting room and sat together on the sofa.

The pamphlet listed a website stating there were many more order of service covers there, so Sherlock turned on his laptop. They browsed the wedding covers. There were many beautiful ones available, but finally they selected one with a picture of two wedding rings. Above the rings were the words “Two Lives”, while under the rings were the words “One Love.” Further down was a Bible passage, “Wherever you go, I will go. And wherever you stay, I will stay. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Ruth 1:16-17.”

“I really like this one,” said the sleuth. It kind of expresses what you did for me. I guess that is from the Bible somewhere, right?”

“Yes, it’s in the Old Testament. Ruth was actually one of Jesus’s ancestors. You will read it in his genealogy. Well you have already read one genealogy, which lists it from Joseph’s line, but the genealogy list through Mary’s line is in Luke, and Ruth is there also.”

“I guess that’s my next mission, to read Ruth and Luke.”

“Do you want to do that now? I can email Nancy Schmidt and let her know which order of service cover we’ve chosen, so she can order them. I’ll also send her the names of our bridal party.”

“That sounds good,” agreed Sherlock. He would be glad of some more distraction. Reading the Bible would help him focus on things other than how much he loved his fiancée and wanted to be with her.

Molly brought out her Bible and handed it to Sherlock, after showing him where the book of Ruth was.

He started to read the four chapters while Molly was composing her email. “What a brave young woman she was,” he commented upon finishing. “She gave up all she had been taught, to follow her mother-in-law. Why does the genealogical line go to David. Who was he?”

“Have you heard the story of David and Goliath?” questioned his fiancée.

“Didn’t he kill the giant with a stone? I thought that was just a story.”

“Well, yes, it is a story, a factual one from the Bible. David became King of Israel. He is a very important figure in Biblical history. Jesus was his descendent. If you go to the next book in the Bible after Ruth, you will read about David.”

“Fascinating. I guess I will go to that after I read Luke.”

“Yes, it’s a good way, to go back and forth with Old and New Testament reading.”

Sherlock closed the Bible. “I think I’ll be done for now though. You sent off the email?”

“Yes.” The pathologist pulled up her sent email folder and showed him. “Does everything look correct? I put our full names and then the names of the wedding party.”
“Looks good to me.” He noted that Kayla’s surname was Roberts, where Molly had listed her as bridesmaid. He wondered briefly if she had been in contact with John. He had seen the signs quite clearly of her interest in his best friend.

“Would you like us to have a personal note on the back of the wedding service order, thanking people for coming or something? I didn’t want to do that without getting your feedback,” said the pathologist.

“I can talk to reporters about cases anytime, but when it comes to writing something down for a speech I’m absolute rubbish.”

“No you aren’t,” Molly defended him immediately. “You did a wonderful job at John’s wedding, when you weren’t getting side-tracked. You even said some rather sentimental things.”

“Ugh, sentiment. It seems I have become too sentimental lately.”

“There’s nothing wrong with that. Any suggestions for what to write?”

“I suppose tell them thanks for sharing our special day and all that.”

“I’ll write it up and read it back to you. Then you can add more if you want, or I can send it off to Nancy, okay?”

“Okay.” Sherlock sat back on the sofa and put his feet on the coffee table as he relaxed. He watched Molly compose the paragraph.

When she had finished, she read it out to him.

“We would like to thank everyone for helping to celebrate the special occasion of our wedding day with us. We hope you will continue to support us as we begin this new adventure together. Our lives are enriched for having you in it.

-Sherlock and Molly.”

“I like it, but maybe switch the last two sentences and replace hope with know?”

Molly changed the wording as Sherlock suggested so it read:

“We would like to thank everyone for helping to celebrate the special occasion of our wedding day with us. Our lives are enriched for having you in it, and we know you will continue to support us as we begin this new adventure together.

-Sherlock and Molly.”

“Perfect,” stated the detective, and Molly sent off another email to the secretary.

“Yet another task completed,” grinned Molly. At this rate we will have nothing left to do soon but wait for the wedding day to arrive.”

“That is not a good thing,” complained the detective. “Too much down time means too much fantasizing about you and me. Why did I think we needed a whole ten weeks?”

Molly laughed. “I guess you will need to get busy with detective work. Speaking of which, shouldn’t you check your email to make sure the times for tomorrow suit your prospective clients?”
“Damn it, woman, I only forgot because you look too hot in that dress.”

“Sure,” scoffed his fiancée. “What is with that mind palace of yours lately? Did it take a long holiday?”

“Possibly, and I blame you entirely.” He put his arms around her as he spoke, kissing her with a little more intensity than he should have done.

Molly was the one to pull away, ordering him, “Check your emails now, or you will forget again.”

The detective grumbled but did as he was told. He went to his laptop and pulled up his email inbox. Sure enough, emails had come in, confirming the times he had suggested for the following day.

“We’re all good for tomorrow,” he told Molly. “Satisfied?”

“Yes. Now you may have a reward for being good.”

He reached for her eagerly, but she ducked out of his grasp and headed to the kitchen. “What now?” he muttered.

“I’m getting your reward,” she told him, returning to the room with the container of remaining ginger nuts.

“Not that I don’t appreciate it, but I had a different sort of reward in mind,” he pouted.

“Sherlock Holmes, you are incorrigible. My goodness, I do use that word a lot, don’t I?” She giggled. “Now take a biscuit and I’ll make us some tea before bed.”

Sherlock took a biscuit sulkily. He knew he should be glad that Molly was keeping him in check, but it was most annoying, the fact that she seemed to have so much more self control than he did.

When Molly returned once again, this time with the tea, he asked, “Why is it that you seem to have no trouble in keeping things between us under control? It’s a constant struggle for me.”

“It’s not easy for me either, but you have to remember, I’ve had to practice self control around you for years. There were many times when I wanted to just tell you how I felt, but I didn’t want to put you in a position of having to decide whether you wanted to be just friends or consider anything more than that. It had to be your decision. It doesn’t mean my feelings are any less overwhelming than yours for me. I’ve just come to terms with them, and can usually keep from getting carried away. Except when I have a few cocktails in me,” she added wryly.

“Well, I was thinking that maybe it’s because I just love you more than you love me.”

Molly stared at him open-mouthed. “Seriously, Sherlock? You didn’t even admit to loving me until three and a half weeks ago! I, on the other hand, have been in love with you for literally, years!”

“So much so that you got yourself engaged to another man,” he said a little peevishly, then immediately regretted his words. Before she could respond, he said hastily, “That was completely out of line. I am sorry, please forgive me. I guess I’m a little more jealous of the meat dagger guy than I realized.”

Molly sighed, and touched his arm. “You need to get over it. I don’t know how many more ways I can prove to you that he was just a substitute for you, that I should never have agreed to marry him. I was lonely and feeling like life was passing me by, a woman in her mid-thirties with no family to love, no future with the man she truly longed for. At least I had the good sense to break things off
with him.” She leaned her head on his shoulder. “I told you over the phone, when you wanted me to say I loved you, that it had always been true.”

The detective put his arm around her. “I’m a complete arse, aren’t I? Constantly needing reassurance from you.”

“Not at all. In a way, I’m glad you said you were jealous. It’s a sign of your humanity, how far you’ve come.” She reached forward and got her tea cup, sipping from it. “You should finish your tea so we can get to bed.”

“Don’t leave the room once you finish your tea. There’s something I want to do.”

“Really?” The pathologist raised her eyebrow.

“Nothing to do with kissing you, although I also want to do that.” He drank his tea and set down the cup, just as Molly was finishing hers. Then he took out his phone and went to the camera icon. “I didn’t get a photo of you when we were dressed for the opera, so I want to get one of you now. That way I will always have your image with me, even when we are apart, like next week.”

“I look awful in photos,” said Molly. “Besides, you took that one at the florist.”

“I liked that one, but, like you said, your eyes were closed. Anyway, I’m going to need your help to put the photo on my display screen or whatever it’s called.”

“Fine,” grumbled his pathologist, “What kind of expression do you want?”

“Just think about how happy we are going to be on our wedding day,” the sleuth instructed her, and she could not help the beautiful smile that crossed her face.

Sherlock took several photos in quick succession. “Give me a sexy look,” he told her.

Instead, the pathologist laughed at him, which was exactly what he really wanted her to do, and he took a few more photos.

“Can we get a selfie now?” Molly asked, producing her own phone. She showed the detective how to change the camera to selfie position. Then she put her head next to Sherlock’s and they smiled for the camera. “You should really do this,” she told him. “Your arms are longer, so you can hold the camera further away.”

Sherlock took the phone, centred them in the viewscreen and tapped the button. He then did the same with his own camera.

“This feels very, uh, millennial doesn’t it?” he commented. “Or is it Generation X?”

“I can’t believe you’ve even heard of those terms,” grinned Molly.

“I do occasionally watch the news and hear stuff on television,” said the sleuth a bit defensively.

“Lighten up, gorgeous,” teased Molly as she tousled his curls. “Want me to help you put a photo on your display screen?”

“Sure, I could use your help.”

Molly showed her technologically challenged (at least camera-wise) fiancé how to choose a photo for his screen. She made sure she found the best photo for him to use, then saved it as the display screen in locked mode. “Once you unlock the phone, you can have a photo for the home screen
too. Do you want me to put on one of our selfies?’”

“Heck no “ the detective said. “I don’t need to see myself. Put another picture of yourself.”

“Only if you will let me take a picture of you, so I can put it on my home screen. I’ll keep the one from John’s wedding on my lock screen.”

“Very well. I refuse to smile though.”

“That’s fine. just look hot, like you always do,” Molly said as she aimed her phone camera at him.

Sherlock couldn’t help but laugh, and she captured it, getting a big smile from him after all to put on her phone. Then she picked the second best picture of herself for his home screen. “So, now can we go to bed?”

“No until I get in some serious good night kisses out here, seeing as we need to behave in the bedroom.” He took Molly’s phone from her and laid it next to his own on the coffee table, before putting his arms around her and holding her close. He proceeded to kiss her breathless. He recognized the signs of the physical desire trying to assert control over his logical mind. Then he heard the still, small voice telling him it was time to stop, before things went too far.

With great difficulty, he released Molly and told her in a voice that ached with the love and desire he felt, “Go, get into bed. I’ll be there once I can get myself back to normal.”

Molly, obviously sensing his internal struggle, immediately followed his direction, going to the bedroom.

Sherlock stood for a moment, inhaling and exhaling slowly. Then he picked up the tea cups and biscuit container and went into the kitchen. He washed the cups, taking his time, drying them and putting them away. Then the detective retrieved the two phones and put them on chargers. He really needed Molly to have gone to sleep in his absence. That way he wouldn’t be tempted to start kissing her again. He picked up the Bible and took it to the bedroom.

Glancing over at Molly, after he put the book on her bedside table, he was able to deduce by her even breathing that she had indeed fallen asleep. Very quietly, he undressed, then slipped into bed beside her. Instead of putting his arms around her, he faced away from her, but moved close enough so their backs were touching. He liked the feeling of being close to her warmth.

The sleuth lay awake for a few minutes, listening to the rhythmic breathing of his fiancée until sleep overtook him as well.

Chapter End Notes

Isn’t Molly unselfish to be willing to share her special day with another couple?

Poor Sherlock seems to be having trouble with his mind palace. I guess Molly is too much of a distraction.

The cover they chose for the wedding is a factual one I found online.

A lot of playfulness here, like with them taking photos of each other and selfies.
When Molly opened her eyes, she was a little surprised to find that Sherlock’s arms were not around her as usual, but she had fallen asleep before he came to bed. She figured he had not wanted to disturb her. She was tempted to give him a good morning kiss, but decided to let him sleep a little longer as she had done the previous day.

Getting out of bed as quietly as possible, the pathologist found her clothes for the day. She was just pulling her jumper over her head, when a voice came from the bed.

“Am I to miss my morning kiss two days in a row?”

“I was just going to let you sleep a little longer. After all, you went to bed later than I did. You didn’t wake me either.”

“I don’t like waking up to find you not there,” pouted the detective.

“I guess you’ll need to get used to it fast, seeing as I start night shift at midnight tomorrow. Besides, you will be out of town yourself for however long it takes to solve that case in Dartmoor and hopefully find the racehorse. How about coffee and crumpets for breakfast?”

“Kiss me first.”

Molly walked over to the bed and leaned down to give him a quick peck, then gave a little squeak of surprise as the detective pulled her down onto him. She allowed herself to thrill at the touch of his lips on hers briefly, then pushed him away saying, “Get dressed while I get our breakfast ready.”

“Spoilsport,” muttered Sherlock, but he followed her command.

While they ate, Molly asked, “Where are we off to first?”

“A small university to see a Mr. Soames. He teaches Greek and someone stole, well rather, copied the answers for the final exam.”

“That sounds a little dull for you. No murder. Just a mystery.”

“Yes, it is merely a three on my scale of one to ten, not something I would have bothered with before. It seems however, lately I have lost that desire for dangerous cases and the thrill of solving murders, in favour of a different type of desire.” He gave a sultry look to is fiancée which made her blush.

“So, anyway,” she said, trying to get things back on track, “what do you know so far, from the
emails about the case?"

“I know there are only three students who are suspects. It is just a matter of discovering who the culprit was. Mr. Soames has already provided me details of the students. I have an idea as to which one did the deed, but I need to look around the campus a bit, to confirm my theory.”

He continued, “It should be fairly straightforward to solve this and make everyone happy. Then I will feel I have accomplished something useful. As you know, I have been sorely neglecting my sleuthing lately. It has been much more fun investigating my future wife.”

The detective winked at Molly, who couldn’t help but laugh. Sherlock was no longer that man whose sole focus was looking for excitement in his life, something to make him realize he was alive. This new Sherlock was softer, caring of others; he was more relaxed in general. His focus had shifted from living only for the present, to living and looking forward to the future.

“What’s the other case about then, that you’ve scheduled for this afternoon?”

“Another one I should be able to deduce very quickly. A wife suspecting her husband of having an affair. Hopefully I can give her some closure one way or the other. If he has been cheating on her, I hope she kicks him out on his arse. I have no tolerance for someone who would marry, and then take up with someone else. Disgraceful.”

Molly took his hand and squeezed it. “I’m glad I won’t have to worry about you going off with someone else.”

“If I wasn’t certain you were the only woman in this world for me, I would not have asked you to marry me. You may be the only one who would be able to put up with me anyway,” he grinned at her.

“Maybe the old Sherlock, because I was able to see the real you where others couldn’t. Now though, you’ve become a man any woman would want. But don’t go getting any ideas.”

“I will always have eyes only for you.” He rose to his feet and caught her up in his arms, kissing her to prove his point.

The pathologist responded, wrapping her arms around his waist and returning the fervour of his embrace until the room started spinning around her. “I think you’ve made your point,” she said unsteadily. “We really need to stop getting carried away, especially when you have an appointment to keep.”

“Yeah, I know,” he agreed, sighing.

After cleaning up the breakfast dishes, the duo prepared to leave. Sherlock grabbed his Belstaff and contemplated wearing the deerstalker. “Should I put on the hat?” he asked.

“Definitely not,” asserted Molly. “As far as I am concerned, you should burn that ugly thing. If you must keep it however, just save it for when you are talking to reporters after successfully solving a high profile case.”

“Okay,” he agreed amiably. “The ‘ear hat’ goes back on the hat stand.” They went outside and were shortly on their way to the university.

Mr. Soames was there to greet the couple when they arrived. “I am glad you were able to come so quickly,” he said. “The examination is this afternoon and I really need to find out who the cheater is.”
“Please show me to the room where you had the papers,” instructed the detective.

The Greek tutor led them to a large room with a desk in the centre of it. “The papers were on my desk. They had been moved when I came in a couple days ago. My assistant assured me he had not done so. All I can assume is that one of the students I told you about, took the papers while I was gone, and copied them.”

Sherlock walked around the room, occasionally using his magnifying glass to study anything that might seem out of place.

“Nobody has been in here since you discovered the papers had been moved?”

“Not at all. I didn’t want to disturb anything that you might find useful.”

“Very good,” praised the sleuth. He walked to the large window at the side of the room. Directly outside was a path. “I presume this path leads to the athletic field?” he inquired.

“Indeed it does,” confirmed Mr. Soames.

“I should like to take a walk there. You may remain here. I will return shortly. Let’s go, Molly.”

Molly joined Sherlock as they walked outside, taking the path which led past the room in which they had been previously standing. As they reached the window, Sherlock peered inside.

“I can’t even see in,” complained Molly. “The window is set too high.”

“Hmm,” said the detective thoughtfully. “Yes, another thing that gives me reason to suppose I am on the right track with regards to who took the papers. Let’s continue on.”

They reached the field, which contained a running track and next to it, a sandpit for practicing the long jump. Sherlock picked up some sand and looked at it through his magnifying glass. “Just as I suspected,” he murmured.

“What?” asked his fiancée. She was enjoying watching him at his work. He had such a look of concentration on his face as he made his examination.

“The sand from the long jump pit of course,” he murmured as if Molly should have a clue what he was talking about.

“Forgive me if I sound dense, but what on earth does the sand have to do with anything?”

“I’m sorry. You couldn’t be expected to know without having read the background of the students. One of them, Gilchrist, is a long jumper. I found sand in the carpet of the room I was investigating. It obviously came from his shoes. In addition, Gilchrist is over six foot in height, unlike the other two students. He must have been walking back from the long jump pitch and happened to see the examination papers through the window of Mr. Soames’ office. I believe it was a spur of the moment thing, to take and copy the papers. We will need to have him confess though to make sure, so let’s get back to the office.”

“Amazing,” said Molly, admiringly. She had not seen Sherlock in action too often. Hearing him explain his deductions was quite illuminating. When he examined corpses in front of her, he tended to make comments without explaining his reasoning. Funny, she thought. A bit like Jesus telling parables, then needing to explain what they meant afterwards, if people were to understand.

Sherlock took a look around the field, and saw nobody else was around. He leaned down and
kissed his fiancée. “I’m quite enjoying having you with me.”

They made their way back to where the Greek tutor was waiting in his office.

“You may call Mr. Gilchrist in and confront him,” said the sleuth confidently, as he explained to Mr. Soames the deductions he had shared with Molly.

The young man was summoned and confronted with the evidence. He immediately confessed.

“I happened to see those papers through the window after my long jump session the other day. I don’t know what got into me. I’ve never been a cheater. I’ve just been so busy lately and hadn’t studied as much as I should have, so I took the papers on impulse and copied them.” He hung his head in shame.

“Well, it is my fault as well for leaving the examination papers on my desk and forgetting to lock my office,” said the tutor. “You will not be able to take this examination obviously, but I will prepare another for you to take next week. Make sure you study in the meantime.”

The student left the room, after thanking Mr. Soames effusively for giving him another chance.

“Well, it appears my work is done here,” remarked Sherlock.

“Thank you so much Mr. Holmes, said the tutor, shaking the detective’s hand. “What do I owe you for your time?”

The sleuth waved dismissively. “I do not require payment. I think the young man would have confessed himself at some point. I was really just doing this to help you, and to give my mind palace a small workout.”

At the Greek tutor’s questioning look, Molly explained. “That’s how Sherlock describes his mental faculties.”

“Interesting concept. I like it,” the older man murmured.

The couple made their goodbyes and left the university.

“Shall we get some lunch?” inquired the sleuth of his fiancée, as he hailed a taxi.

“Sure. Is there somewhere near your next appointment?”

“I believe so.”

They found a fish shop and ate chips, which were definitely not the same quality of those from Joe’s Fish Shop.

Within a half hour of arriving at their next appointment, Sherlock had determined that the suspected cheating husband was indeed having an affair with the nanny.

After delivering the unwelcome news, which Sherlock did in a remarkably gentle way, he and Molly returned to Baker Street.

During the cab ride home, the detective was silent, lost in thought.

Once inside the flat Molly remarked, “Well, that was a successful day’s work. What has made you so pensive?”
“I guess I just don’t understand people sometimes. That poor woman. She wasn’t unattractive, and she seemed devoted to her husband. Why would he go behind her back and risk everything to have an affair? They have two kids for God’s sake. I just don’t get it.”

“Sherlock, it’s a sad fact of life that many marriages these days fail. I don’t know if people don’t work at it, or just go in with unrealistic expectations. We can’t know why that man cheated on his wife, we can only take responsibility for our own lives.”

She continued, “I think a faith based marriage has a better chance at success, because your goal is to please God, as well as yourselves. I have no doubt that we will succeed where others fail because of this. If you remained an atheist, I think we may have had a lot of challenges down the road.”

“I’m glad that is one thing we don’t have to worry about now. So, what do you want to do tonight? It seems we have some spare time.”

“It will be nice to have a night in, especially seeing as tomorrow night I go back to work. Do you want to watch a movie or just watch television?”

“I guess we could see if there’s anything worth watching on the telly, and go from there.

The pair went into the sitting room and sat together on the sofa. Sherlock picked up the remote and turned on the television. He started searching through the channels. After changing the station about ten times he handed the remote to Molly. “I don’t know why I’m even looking at this. I really don’t watch much television.”

“Me neither. I like a few shows, but usually I just have the telly on for background noise while I’m cooking or doing chores. I really prefer just picking up a book and reading.”

Molly suddenly remembered something.

“Sherlock, did you end up asking your parents about the negative emotions you associated with Enid Blyton books?”

“Oh yes. I asked my mum when we were at Sherrinford on Sunday. With all that happened afterwards, it completely slipped my mind.” He recounted the details of that conversation to Molly.

When he had finished, she said thoughtfully, “So your sister was able to manipulate you even when you were young. She must be absolutely brilliant.”

“Mycroft said she was described as being an era defining genius, beyond Newton, when we were tested on our abilities as children.”

“That’s quite mind-blowing, to think of anyone being more clever than you are.”

“My brother will tell you in no uncertain terms that he is the smart one.”

Molly traced the back of her hand along her fiancée’s sharply defined cheekbone. “Oh, but you’re the total package, babe,” she flirted.

Sherlock grabbed her hand and pressed it to his lips. “Be careful, Molly Hooper. Remember, I find it a lot harder to control myself than you do, and when you start blatantly flirting like that, I’m taking it as an invitation.”

“An invitation to what?” she asked in mock innocence.
“To do this,” he growled, placing his hands on either side of her face. Then he was kissing her, hungrily, desperately, trying to convey to her his need.

Molly returned his kiss with enthusiasm, thinking dreamily that this was much better than watching television.

Sherlock’s hands dropped to his fiancée’s shoulders, massaging them as he continued to kiss her. Her hands in turn crept upwards so she could run her fingers through those wonderful curls.

As always happened when they were involved in a passionate embrace, Molly had to use all her willpower to slow things down. She pulled away a little and nestled her head against Sherlock’s shoulder, below his chin.

The detective groaned and said in a voice that was deep with longing, “How can I do this for another eight weeks? It seems like forever.”

“I know. I’m sorry. I can’t help myself. I love it when you kiss me. I don’t want to have to give that up in order to keep away from the temptation you provide. Would you rather we stick to less intense kissing?”

“God, no. If I couldn’t release some of my feelings every now and then, I’d probably just go crazy one day and carry you to the bedroom, abstinence guide be damned.”

Molly chuckled. “The whole point of kissing outside of the bedroom is to prevent that from happening.”

“I realize that. It’s still a good rule for us, and I’ll stick to it. I’m just saying I need to be able to at least express myself through kissing. It’s a wonder I never understood how enjoyable kissing can be, and how many ways there are to do it. Quite illuminating. Perhaps I should study different methods of kissing and write a dissertation on it, like I did with the 243 types of ash.”

“Sherlock, I don’t think studying kissing is going to help with your detective work. It may not be the most appropriate subject to discourse about with fans of your work either,” grinned the pathologist.

“Very well, I shall just keep the information for private use. After all, I’ve already researched that French kissing thing.”

“Really?” Molly raised an eyebrow. “When did you find time for that?”

“I don’t remember, one day when you were at work.”

“I suppose I should be glad you didn’t do that before we got together.”

“Certainly not,” responded Sherlock in a shocked tone. “The only woman I have ever wanted to please is you, Molly Hooper.”

“You don’t need to study techniques to please me. You are doing perfectly fine already. Your kisses are way better than any I’ve experienced in the past.”

“Well, I suppose you would know, seeing as you’ve probably had loads of boyfriends, including Moriarty,” said the detective jealously.

“Whoa there. Your green-eyed monster is emerging. I have not had ‘loads’ of boyfriends as you put it. I did not even get as far as kissing Jim. We only went out three times before I ended it. I barely
even went out with anyone when I was younger because I was too busy studying. Tom was the first person to reach the status of boyfriend. Furthermore, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, I have never been kissed or kissed anyone the way we do it.” She poked her tongue out playfully at her fiancé.

“I guess we were just made for each other then. Shall we practice some more?”

She eyed him warily. “Will you be needing a cold shower afterwards?”

“Possibly.”

“Then my answer is no. I don’t want to cause you any more discomfort. Come on, let’s have something to eat for dinner and then you can do some Bible reading to keep your mind palace in working order. I have two days of devotionals myself to read.”

“Yes ma’am,” grumped the sleuth.

How about I make us some stir-fry? We have loads of fresh vegetables and I have soy sauce in the cupboard as well as rice.”

Shetlock visibly perked up. “I like Chinese food,” he stated.

“I know. John told me you like the Chinese place down the road, but this time I’m cooking it. Besides, you mentioned you had a lot of experience with chopsticks due to eating a lot of Chinese take-away.”

She went into the kitchen and started preparing their evening meal, chopping vegetables, cutting up two chicken breasts and getting out the oil for the frying pan. “We should get a wok,” Molly said. “It isn’t worth it for one person, but cooking for two makes a difference.”

Molly turned on her phone and started playing songs from the Paramore album she enjoyed. “It’s just a spark, but it’s enough to keep me going,” she sang as she prepared the meal. She was enjoying cooking for someone besides herself. Life was good.

Chapter End Notes

The first case Sherlock and Molly go to solve is based on “The Three Students,” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Thought it would be nice to do a little canon story from the original author!

Oh dear, that flirty Molly is walking a tightrope, isn’t she? I think it would be hard to not flirt with the person you love. Don’t you love jealous Sherlock?

Please make my day by leaving your feedback! I like to pose questions to prompt a response in case you don’t have any specific thoughts on a chapter..
Planning another Surprise - Sherlock (Saturday)

Chapter Summary

Sherlock enlists Mycroft’s help to do something special for Molly.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sherlock listened as Molly sang from the kitchen. He liked hearing her sweet voice, it was something new he had discovered about her, that she liked singing to her music. He was glad she felt comfortable enough with him now to sing in his presence, well from the next room at least.

“What’s the name of that band again?” he called to his fiancée.

“Paramore,” she responded.

“As in a lover, a paramour?”

“No, it is spelled PARAMORE. Don’t ask me why. I just love their music.” She went back to singing along.

An idea flashed through the detective’s brain. He decided to research the band and find out more about them.

Fetching his laptop, he turned it on and sat in his leather armchair. He Googled the band and read some information about them. Suddenly his eyes fixed on an article about their upcoming tour. They were coming to London. He clicked on the link and read that the band would be performing in the Royal Albert Hall. The date was Monday after next.

Could he take Molly to see the concert? He clicked on the link to purchase tickets for the event, silently wondering if it would be too late to get tickets at this late date. Sure enough, a line of text came up. Saying there were no tickets available. “Damn,” he muttered.

Then the sleuth had an idea. Pulling out the phone from his pocket, he sent a text to Mycroft.

“Need a favour. Can you get me tickets for a concert at the Royal Albert Hall on Monday week? Molly’s favourite band Paramore is performing.” He waited for a response and went back to reading about the band.

The band members proclaimed themselves to be Christian, although they were not a Christian band per se. No wonder Molly liked them, he thought to himself.

He could smell the food cooking and his mouth watered. He didn’t remember the last time he had had a proper home cooked dinner. It was probably when he had been visiting his parents at Christmas.

“Come on, Mycroft,” he muttered. “I hope your connections count for something in places other
than your governmental affiliates.”

It was some minutes later when the detective heard his phone ping. There was a message from his brother.

“Box seat tickets procured for you. Figured you wouldn’t want to be where people might recognize you and cause a scene. Had to pull some strings. You owe me, brother mine. Pick tickets up under your name at Door 12 of the venue on the evening in question.”

“Thanks Mycroft, I’m in your debt,” he texted back.

The detective smiled when Mycroft texted back, “I will collect, have no fear about that. You know how I hate texting too, so you owe me even more.”

Sherlock turned off his phone and x’ed out of his laptop browser window, as Molly called, “Dinner’s ready.”

He was pleased with himself. That had been fortuitous timing indeed. He walked into the kitchen and sat at the table. Molly placed a plate of stir fry in front of the detective, then set one down at her spot.

Sherlock enjoyed his meal, commenting, “This is every bit as good as Chinese take-away, Molly.”

His fiancée beamed. “Thank you. It’s fun to cook for someone besides myself. I know I can’t do it all the time, like when I am on night shift, but at least I can do it on weekends and regular work days. I also make a nice authentic Italian pasta sauce.”

“I look forward to trying more of your culinary creations.”

As Molly was clearing away the dinner dishes, she asked, “Sherlock, I was thinking about your case this morning, with the Greek tutor.”

“Yes?” Sherlock said in a puzzled tone.

“You were telling me the other night about the languages you know. Greek isn’t one of them, is it?”

“No. I have had no cases in which I was required to have knowledge of that particular language.”

“Well, I don’t know if you are aware of this, but the New Testament was originally written in Greek.”

“Really? That’s very interesting.”

“I’m not trying to tell you that you should learn Greek, just saying if you ever decided to, you might enjoy reading the New Testament in its original language.”

“That would indeed be interesting. A lot can be lost in translation.”

“I don’t know any Greek myself, but I do know, from learning it in church, that there are several different Greek words for different types of love.”

Sherlock was intrigued. “Really? How do they differ?”

The one word for love is ‘eros,’ which is erotic, sexual love. That one is actually not mentioned in the New Testament. Another type of love is ‘storge,’’ which is affection between family members.
Then there is ‘phileo’ which is a deep bond, or friendship kind of love.”

“Like how you feel about a best friend?” asked Sherlock. “Like my friendship with John?”

“Exactly,” agreed the pathologist. “The last kind of love is ‘agape’ love and it is used the most often in the New Testament. It is the selfless, unconditional love that God has for us.”

“It seems the English language is rather inadequate when it comes to the word love,” remarked the sleuth.

“That’s for sure. I want you to know, Sherlock, that the love I feel for you is more than the eros kind of love. My love for you is agape love, Unchanging and unconditional,” she told him earnestly.

“I know that,” he assured her. “You’ve proved that so many times in the ways you helped me. You never asked for anything in return. While I know I definitely feel that eros love, I also feel the love you are speaking of now, because your happiness is what matters most to me. So I guess we are on the same page.”

Taking the plates out of Molly’s hands and placing them in the sink, he continued. “The English language may be inadequate, but I have a few other words I can use for love, like ‘Ich liebe dich,’ and ‘je t’aime, je t’adore.’ I do adore you Molly Hooper. He put his arms around his fiancée then and kissed her reverently, slowly, tenderly. Every fibre of his being vibrated to her response. The feel of their lips connecting made him feel so alive, glad he was on this earth.

The detective released his fiancée and said, “Je suis fou de toi.”

“What does that mean?”

“It means I’m crazy about you.”

“You speaking in another language, it’s quite sexy.” Molly batted her eyelashes.

“I’ll have to do it more often then,” he grinned roguishly.

“Behave, Mr. Holmes. Why don’t you go take a shower while I wash the dishes. Then I’m going to catch up on my “Our Daily Bread” reading.”

“With all due respect, Molly Hooper, you started it by calling me sexy.”

“No I didn’t. I said that you speaking in another language was sexy,” she corrected him.

Sherlock pouted. “So my words are sexy, but not me?”

“Wow, you’re really fishing for compliments aren’t you? I find everything about you sexy, if you must know. Your hair of course, your deep voice, your energy when you are on a case and the way you pop your ‘p’ at the end of ‘yep’ or ‘nope.’ Totally adorable, in a heart stopping way. Then there are your lips and the way they feel against mine...” Her voice trailed off as Sherlock pulled her close again.

The detective kissed her tenderly. “I love the way your lips feel against mine too. So now I’m going to take that shower as you suggested, or you won’t get your reading done, and I want to do mine, too.”

He left Molly in the kitchen and went to take his shower.
In the sitting room, Molly was seated on the sofa, with her legs curled beneath her. She had put her Bible on the sleuth’s leather chair.

“You don’t want me to sit with you?” he asked.

“I would never not want you to sit with me, but I know how you love your chair.”

“I love you more, so I’d rather sit with you. I’ll sit in my chair when you are not in the room; how does that sound?” He picked up the Bible as he spoke and seated himself next to his fiancée.

“Works for me,” she said, glancing up at him as she spoke, before returning her attention to her reading.

Sherlock found the book of Luke in the New Testament and began to read. He was soon engrossed. Luke was the only author who told the story of Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem.

“So much common sense in this,” he murmured to himself after awhile.

Molly had been leaning against his shoulder, having finished her reading. “Hmm, what?” She asked sleepily.

“Everything Jesus talked about, it’s so true. ‘Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.’ If everyone would actually do that, this world would be a much better place.”

“That’s true. I’ve heard people say Bible is an acronym for ‘basic instructions before leaving earth.’ It’s a rather good way to describe it, and one I’ve always remembered. I guess I’ll go take my shower now, I’m falling asleep on you.”

“Okay, love.” The detective kissed her cheek and returned to reading as she got up from the sofa. His brain vaguely registered the sound as she turned on the shower.

Rather than have the same thing happen as the previous night, when Molly was asleep before he went to their bedroom, Sherlock decided to continue his reading in bed. He was reading chapter eleven when his fiancée entered the room.

“Can I ask you something about this?” he asked.

Molly slipped under the duvet and sat beside him, peering at the passage he was pointing at.

“For some reason, I feel like these words are familiar in some way,” he said.

“You most likely heard a version of those words when you were in church as a child. It’s referred to as ‘The Lord’s Prayer.’ We also say it every week in church, so you might have remembered it from there. Many Christian denominations use that prayer regularly in their church services, because Jesus himself instructed his disciples to pray that way.”

“Interesting. I shall have to pay attention tomorrow, when we are in church.”

“I’m really excited about you coming with me tomorrow,” confided the pathologist. “I think you will get a lot out of the service as a new Christian.”

“I believe I got a lot out of it last week, when I was still on the fence about things. Some of those song lyrics really spoke to me, and the sermon did too.”

“I’m glad,” smiled Molly. “Hey, I have a question to ask you, while we are talking about church.
Do you remember Abigail and Caleb, who were leading the singing last week?”

“Of course. I thought they sounded very good.”

“I was wondering if you would mind if I asked them to sing while we are signing the register during our wedding.”

“I have no objection. Do you have a song in mind?”

“Actually, I do. There’s a beautiful song that was made famous by Celine Dion and Andrea Bocelli, who is an amazing blind tenor. The song is called ‘The Prayer.’ Let me just get my phone and I’ll look it up on YouTube.”

She hopped out of bed and returned a minute later with her phone. Molly found the song on YouTube and played it for Sherlock.

“A very nice song,” he observed, after it was finished. “Do you think they could learn it in time?”

“Actually, I’ve heard them sing it before during a church service some time ago,” responded his fiancée.

“Well then, I guess you can ask them tomorrow. I saw that you have their names on the guest list for our wedding, so presumably they are friends of yours.”

“They are. We have been involved in church Bible studies together. They are married, you know.”

“My deductive powers must be slipping. I did not realize that.”

“Well, you had a lot of things to process last week,” smiled Molly. She took her phone and put it on the charger she had brought into the bedroom with her. “I’ll set my alarm on my phone for eight-thirty,” she remarked, as she did so before laying the phone on the nightstand.

Sherlock finished the chapter he was reading and then put the Bible on his own nightstand. Molly had already gotten comfy under the duvet. He turned off the bedside lamp and reached to hold his fiancée close to him. “Kiss me goodnight, please,” he said softly.

Molly turned her head so their lips could meet in a delicious, sweet kiss. With a sigh of contentment, the detective closed his eyes and slept, as he continued to hold the woman he adored close to him.

Chapter End Notes

Paramore is a great band. I recommend you listen to their music. The concert Sherlock has Mycroft book tickets to is a factual one. The timing just happened to work in perfectly with my timeline, so I used it. I was quite excited when I discovered they had had a concert in London!

“The Prayer” is a lovely song, and I actually learned it to sing for a wedding a few
years ago. Recently I sang it again with a member from my church, for a benefit we
hosted to aid in disaster relief for the people affected by Hurricane Katrina. You can
find the song on YouTube, but I prefer the version with Andrea Bocelli and Katherine
McPhee.

Please continue to support my work with your feedback. Reading your comments
brightens my day and keeps me going despite cramping hands and pain in my arms
from typing.
A Scary Fall _ Molly (Sunday)

Chapter Summary

Molly is hurt after going to church with Sherlock.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The sound of her phone alarm going off woke Molly at eight-thirty. She reached out towards the phone, disappointed that she had to move from the shelter of Sherlock’s arms to tap the display in order to snooze. Having done so, she settled back into those arms and just enjoyed their warmth.

Those arms tightened around her and a deep, masculine voice that thrilled her asked, “How did you sleep, my love?”

She turned to look into the fathomless depths of her fiancé’s aquamarine gaze. “Wonderfully,” she responded with a small sigh of contentment. Waking up in your arms is the most wonderful way to wake up each morning.”

“I would have to agree with that.” Sherlock leaned in and kissed her gently. “Good morning.”

Knowing the alarm would be going off within a few minutes again, the pathologist pressed herself up against her fiancé, threading her hand through his curls and pulling his face to hers so they could enjoy a more thorough embrace.

When the buzzing sounded, Molly turned away from Sherlock and tapped for the alarm to stop. She got out of bed and shivered. It was quite a contrast being away from the warmth. Walking over to the wardrobe, she selected one of her new outfits for church. She like to dress up a little for church, because she didn’t have the type of job where you had to look smart every day.

Keeping her back to Sherlock, she dressed quickly. She didn’t know if he was watching her, but was mindful of their “guidelines” and didn’t want to offer any temptation.

His voice drifted from the bed. “Just so you know, I am closing my eyes. Let me know when you are done.”

Molly ventured a glance behind her and saw the sleuth’s eyes were indeed closed. She was pleased he was making an effort also to keep to their agreement. After she had put on a pair of earrings, not the ones from the previous week, she had thrown the one away as presumably Sherlock had done with the other, she walked to the bed and kissed her fiancée’s cheek. “All done. You can get up and I’ll fix us some breakfast.”

Molly had just finished scrambling some eggs and making toast when Sherlock walked into the kitchen. He looked gorgeous as ever, in his customary well-fitted suit.

“You can pour the coffee if you like. I’m just getting our eggs onto plates.”

Sherlock did so, and they ate their breakfast together in companionable silence. Afterwards, as they did the dishes, Sherlock asked, “How do you manage your sleep cycle when you are on night
“I usually try and go to sleep before three o’clock and get up around ten-thirty. I probably won’t be able to sleep so early today though. Maybe I’ll try to sleep for a few hours, usually I just take a nap before the first night.”

“So, you are on from midnight till eight in the morning until Friday?”

“Yup. Mike usually schedules Kaitlyn with me. I’ll probably be in his office most of the time doing reports and the like, seeing as I’m acting supervisor at night.”

“I’ll miss you tonight.”

“I’m not gone yet, Sherlock. We still have a few hours to go,” laughed Molly. “You can always text me if you’re lonely. If I’m in Mike’s office, I can respond quickly.”

“Speaking of Mike, Is he working this weekend?”

“Probably. He usually finishes at midnight when I take over for night shift. Why do you ask?”

“Just need to speak to him about something. I think I’ll tag along when you go to work tonight.”

Molly glanced at him a little suspiciously. “Why do you need to speak with Mike? Does it have something to do with a case?”

“No. It’s a personal matter. Never you mind, my love. You will find out in due course.”

“Oh really? I won’t press you further then. It will be nice to have you come along with me to the hospital anyway. I really don’t like taking the Tube at night.”

“I don’t like taking it at any time. Too crowded.”

“Well, people would probably recognize you and ask for your autograph too.”

“The price of fame is not cheap,” deadpanned the sleuth.

“I think you secretly enjoy the attention, as long as it’s on your own terms.”

“Possibly.”

“Well, I need to put on some makeup. I’ll be back in a few minutes and then we can get going,” Molly told her fiancé.

“Okay. I’ll just check out my emails while I wait.”

When Molly was done with her beauty regimen, she went into the sitting room to see Sherlock tapping away at his laptop. “Any cases in the works?”

“Nothing urgent,” he replied. “‘I’ve asked for more information on a couple. I won’t have time to do much till I’ve finished with the Dartmoor case anyway.” He turned off the laptop and stood. “Ready to go?”

“Yes.”

They walked outside and took a taxi to church. When they arrived, Molly was pleased to note that Kayla was there, and Sherlock appeared to recognize a couple other people who she had introduced
to him the previous week. Several others clustered around them. Apparently word had spread that she was engaged to London’s favourite detective. Fortunately, everyone was respectful in their manner. Two of her more casual friends did pull Molly aside and whisper,

“Omigosh Molly, he’s so gorgeous!” to which the pathologist nodded her agreement and smiled.

The couple made their way into the sanctuary of the church and sat down in the same place as the previous week. Molly felt a surge of pride, having someone to sit with. She had occupied the one end of this pew alone for years. She turned to her fiancé and smiled. He in turn took her hand in his and held it firmly.

Abigail and Caleb were once again leading the songs for the worship service. One of them was a song Molly particularly enjoyed from Hillsong United, called “Oceans.”

The lyrics of the chorus were:

“And I will call upon Your name,
And keep my eyes above the waves
When oceans rise, my soul will rest in Your embrace
For I am Yours and You are mine.”

She sang along, her heart full of joy. Trusting in God and His purpose for her had led her to this place of peace, and now a lifetime ahead with a man whom God had created for her. She looked over at Sherlock. He wasn’t singing, but he was moving his lips to the words that were displayed on the overhead projector. She longed to hear him sing. Molly felt sure the detective’s singing voice would be musical and rich, in the same way his speaking voice was. Perhaps one day, when he was more familiar with the songs.

Pastor Briggs’ sermon was very insightful, as always. Once in awhile, Sherlock squeezed her hand, when the preacher was saying something that he found particularly illuminating. She loved the feeling of their hands being clasped together. The detective only released it when they stood, taking it up again each time they sat.

After the sermon, everyone stood and said the Lord’s Prayer, which was displayed on the overhead projector, as the song lyrics had been. Molly, of course, had been saying the Lord’s Prayer for years and knew it by heart, but she was glad Sherlock could read the words for himself. They differed somewhat from the version he had read in Luke, but she knew by his quick glance at her, that he recognized them from the previous night. The sleuth even said them aloud, quietly. He was obviously not used to reciting anything out loud, let alone with others, so his voice was a little hesitant. Molly smiled as she said the words, enjoying the sound of the deep male voice next to hers. Molly’s mind drifted off into thinking about him saying his vows to her in a few short weeks, and she was a little embarrassed to feel Sherlock’s tug on her hand to get her to sit down after the prayer was concluded, a few beats after everyone else had sat down.

It was a communion Sunday, and Pastor Briggs began to explain what the Lord’s Supper was about. Very quietly, Sherlock whispered in Molly’s ear. “Am I allowed to take communion?”

“Anyone who believes in Jesus and who accepts him, and understands that communion is where we partake of the bread and wine to represent Jesus’ body and blood, can participate. We do it in remembrance of the sacrifice he made for us on the cross. You can watch me and follow my lead.”

Communion plates with bread were passed along the pews. Molly took a piece and Sherlock did the same. Once the plates were returned to the front of the church, Pastor Briggs said the words that led to everyone in the congregation eating the bread they held. Then were passed around the plates
which had small holes in which tiny cups of purple grape juice were set. The congregants also drank the grape juice together after the plates were returned to the front of the church.

Afterwards, Molly took Sherlock’s cup and placed it inside hers, then set them into the little hole in the rear of the pew ahead of them, which was designed for the used cups.

“After church, I have a couple questions to ask you about communion,” Sherlock told his fiancée in a low voice as everyone was instructed to rise for the last hymn.

“Of course,” said Molly. She opened her hymnal to the correct page and shared it with Sherlock. On the third verse, Molly was delighted to hear Sherlock making the effort to sing, quietly and hesitantly, but very musically. He had a lovely tone and obviously had a good ear for pitch. This was not surprising, given the fact that he played the violin so beautifully.

After the hymn, the pastor ended the service with a benediction and the church bells rang, as they did at the beginning of the service.

“You have a beautiful singing voice,” Molly told her fiancé, beaming at him.

“I do?” he asked shyly, looking embarrassed. “I’ve never really tried to sing before. I’ve hummed to violin music, especially when I am composing it myself, but I don’t usually listen to music with lyrics.”

“You definitely need to do it more often.” Molly squeezed his hand, which he had automatically slipped into hers again as soon as the hymn was finished, and she had put the hymnal back into the pew ahead of them.

“Oh, let me introduce you to Caleb and Abigail,” said Molly as she walked towards the front of the church, where the couple was standing.

“Molly!” Abigail said as soon as the pathologist reached her. “I’m sorry we didn’t get to talk to you last week. Congratulations on your engagement!”

“Thank you,” beamed the pathologist. “Sherlock, I’d like you to meet Abigail and Caleb Evans.”

“Pleased to meet you,” said Caleb, extending a hand to Sherlock, who shook it.

“Lovely to meet you,” said Abigail, who, eschewing formality, offered the detective a quick hug. “My husband and I have been following your cases for years, as a matter of fact. One day you’ll have to tell us the secret of how you managed to survive that fall from the top of the hospital building.”

Sherlock chuckled. “That’s a secret not many are privy to, but suffice it to say I could not have accomplished it without Molly’s help.”

Abigail turned to Molly. “I can’t believe you never told me about Sherlock. Especially when I used to tell you about what a great detective he was, and how I enjoyed reading about his cases.”

“She still does,” Caleb put in dryly, rolling his eyes, and the four of them laughed.

“Well, it’s kind of a long story,” Molly told her friend. “Actually, I had an ulterior motive for coming up to you both today.”

“Really?”
‘Yes. I was wondering if Sherlock and I could engage your services, both of you, on our wedding day. I’d love it if you could sing “The Prayer” while we sign the register.”

“When are you getting married?”

“Eight weeks from yesterday.”

“That shouldn’t be a problem,” said the singer. “Now, if you had said four months, it would have been a different story.” She laid a hand lightly on her softly rounded abdomen with a contented smile.

“O!,” exclaimed Molly. “You told me a few weeks ago that you were due to have an ultrasound around this time. Did you have it? Did you find out if it’s a boy or girl?”

“Indeed we did,” Caleb answered for his wife. “We are expecting a beautiful baby girl.”

“How wonderful,” the pathologist enthused. “I’d love to have a baby girl myself...” she broke off and looked at Sherlock, a little embarrassed.

The detective merely smiled at her, but oh, the depth of love in that smile could not be misunderstood. It made her feel as if her heart stood still. They stood staring at each other, spellbound for a few moments until Abigail’s laugh broke in.

“I have the distinct feeling you two won’t be far behind us when it comes to starting a family. Our little girl will need a playmate anyway, we need more children here at church.”

They all laughed again and Molly said, “Thank you both. We’ll be sending out invitations in the mail soon. They should be arriving from the printer this week. You’ll have to tell us what you charge for singing too.”

“Why don’t we just make it our wedding gift to you?” suggested Abigail.

“That sounds perfect,” smiled Molly.

She and Sherlock said their goodbyes and headed to the back of the church. Pastor Briggs, who had been greeting people as they left, spoke to them.

“I will be sending you an email this week, with a list of what I require for the signing of the register, so look out for that. If you haven’t been to the registry office yet, make sure you do it soon. They require at least twenty eight days notice before a wedding.

“We actually took care of that on Friday,” Molly told him.

“Very good. I’ll look forward to seeing you next week.”

The couple exited the front doors of the church and started going down the steps, when a voice called, “Molly, can I talk to you for a moment?” It was Nancy Schmidt.

Molly turned towards the older lady and her heel caught in a crevice of the step. She lost her balance and her ankle turned to an awkward angle as she began to fall. Her left knee hit one of the stone steps painfully as she fell, and her left palm, trying to break her fall, struck the stone hard as well. Just as the pathologist realized she was not going to be able to prevent herself from falling down the steps further, a strong arm shot out and prevented her progressive descent.

Molly blinked back tears at the sudden, blinding pain in her twisted foot and the sting across her
knee and palm.

Sherlock gently pulled her upwards. “Where are you hurt, my darling?” he asked urgently.

“It’s my ankle. I twisted it as I fell, and I grazed my knee and palm too,” she managed to say as tears spilled down her cheeks.

A small group of stragglers had congregated around the couple, offering assistance, as Nancy came rushing up. “I’m so sorry, “ she apologized. “It’s my fault for distracting her as she was going down the steps,” she told Sherlock.

“Of course it isn’t your fault, it was an accident,” he told the agitated woman. “Do you have a first aid kit?”

“Yes, there’s one in the church office. I’ll go and get it.” The secretary hurried away.

“Everything is under control,” the detective told the people around him. “There is no need for you to help right now.” The group slowly dispersed, casting glances back at the woman on the ground.

Sherlock gently lifted Molly’s right leg and put it across his knees as he supported her with his left arm. He looked at her ankle which was already beginning to swell.

“I hope it’s not broken,” he murmured. Then he looked at the graze on Molly’s knee which was dripping with blood. The palm wound was not as bad, fortunately.

Nancy came back with the first aid kit and pulled out antiseptic swabs and some sticking plasters.

“I’ll do it,” Sherlock told her, as she moved to clean Molly’s knee with a swab.

Molly winced as Sherlock gently dabbed at her knee, using two swabs, the ache in her ankle temporarily forgotten at this more immediate pain.

“We’ll need a larger bandage for her knee,” the detective told the flustered secretary who was hovering over the pair.

Pastor Briggs cane up then, as the secretary rummaged for a large piece of gauze for Molly’s knee and an elastic bandage to wrap around it.

“We’ll also be needing a bandage to strap her ankle,” he commanded.

“Is there anything I can do?” asked the pastor with concern.

Before Molly could speak, Sherlock said, “She slipped partway down the steps. Perhaps you could fetch her a glass of water?”

“Of course,” responded the older man, and he went back into the church.

Sherlock removed his left arm from around his fiancée and took the gauze and bandage proffered by Nancy, bandaging the wounded knee. Then he got another antiseptic swab and cleaned Molly’s palm, before adding a sticking plaster to cover the graze.

“Thank you,” she said with a wobbly smile at the man she loved.

“How is your ankle?” he asked solicitously.

“Throbbing,” responded the pathologist, “but as long as I keep it still, it isn’t too painful.”
“Bear with me as I wrap it. I know it’s going to hurt and I’m sorry.” He took a long elastic bandage and wrapped it securely around Molly’s ankle, passing it under her foot as well several times for support.

Molly bit her lip as he worked, trying not to cry out. She let out a whimper or two before the bandaging was complete. “How did you learn to do that?”

“You’d be surprised at what I’ve learned over the years when Mycroft has sent me out on assignments. I’m just lucky I wasn’t the one who needed the bandages.”

Pastor Briggs returned with the water and Molly drank gratefully. She did feel a little better afterwards.

“If I support you, do you think you can get down these steps?” Sherlock asked.

“I don’t know, but I’ll try.”

He hoisted her up and held her right arm around his shoulder.

“If we can get to the kerb, we can get a taxi home. Thank you Nancy for the first aid kit. Thanks for the water too, Pastor Briggs.” The detective handed the empty glass to the pastor. “Perhaps someone could hail us a cab?”

Molly hopped awkwardly down one step with Sherlock’s help, then bit her lip again at the pain even that small movement created,

Seeing her distress, Sherlock scooped her up in his arms instead and carried her the rest of the way.

By the time he reached the street, Pastor Briggs had already flagged down a taxi.

“If there is anything I can do,” the pastor began, but Sherlock didn’t let him finish.

“We’ll be alright. As soon as we get home, I’ll get an ice pack on to Molly’s ankle. Hopefully it’s just a sprain. We’ll text you later.” He gently deposited his fiancée into the waiting taxi, then went around to the other side and got in.

Nancy appeared at the cab window just before they pulled away, with Molly’s now ruined shoe in her hand. The heel had snapped off of the shoe itself and was irreparably damaged. Sherlock thanked her and tucked it into his pocket.

After giving instructions to go to Baker Street, the detective instructed Molly to keep her leg elevated on his lap, and she did so. As soon as they got home, Sherlock paid the driver and once again picked up his fiancée. Instead of putting her down to fish the key out of his pocket, he rang the doorbell.

Within a minute the door was opened by a very surprised Mrs. Hudson. “What on earth happened?”

“Molly fell down a couple of the steps at her - our church and hurt her ankle and knee.”

Molly was pleased to hear Sherlock refer to her church as his as well. She was enjoying the feeling of being in his arms and it almost made her forget about her throbbing ankle and stinging knee. Her palm wasn’t really hurting anymore.

“That’s dreadful,” exclaimed the landlady as she moved out of the way to allow them entrance.
“It could have been much worse. Sherlock saved me from falling the rest of the way. If he hadn’t caught me, I could have hit my head or had much worse injuries.”

“Thank God he was there then. Can I help you in any way?”

“If you could bring us some tea and maybe some of your delicious scones for lunch, that would be a great help,” the sleuth told her.

“Of course I will, I’ll be upstairs in a few minutes.”

Sherlock carried the pathologist up the stairs to their flat. “Can you reach into my left pocket for the key?” he asked.

She fished the key out of his pocket and managed to unlock the door, then open it as he continued to hold her.

“I feel like a bride being taken over the threshold,” she joked as her fiancé entered the flat. He left it open, knowing Mrs. Hudson would be up soon.

“In a few weeks you will be,” he responded, tightening his arms around her. “Would you rather be in the bedroom or should I put you on the sofa?”

“The sofa is fine.”

Sherlock set her down gently. He got a cushion from the yellow armchair for Molly to rest her ankle on, and another for behind her back so she could sit lengthwise on the sofa.

“I’m going to get an ice-pack,” he told her, going into the kitchen. He returned a couple minutes later with an ice-pack, a glass of water and two cartons of tablets - Panadol advance and Panadol extra advance. “Which would you like for the pain?” He showed Molly both packages.

She gingerly moved her ankle a bit. It was still throbbing, but the pain was not acute as it had been at first. She was touched by Sherlock’s thoughtfulness. “I think the regular Panadol will do, thanks.”

“I assume the pain has diminished somewhat, which means it is probably a sprain and not broken,” pronounced the detective with relief in his voice. He took two tablets from the foil pack and handed them to Molly, along with the glass of water.

She took the tablets and swallowed them with the water.

Sherlock set the glass on the coffee table just as Mrs. Hudson appeared in the doorway with tea and several scones.

“Thank you Mrs. Hudson. You can put them right here on the coffee table.”

“Shall I fetch you a couple plates?” inquired the landlady.

“Yes please.” Sherlock gently unwrapped the bandage from Molly’s ankle and placed the ice-pack on it. The swelling was still there, but it hadn’t gotten worse.

Molly yelped at the ice-pack on her skin.

“Oh, sorry,” apologized her fiancé. He called to Mrs. Hudson. “Can you bring me a damp tea towel please to wrap around the ice-pack?”
The elderly lady came in with plates and the tea towel, which Sherlock wrapped around the ice-pack and put back over the pathologist’s ankle. “Better?”


“If there’s anything else I can do, let me know,” said Mrs. Hudson before she returned to her own flat.

“Thanks,” the pathologist told her gratefully, before Sherlock rose from his kneeling position by the sofa to close the flat door.

The sleuth seated himself back on the floor in front of his fiancée. He put two scones with butter and raspberry jam onto a plate for his fiancée, then took two for himself.

As they ate, Sherlock asked, “Do you want me to call the hospital and say you won’t be in?”

“No,” Molly said immediately. “I just had a week off. If you can help me get to the hospital, I can get some crutches. Like I told you before, I usually spend most of the time in Mike’s office when I’m on nightshift.”

“Well, if you’re sure...”

“I am,” she said firmly.

“How will you manage while I’m out of town?”

“Kaitlyn can help me. If you give me my phone, I’ll call her.”

Sherlock dutifully procured Molly’s phone from her handbag and gave it to her.

The pathologist made the call and explained what had happened. When she hung up, she said, “Kaitlyn will come home with me after work, until you get back from Dartmoor, if I need it. Who knows, I might be fine in a couple days.”

“If you want me to delay my trip, I’ll put it off for a day or two.”

“Don’t do that. You said the big race is supposed to be this Saturday, so you need to find that racehorse safe and sound, hopefully, before then.”

“In that case I will at the very least delay our leaving until after I get you safely home on Tuesday. I’ll text John about it later.”

“That sounds like a good compromise,” Molly nodded.

Sherlock took their empty plates and tea cups out to the kitchen, then returned and kissed her softly. “You should rest,” he told her, “especially as you need to go to work later. I’ll wake you in plenty of time to eat and get ready.”

Molly nodded and settled back on the sofa so she was stretched fully along its length. She was in fact feeling quite tired after her fall and wanted to sleep to forget the throbbing in her ankle. Her eyes drifted closed and she was vaguely aware of her fiancé putting a blanket over her before she slept.

Chapter End Notes
Poor Molly can’t seem to get a break, but luckily for her, Sherlock is quite good at looking after her.

How did you find Molly’s explanation to Sherlock about communion? Have you heard the song “Oceans?” I recommend it!
Chapter Summary

Sherlock tend to his fiancée’s needs.

Chapter Notes

I have been posting this every day to catch up to my progress on another site. Once I am caught up this week, I will update three times a week, perhaps four if people really want it. Would you prefer three or four updates?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sherlock sat on the floor in front of the sofa, watching the rhythmic rise and fall of Molly’s chest as she slept. His fists clenched involuntarily as he thought about what had happened earlier.

The day had started out well. He had really enjoyed the church service, and meeting Abigail and Caleb. He had a strong feeling that the two of them could become good friends with him as well as Molly. There was an openness and honesty in their manner and Molly was already friendly enough with them that they merited a wedding invitation.

Then afterwards had come that horrible moment when the sleuth had watched as Molly started to fall. For a moment he had been frozen as dread washed over him. In the space of mere seconds he had envisioned her lying broken at the bottom of those hard stone steps and lost to him forever. Then, without realizing what he was doing, he had reached out impossibly quickly and stopped her from plunging down any further.

Immediately, his brain had forced him to go into emergency action mode, rather than dwell on what had almost happened. Sherlock had hidden from her the terror he had felt, and instead concentrated on making his fiancée as comfortable as possible. He couldn’t believe that she had suffered two near misses in the space of a week. He reflected now that the thing to remember was that she was okay. He knew God was watching over her, but his humanity, and the sentiment that came along with it, made him want to scream and ask why she had to go through so much trauma. She was so innocent, so not deserving of any pain. His heart overflowed with the love he felt for the petite pathologist. Perhaps it was all those years of refusing to acknowledge his feelings for her fully, but now, each day he fell more in love with his fiancée.

Finally getting up quietly, the sleuth pulled out his phone and sent off a text to John.

“Molly sprained her ankle this morning. Need to delay departure on Tuesday so I can bring her home after nightshift. Be here at ten instead of eight.”

John’s text was swiftly forthcoming, and they texted back and forth.

“My God, did she see a doctor?”
“She’s going in to work tonight. She can see someone there if her ankle doesn’t improve. She’s sleeping now.”

“Tell her Rosie and I are thinking of her and hoping she is all better soon.”

“Will do. Thanks John.”

Their conversation finished, Sherlock decided he should let Mike Stamford know what was happening. Fortunately he had The man’s mobile stored on his phone. He called the number and fortunately Mike answered.

“Hey Sherlock, what can I do for you?”

Sherlock walked to the bedroom and closed the door so the sound of his voice wouldn’t wake Molly. “Mike, I wanted to let you know Molly had a fall this morning, she tripped down some steps.”

“Oh my God, is she okay?”

“Some scrapes and a twisted ankle. She is determined to come to work though.”

“How has she been since last week? I hope she has recovered from that.”

“A couple of nightmares, but she’s a strong woman.”

“She’d have to be, to be willing to take you on.” A chuckle sounded from the other end of the line.

Sherlock was not offended. He had known Mike for many years, and the man had seen him at his worst. “Believe me, it might have taken me a few years to get a clue, but you have to give me credit for the fact that once I did, I didn’t waste time in making sure she will be forevermore stuck with me.”

Mike chuckled again. “That’s for certain.”

“Anyway, while I have you on the line, I have two requests.”

“More body parts you need to experiment on?” teased Stamford.

“Very funny. No, I was wondering if you can requisition a pair of crutches for Molly and bring them downstairs for her when we get to the hospital tonight for her shift. I can call you just before we arrive.”

“No problem,” stated Stamford easily. “And your other request?”

“I had been planning on asking you this in person tonight, but seeing as we are on the phone now, I’ll just go ahead and ask. Next week Monday I have procured tickets for a live performance by Molly’s favourite band.”

“You mean Paramore is in town?” interrupted Stamford.

“How the hell do you know her favourite band?”

“Not everyone is as oblivious as you, Sherlock,” came the laughing reply. “She often plays their music when she’s at work doing post-mortenms. Says it keeps her calm and focussed on the job at hand.”
“Hmm, interesting. Well anyway, doors open at six-thirty and I was hoping you can make sure Molly is scheduled for the early shift that day, you know, the seven till four shift.”

“Easily done. I think she is not scheduled for work anyway on Monday, but if she is, I’ll take care of it. There isn’t much I wouldn’t do for that girl. She’s my best worker. I wouldn’t trust her to be supervisor in my absence otherwise. Very smart girl you have there, mate.”

“Except that she chose me,” remarked the detective dryly.

“Actually, I think she balances you perfectly. She grounds you in a way nobody ever has, except maybe John.”

“She does, doesn’t she? Well, I’ll see you tonight; thanks for being willing to accommodate me with my requests.”

“Anytime. Cheers.”

Sherlock turned his phone off and returned to check on Molly, who was still peacefully sleeping. He decided this would be a good time to do some browsing on the internet. He wanted to shower his fiancée with gifts, show her how much she meant to him, and that he paid attention to her wants and needs.

Remembering her comment the previous evening about needing a wok, he went to the Amazon website and did a search for woks. Finding one with good reviews, he decided to purchase it. He ordered it and went downstairs to let Mrs. Hudson know a package would be arriving that week if he wasn’t home to get it. The landlady promised to look out for it while he was absent. She pretty much always collected his mail anyway. The detective had never been one to think of such mundane matters. In fact, it was always Mrs. Hudson who reminded him when he needed to pay off his credit card each month. He really was quite fond of her, she acted like a mother more than a landlady.

The sleuth decided he would have to consult with Molly about buying the landlady something special. Women were always better when it came to gift giving.

Sherlock thought it might be a good time for him to look for a honeymoon location, while Molly was sleeping. With less than eight weeks till the wedding, it was probably best to not leave the search any longer. Having already decide a Bed and Breakfast Inn would be ideal, he searched and found one that sounded romantic and idyllic, in Stratford-upon-Avon. The location lent itself to privacy if one wished, with a park surrounding it, but attractions close by if they felt like doing anything besides stay in their room. Sherlock suspected they would not be interested in doing too many activities, at least not at first. He intended to spend at least the first two days learning everything about his wife that was currently forbidden to him. That thought brought a smile to his face. He glanced over at his sleeping fiancée from his position in his leather chair. Oh yes, he was definitely looking forward to their honeymoon. After those first couple of days, they would have many options. They could take a tour of the nearby Cotswolds, visit Shakespeare’s birthplace or even see a Shakespeare play. The decision made, Sherlock texted Mycroft the details of the Bed and Breakfast and the room he had chosen. He had already determined that the room was available for the seven days he wanted.

Mycroft’s response came through within twenty minutes.

“Too much to discuss over text. Call me.”

With a sigh, the detective headed back into the bedroom and called his brother.
“That was quick,” remarked the older Holmes sibling when he answered his phone.

“Yes, well, I don’t want to take too long. Molly is sleeping and you know I want our honeymoon destination to be a surprise for her.”

“Duly noted, brother mine. A rather odd time for her to be sleeping though in the middle of the afternoon.”

“Well, she is on night shift starting tonight. Also, she had a rather nasty fall when we were at church this morning and sprained her ankle.”

“Did I hear you correctly? You were at church this morning?”

Sherlock growled in irritation. “I tell you Molly sprained her ankle and all you get from my sentence is that it was while we were at church?”

“Apologies. It is just a little difficult to get used to. My brother, the Christian.”

“Shut up, Mycroft.”

“Tut, tut. That’s not very Christian-like of you,” scolded Mycroft

“Being a Christian doesn’t make me all holier-than-thou, Mycroft. It just means I have finally found a real purpose to my life. I would think you would be glad that you don’t have to worry about me using anymore,” retorted the younger Holmes.

“True enough and I am glad you have found a good woman and religion at the same time.”

Sherlock rolled his eyes, wishing Mycroft was there so he could tell him Christianity was not just any old “religion,” it was a way of life.

“Whatever,” he said instead. “You could at least ask how my fiancée is doing.”

“How is she doing, then?”

“As well as can be expected for someone who has been hurt. I gave her some panadol, and she is not a complainer anyway.”

“She certainly never complained about anything you asked her to do over the years. I rather think the woman is too good for you.”

“I agree,” admitted the detective, “but she loves me nevertheless, and I love her, so you’ll have to reconcile yourself to that fact.”

“Well, I booked your honeymoon didn’t I? I would consider that proof I am reconciled to your pairing.”

“You did? Thank you.”

“There’s an airstrip close by your destination, so I have made these arrangements. A chauffeur will transport you from the Ritz to the private airstrip I always use. A plane will take you to Wellesbourne Mountford Airfield. It is only about five miles from Stratford-Upon-Avon. I can have someone meet you to take you to the Bed and Breakfast.”

Sherlock listened to his brother and then asked, a little hesitantly, “Instead of having a driver take us to the B&B, do you suppose I could have the use of a car while we are there, in case we want to
“Do you still remember how to drive, brother mine?”

“Isn’t it like riding a bike? I may not have driven since I’ve lived in London, but I daresay I still remember how.”

“Well, if you are certain, I suppose I can arrange for a car to be left at the airfield for you. In that case, you will need to be responsible for returning to the airfield at the designated time for departure back to London.”

“I’m not a child, Mycroft, I’m forty years old, for God’s sake,” rebuked the younger Holmes.

“Really? I suppose you are. Apologies again. I’ve had to look after you for so long, the years have gone by without my knowledge.”

“Well, if there’s nothing else, I need to get back to my fiancée.”

“There’s one more thing. Mummy called me this morning. She insists on visiting our sister again next week. Would you be free to play your violin at Sherrinford?”

Sherlock sighed. “Last time I went there, Molly was kidnapped. I suppose she will be okay this time. I’ll make sure Mrs. Hudson keeps an eye on her. What time?”

“Let’s say two o’clock. That way you can be home for dinner.”

“Fine, anything else?”

“Well, Mummy and Daddy will probably want to see a show again while they are in town. I’ll book a matinee for the four of you for Sunday afternoon. Remember, you owe me.”

“Alright,” groaned Sherlock. Secretly he thought it wouldn’t be so bad if Molly was with him, but he wanted Mycroft to believe it was a great imposition. If he didn’t sound displeased, his brother might conceivably find something much worse for him to do.

“I’ll let you know what musical and when, once I’ve purchased the tickets. Now you can get back to your injured fiancée. Goodbye.” He hung up.

“Goodbye to you too,” muttered the detective to the dead air, before he returned once again to the sitting room.

Molly had still not stirred, and the detective thought he might have a cup of tea and some biscuits. He noticed with some dismay that there were only three ginger nuts left. Molly would undoubtedly not be able to do any cooking or baking until her ankle healed.

Oh well. He shrugged and took the biscuits, along with his tea and placed them on the coffee table. He savoured the biscuits, eating them slowly, thinking of the effort Molly had made with them. He watched her, so quiet in sleep; not the slightest snore interrupted the silence. He had a sudden urge to touch her, to make sure she was still breathing. It was totally ridiculous, but he gently placed his head on the blanket over her chest and was reassured to feel the steady in and out of her breathing. He closed his eyes.

The feel of Molly’s hand stroking his hair woke him. He didn’t even realize he had drifted off.

“Hi,” she whispered.
Sherlock raised his head groggily and checked his watch. It was almost eight o’clock. He had slept like that for a couple of hours. His tea of course was stone cold.

He blinked a few times, trying to wake himself up more fully. Molly was smiling at him and he couldn’t resist the temptation to lean over and kiss her deeply. How sweet it was, feeling her lips under his.

“How’s your ankle?” he asked, “and is your knee or palm hurting?”

“The scrapes are okay. My ankle isn’t throbbing right now, but it might when I try to move it.”

“Let me check the swelling.” Sherlock took the tea towel away from the injured ankle and looked at it. The swelling had definitely subsided somewhat, and he touched it gently. “Does that hurt?”

“A little, it’s not too bad.”

“Try and move your ankle slowly.”

She complied but had only moved it a little before saying, “Ouch.”

“How about in the other direction?”

Molly moved it experimentally the other way and was able to move it a little further. “That wasn’t too bad, more of a dull ache than the sharp pain when I tried moving it the other way.”

“You should be able to manage on crutches at any rate,” the detective commented.

“I need to get them first,” the pathologist pointed out.

“Already taken care of. I called Mike Stamford earlier. Just before we get to the hospital tonight, I’ll call him and he will bring a pair of crutches downstairs to the taxi for you.”

“Thank you Sherlock,” Molly smiled at him tenderly.

Oh he could lose himself in that smile he thought. He wanted very much to kiss her again, but he had to take care of her needs first.

“I expect you need to use the toilet,” he ventured, just as Molly said,

“I’m really busting for the loo,” and they both laughed at having the same thought.

“I’ll help you to the bathroom.” Sherlock lifted Molly into his arms and carried her to the bathroom. “I presume you can make it to the toilet unassisted,” he said with a quirk of his eyebrow.

“I’ll manage.”

“I’ll be back in a few minutes to take you back to the sofa.” He left the bathroom to allow her to have privacy, and took his tea cup into the kitchen, pouring the cold contents down the sink. Then he turned the kettle on again. He rummaged under the sink for the first-aid kit John had insisted he buy years earlier. John was always worried he would hurt himself in some way while doing his experiments. Finding the kit, he opened it and found a large square sticking plaster to replace the gauze pad and bandage over Molly’s knee. That would assist her mobility. He took the plaster and put it on the coffee table, hearing the toilet flush as he did so.

Molly opened the bathroom door just as the detective reached it.
“I can hop to the sofa if you support me, You don’t need to carry me.”

“Nonsense. You can try that once your ankle is bandaged again to keep it immobilized.” He scooped her back up into his arms and carried her back to the sofa, making sure she was propped up with a cushion behind her and the ankle elevated on a cushion once again.

Retrieving the now melted ice-pack, he put it in the freezer once more, pulling out a second ice-pack. He was grateful for John’s insistence that he have ice-packs on hand for potential burns as well.

Wrapping the still damp tea towel around the ice-pack, Sherlock placed it over the pathologist’s ankle and then proceeded to remove the gauze pad from her left knee and replace it with the plaster. The knee didn’t look too bad, now that the bleeding had stopped, the scratches were quite shallow and should heal quickly.

“Do you want me to run a bath for you?” he asked his fiancée.

“I think I won’t worry about it until after work.”

“Very well. I’m going to find us something for dinner.”

“There’s leftover stir-fry in the fridge from last night, rice too. You can just heat it up in the microwave,” Molly suggested helpfully.

“I’ll do that then,” responded the detective.

He prepared their food then returned with two plates.

Molly pushed her plate away after eating only half of her meal.

“Have some more,” urged Sherlock, “you need to keep your strength up.”

She raised an eyebrow. “This coming from a man notorious for skipping several meals in a row when he is working on a difficult case?”

“Never mind that. I’m sure you won’t let me do that in future. Eat some more, just for me.”

The pathologist took a few more mouthfuls then said, “I really can’t eat any more.”

“Very well.” The detective took his empty plate and Molly’s mostly eaten one back to the kitchen. Glancing at his watch, he decided he should bind Molly’s ankle. They would have to leave for work in less than an hour. First though, he called the taxi company and ordered one for eleven-thirty. He didn’t want to have to wait to flag one down with Molly being injured.

Molly’s eyes were closed when he returned. “Sleeping again?” He softly asked.

“No, just thinking about what a good nurse you are.”

“Let’s hope you still think that after I wrap your ankle again in the bandage.” The sleuth removed the tea towel and bound her ankle, being careful not to jostle it as he weaved it around the ankle and foot. “How does that feel?” He asked when he was finished. “barely hurts at all.” She was looking at him with a soft expression on her face.

Impulsively, he leaned over and kissed her. He had definitely not kissed her enough that day, he reasoned as he put his hands on either side of her face.
Molly’s arms went around his neck and they kissed for some minutes, before disengaging from their embrace.

“T’ll miss you tonight,” he murmured.

“You’ll be asleep for most of the time I’m at work,” she scoffed. “T’m the one who will be missing you as I do boring, mindless paperwork.”

“I’m not sure how well I’ll sleep. T’ve grown accustomed to having you in the bed beside me.”

“Think of it as practice for being alone at night while you are in Dartmoor.”

“I suppose so.”

They remained together quietly, just enjoying being in each other’s presence until Sherlock decided it was time to get things ready for them to leave. He collected Molly’s phone and handbag, then helped her put on her jacket before putting on his own coat.

It was just before the time the taxi was due to arrive, when he picked his fiancée up into his arms and carried her down the stairs. At Molly’s insistence, he set her down and assisted her to get into the cab while he supported her. Then they were on their way to St. Bart’s.

Chapter End Notes

what do you think of Sherlock the nurse?

Did you enjoy the conversation between Mycroft and Sherlock - especially the Christianity part? I figure Mycroft would be a little skeptical and ready to tease his brother.

Did you like the way Sherlock fell asleep with his head on Molly’s chest?

I really enjoy it when people comment with answers to my questions, but any and all comments are welcome. What part of a chapter speaks to you?
Nightshift - Molly (Sunday/Monday)

Chapter Summary

Molly goes to work, then back at home is taken care of again by Sherlock. Some revealing conversations occur.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

During the cab ride, Sherlock insisted that Molly keep her ankle on his lap. She was completely blown away by his solicitousness. She would not have believed his transformation if she hadn’t experienced it firsthand.

Just before they reached the hospital, the detective called Mike. Sure enough, her supervisor was waiting at the kerb with crutches when their taxi pulled up. Sherlock assisted her to alight and Molly awkwardly put the crutches under her arms. She had never had occasion to use them in the past, and it took a bit of getting used to.

“Use your hands to support your weight and don’t rest your body on the crutches,” instructed Mike. He and Sherlock walked on either side of her and fortunately it didn’t take long to get used to the way the crutches worked.

The trio was just getting into the lift when Molly heard Kaitlyn’s voice saying, “Hold the lift, please.”

When the blonde entered the lift, she stared at Molly in surprise. “What on earth happened to you? I just saw you on Friday night!”

“I sprained my ankle outside of my church this morning and fell down a couple of the steps.”

“That’s awful,” commiserated Kaitlyn. Brightening, she added in her usual cheerful manner, “Well, if it had to happen, better now than just before your wedding.”

“True enough,” replied the pathologist.

Kaitlyn turned to her supervisor, “Did everything work out okay with me taking next week off?”

“I rearranged the schedule to accommodate your absence, yes,” replied Stamford.

“You’re taking next week off? You never mentioned it on Friday,” said Molly in surprise.

“It was a last minute thing. My grandparents in the States are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary next Sunday, and my American relatives decided last minute to throw a surprise party for them. We are going to be the “big” surprise at the party.”

“How wonderful,” enthused Molly. She noticed that Sherlock had been following the conversation with interest with a thoughtful look on his face.

The lift opened and the four exited.
“Molly, you can just work from my office as usual. If anything urgent comes in for analysis Kaitlyn can take care of it. I don’t want you exerting yourself. There’s always plenty of paperwork to be done, and a supply order as well. I’m going to head out now and leave you too it.”

Molly made her way towards Mike’s office. As she did so she heard Sherlock saying, “Kaitlyn, may I have a quick word with you?” He was probably just going to ask her friend to make sure she didn’t work too hard.

Once in the office Molly turned on the computer. Her supervisor had kindly brought over a chair on which she could elevate her ankle. It only ached slightly now when she tried to move it, so she was relieved it was definitely just a sprain. She settled herself into the chair and began to go through Mike’s inbox.

Sherlock appeared in the doorway a few minutes later. Molly was not surprised when he said, “I told Kaitlyn she needs to make sure you don’t do too much.”

“I guess you should get going now,” she responded. “You need some sleep if you plan to be back here to take me home. You really don’t have to, though.”

“I don’t have to leave, or come back?” her fiancé asked walking around the desk to kneel next to the chair. Just watching his languid grace as he moved toward her made Molly forget for a moment what she had been talking about. His eyes were fixed on hers as he moved in, his face drawing nearer to hers.

What had she been saying? Before she could collect her thoughts, Sherlock’s lips met her own in a searing kiss. Involuntarily, she closed her eyes and put her arms around him, enjoying the delightful tingles that went through her as they kissed. It was some minutes before she came back to reality and where she was. She was supposed to be working, not kissing.

Pulling away from Sherlock’s embrace, she said in a voice that was a little breathless, “You really need to go, or I won’t get any work done. What if somebody had come in while you were kissing me? Very unprofessional.” She tried to look stern but failed miserably. She had observed several instances in her career where colleagues were sneaking kisses during shifts. It was really a little thrilling to be the one acting a little “naughty” for once.

Sherlock, ever observant of her every thought remarked, “Don’t pretend you didn’t like me kissing you in here.” He gave her a seductive smile.

Molly blushed. She couldn’t keep anything from him. Maybe once she could, when she had tried to hide her crush, but she suspected he had been all too aware of it and had used it to his advantage on many occasions. “Sherlock Holmes, just behave yourself. Go home, now.”

“Oh, very well,” he conceded. “I’ll be back at eight.” He gave her another kiss, just a quick one this time and said, “I love you,” before leaving the office.

“Love you too,” she whispered as the door closed behind him.

Then it was time to get back to work. At around two o’clock Molly’s text alert sounded as she was in the middle of ordering more supplies for the lab. She read the text.

“This bed is too big, empty and cold without you. Finding it hard to sleep.”

“You managed seven plus years just fine. Try and sleep. I love you,” she texted back.

“Very well. I’ll try. Don’t work too hard.”
Molly smiled and returned to her task.

Apart from Kaitlyn popping in every now and then, asking if she wanted coffee or help with anything else, it was very quiet. Her friend had brought up a sandwich for her during her meal break, but she was getting pretty hungry by the time the clock showed it was a quarter to eight.

The door to the office opened a few minutes before the hour and Sherlock walked in with a bag containing cinnamon rolls. He looked tired, Molly noted.

“T’m guessing you didn’t sleep well?” she queried.

“Good morning to you too, love,” he replied. “I did manage to sleep until about six, then was unsuccessful at returning to slumber, so I gave up and finished reading the book of Luke. Then I went to the bakery down the street that opens at seven and picked these up for you. Thought you might be hungry.”

“Thank you Sherlock, I appreciate it,” the pathologist said warmly. “I am rather hungry as a matter of fact. I hope you are going to join me.”

He shrugged. “I bought six, just in case.”

She laughed. Well, I won’t have more than two. We might as well eat before we leave for home.”

The two of them ate and then Sherlock helped Molly to get up. Before he brought her the crutches, he gave her a kiss that tasted of the cinnamon rolls they had just eaten.

The two leftover rolls were stowed in Molly’s locker at the detective’s insistence.

“You can eat them as a snack tomorrow,” he told her.

On the ride to Baker Street, the pathologist closed her eyes and rested her head on her fiancé’s shoulder. All too soon the cab arrived and they alighted.

Molly was ready to haul herself up the stairs, but Sherlock picked her up once again, leaving the crutches down below. He settled his fiancée on the sofa and retrieved the crutches, putting them against the sitting room wall.

“I’m going to run you a bath,” he announced, before going to the bathroom to turn on the taps.

“Thank you. You can use my body wash in the tub, it makes a bubble bath too,” she called after him.

When he returned, the detective asked, “How is your ankle feeling now? I’m going to take off the bandage,”

“It’s much better. I can move it a little more now without it hurting.”

“That’s good.” Sherlock examined her ankle after unbinding it. “The swelling is almost gone too. At this rate you will be off the crutches before I get back from Dartmoor.”

“I’m so glad it wasn’t worse.”

“Me too.” He kissed her gently then returned to the bathroom to turn off the taps.

When the sleuth made a move to gather Molly up into his arms to take her to the bathroom she said, “Wait. Let me see if I can put any weight on my ankle yet.”
He scowled a little. “There’s no need. I am perfectly capable and willing to carry you. Why put undue stress on your ankle before you need to?”

“Please, Sherlock. Just let me try.”

“Very well,” he growled, before assisting her to stand.

Molly gingerly set her right foot down and put a little weight on it. She yelped immediately. Apparently the ankle wasn’t ready to bear weight yet.

The detective immediately scooped her up, saying with a note of recrimination in his voice, “See, I told you.” He deposited her onto the closed toilet lid, asking a little hopefully, Do you need me to help you undress?”

Molly rolled her eyes at him. “Nice try. If I had broken an arm, I might have needed help, but not for an ankle.”

He gave her a wicked grin. “Just trying to help.”

“Yeah, sure. You can help by getting me clean pants and my chemise. I might as well get into what I’m going to wear for bed.”

“Fine, fine. I’ll leave you to get into the tub then.”

“You do realize if I had said yes to your undressing me, that it would have put our abstinence guidelines at risk, don’t you?”

Sherlock looked ashamed. “Possibly,” he admitted. “I’m sorry, I should have resisted the temptation to even ask.” Brightening, he added, “but I knew you’d say no, you’re much stronger than I am.”

“It’s no picnic for me either. If it weren’t for my beliefs and the values I hold dear, we would have consummated this relationship weeks ago. But I’m not the kind of girl who jumps into bed with someone just to satisfy her carnal desires.”

Sherlock stroked her face tenderly. “I know that, and it’s one of the things I love about you. I’m still adjusting to having these sort of emotions, the desire I have for you. It’s unlike anything I’ve felt before, although Irene Adler, ‘The Woman’ as she was known, did intrigue me when I met her and she was completely naked.”

Molly raised an eyebrow. “So that’s why you were able to identify her body in the morgue that Christmas night?”

“Uh, yes, although it turned out not to be her anyway. Long story, I’ll tell you another time. For now though, you had better go have your bath before it gets cold.” He gave her a chaste kiss on the cheek and departed, closing the door behind him.

Molly removed her clothes, glad she was still wearing her skirt from yesterday, even though it had meant no protection for her knee. It was much easier to remove a skirt over her ankle than trousers would have been.

She settled back into the tub, contemplated leaving her ankle out of it, then decided to put it under the water, seeing as it was no longer wrapped. She got her body sponge and used her jasmine vanilla body wash, to match the scent of the bubbles. The bubbles were plentiful and covered her nicely, so when Sherlock knocked on the door and said he had her nightwear, she said he could
The detective came in hesitantly and said, “I’m not looking, I promise.”

The pathologist laughed. “It’s okay, the bubbles do a wonderful job at preserving modesty.”

The detective ventured a peek in her direction. “I hope you won’t mind me joining you in the bath occasionally, once we are married.”

A little tingle of anticipation ran through Molly. She could imagine leaning back against him, maybe having him wash her hair. The thought made her heart beat quicken.

Sherlock seemed to be having similar thoughts, by the slightly glazed expression on his face, as he met her gaze.

At last she spoke, breaking their silent contemplation. “I shall very much look forward to it.” She reached a hand up out of the water to take his, dislodged a mountain of bubbles and quickly spread them back over herself more evenly.

She had definitely seen a glimpse of breast before rearranging the bubbles and hoped Sherlock hadn’t noticed. It had only been for a second after all.

If he had noticed, he gave no indication of it, merely saying, “I’ll leave you to finish your bath,” before dropping a kiss on top of her head and leaving the bathroom.

Molly finished bathing herself, having decided to eschew the washing of her hair. The water was getting cold and she didn’t want to have to rinse her hair in the bath water, nor stand to turn on the taps again and rinse that way. Exiting the deep tub a little awkwardly due to her ankle, the pathologist nonetheless managed to get herself dressed and out of the little room in a timely manner. She had put on the dressing gown Sherlock had thoughtfully provided.

The detective had obviously been waiting for her to emerge, because he took her in his arms again and walked to the sitting room. Instead of putting her down on the sofa however, he sat down still holding her.

Sherlock sniffed her skin appreciatively. “That jasmine vanilla makes me want to kiss you senseless.” With those words his lips sought hers for a long kiss that left them both breathing hard when it ended. His hand stroked her back in a circular motion and Molly leaned against him.

“Why do you do this to me?” he asked huskily.

“Do what?” she asked.

“Be you. The way you look at me with those beautiful, inviting brown eyes. “I just want to kiss you, to touch you everywhere. You drive me wild.”

Abruptly he lifted Molly off of his lap and seated her on the sofa, muttering as he did so,”Dammit, that was a mistake.” A little louder he said, “I’m going to take a shower, a cold one, I think.” He turned and left the room. Soon afterward Molly heard the sound of the shower running.

The pathologist leaned toward the coffee table and grabbed the remote, turning on the television for some distraction. She needed to do something to take her mind away from thoughts of Sherlock touching her the way he wanted to, and if she were honest with herself, the way she wanted him to.

Her eyes drifted closed and she was starting to fall asleep when her fiancé returned. He was wearing one of his dressing gowns, rather than his suit jacket. “Better?” she asked.

“For now. I’m going to get a fresh bandage from the first-aid kit and strap your ankle again.” He
went to the kitchen, returning a couple minutes later with a bandage and a menu in hand from Speedy’s Cafe downstairs. He offered the menu from Molly and said, “choose something for lunch and I’ll bring it upstairs.”

Molly looked at the menu. There were a lot of sandwiches to choose from. There was also a “Sherlock” wrap and a “John Watson” wrap.

“Apparently, Speedy’s is not above taking advantage of your fame. I actually like the sound of the ‘Sherlock’ wrap. It has bacon in it. So I’ll go with that.”

Sherlock looked up from his binding task and grinned. “The owners actually asked my permission to make a wrap with my name, and they asked what my ideal ingredients would be. So you are essentially choosing me. Personally I think John’s choice for his was rather boring, no meat. I think I’ll order the same as you.”

“So, are you as spicy as the chili sauce on the wrap?”

“Much spicier,” deadpanned the detective.

“Well, that’s good then, because I’d rather have a not too spicy sauce and a spicy fiancé than vice versa.”

“I like it when you refer to me as your fiancé. I will like it much better though when you refer to me as your husband.”

Molly sighed contentedly. “I’m counting the days.”

“Fifty-four seems like a big number right now,” Sherlock sighed with disappointment, not contentment, and Molly was secretly pleased that he really was counting the days as well.

“All done.” he announced after her ankle was once again bandaged. “So what shall we do from now until lunchtime?”

“You could ask me the questions you had about communion that you planned on asking me yesterday,” Molly suggested.

“Ah, yes.” Sherlock lifted his fiancée’s legs so he could sit next to her, then settled them onto his lap, making sure to not jostle her injury. “I was wondering if grape juice is always substituted for wine during communion.”

“Our church uses grape juice, because we allow everyone who is baptized and who has confessed Jesus as Lord to participate. That means there are young people who take communion, even children. The younger ones have to do a short course with Pastor Briggs first, to make sure they understand what it is all about. However, there are denominations that use real wine for their communion. There’s no right or wrong way. In some churches people also go forward to an altar rail to receive communion.”

“Altar rail?”

“In a lot of churches, there is an area where the altar is situated which is on a higher level than the rest of the church. There’s a rail around that section and people kneel there for communion.”

“Ah, I see. I had also wondered how often you have communion?”

“Our church does it monthly. Some do it every fortnight. Still others, weekly. Again, there’s no
right or wrong in regards to frequency. The main thing is that it is offered periodically.”

“Thank you for explaining.”

“You’re welcome.” Molly squeezed his hand. “Any other questions?”

“Not right now, I think,” responded the sleuth.

“In that case, why don’t you tell me about this Irene Adler woman. Should I be jealous? I assume it was her phone you were examining at the lab some years ago? She was also the person involved in the royal scandal?”

Sherlock grimaced. “Yes, clever deduction, my love. It’s rather a convoluted story.”

“We have time,” the pathologist said.

Sherlock explained his first meeting with “The Woman.” He told her how Adler had faked her death but let him know within a week that she was still alive. She had disappeared for six months, only to return and have him figure out some vital information about a government ploy to thwart a terrorist plot, which she then passed on to Moriarty.

Molly put her thoughts in order and said slowly, “so she was the blackmailer who wanted money? The reason you are now receiving £10,000 a month? Where is she now?”

“I have no idea. She used to text me every now and then. Her last text was just after you and I got engaged. I rarely answered her texts, but that one I did. I told her I was an engaged man and wished her all the best with her future. I sent the text and then deleted her contact information. I blocked her too.”

“You did that, for me?” questioned Molly.

“And for myself. The past is irrelevant. What matters is my future with you.”

Molly smiled at her fiancé, who shifted his body weight in order to kiss her. What was intended to be a light kiss ended up, as usual being a much longer, deeper kiss. Sherlock was the one to pull away.

“Well, I suppose I should go downstairs now and get our lunch. Do you need anything before I go?”

“Yes please. My devotional. I’m two days behind again. Besides, there’s nothing interesting on the telly.”

Sherlock left, then returned to the stirring room in his usual suit, having discarded the dressing gown. He brought Molly her “Our Daily Bread” and she caught up on the reading, using her phone which Sherlock had placed on the coffee table to find the Bible verses. She finished just as he reappeared.

“Cup of tea or coffee?” he asked, setting the wraps on the table.

“Tea please. I’ll probably try and get some sleep after we eat.”

The detective got their tea and plates they could put underneath the wraps to catch any stray pieces of food.

“Delicious,” commented Molly, munching on her wrap.
“Why thank you,” said the detective, as if he had personally made it himself, and Molly grinned.

“It is rather good, isn’t it? I must admit, I have purchased the wrap on several occasions.”

“Has anyone asked you for your autograph when you’ve been in there?” questioned the pathologist.

The detective looked a little embarrassed. “A couple times. In fact today was one of them. But these fans were asking all about you.”

“Really?” Molly was intrigued, despite herself. “What did you tell them?”

“Very little. I said things are going well and that we would like people to respect our privacy.” He paused for a moment and then added, “Do you object to our letting people know our wedding date when the time is closer? I expect the press will want to document the occasion.”

“I know, the price of fame. I’m sure someone will let it slip anyway. It’s not like we asked the people at the florist or bakery to keep it quiet. People talk. It will probably come out before you make an official statement.”

“Well, they won’t be able to follow us to our honeymoon destination, seeing as we are flying.” Sherlock stopped abruptly with an expression of chagrin on his face.

Molly had not missed the slip. “So you have decided on a destination then?”

“Possibly.”

“Are you going to tell me about it?”

“It’s going to be a surprise. Wouldn’t want you to accidentally let it slip to anyone who might pass it on.”

“As if I’d do that,” scoffed Molly. “I’ll let you keep your secret, as long as you don’t have any other ones you are keeping from me.”

“Of course not,” Sherlock said, a little too quickly. Molly would have wondered about that, but she was distracted as sherlock took her empty plate, set it on the table and started to kiss her. There was a slight spicy tang on his lips from the chili sauce in the wrap, but it only served to increase the tingling she felt at his touch.

This time it was the pathologist who broke off their embrace, saying reluctantly, “I guess I should go and get some sleep. Will you - will you come too?”

“I will. I am rather fatigued myself, having not managed to sleep very well last night without you.”

He lifted Molly into his arms and took her to the bathroom, saying, “I expect you would like to use the toilet and brush your teeth first.”

“Yes I would, thank you.” After the detective had helped her into the bathroom, she could hear him rattling around in the kitchen, putting their lunch dishes in the sink.

When she was ready, he carried her to the bed. Molly took off the dressing gown and slipped under the duvet.

“I’ll join you in a minute,” promised the sleuth, before he too headed to the bathroom.

When he got into bed beside her, Molly scooted closer so she could be held by her fiancé. It wasn’t
long before she fell asleep.

Chapter End Notes

The real Speedy’s Caré does indeed have a Sherlock and a John Watson wrap, so I thought it would be fun to put that into the story.

Isn’t Sherlock a total sweetheart?

Did you like that “oops” Molly made in the bathtub? Do you think Sherlock noticed?

How did you find the communion conversation?
Sherlock lay awake, with Molly nestled in his arms. He wanted to sleep, and he was very comfortable, much more-so than overnight when he had been alone, but his mind palace refused to turn off.

When he had taken Molly to work the previous evening, and had discovered that Kaitlyn was going to America the following week, he had had an idea. He had spoken to the blonde about buying more of the two kinds of body wash that Molly liked so well, and also any matching items with that scent from Bath and Body Works. Kaitlyn had been only too happy to indulge him in his wishes, gushing about how romantic it was and how sweet he was. The detective had been quite embarrassed at the fulsome compliments. He had handed Kaitlyn two £50 notes, promising to make up the difference if there was any when she cane back to London.

After Sherlock had returned home from the hospital, he did not feel ready to sleep, so instead he decided to turn on his laptop and look at lingerie sites. He wanted to buy Molly something special to wear on their honeymoon, maybe multiple items. Having never been interested in perusing a site with women’s underwear, it was quite a revelation to discover how much there was out there for women to look sexy for their men. There were bra and knicker sets, chemises such as Molly seemed to favour, judging by her choice of nightwear, basques and corsets with G-strings and suspenders for thigh high stockings. What he liked most though were the babydolls. They came in many colours and styles, often with a fitted bra with sheer fabric attached to cover the torso, and matching thongs or G-strings. Sherlock tried to imagine Molly wearing a babydoll for him and it pleased him greatly. Deciding that the honeymoon was supposed to be a time of getting to know each other intimately and to enjoy being with each other, Sherlock impulsively decided to purchase three different babydoll sets, a black one, a purple one, and a little more risqué red one. He would pack them secretly and produce them at the appropriate time.
The sleuth had put in the order, noting that delivery was expected late in the week. He would have to tell Mrs. Hudson to look out for that package as well.

Then he had undressed and gotten into the empty, cold bed. Feeling restless and unable to sleep, he had sent that text at two in the morning. It had been nice to converse with his fiancée for a short time, and afterwards he had found he was able to sleep.

He had awoken however at six and tossed and turned for several minutes before giving up on sleep and getting up. He had decided to finish reading the book of Luke, after which he bought the cinnamon rolls and headed to the hospital.

Lying in the bed now with Molly, he cast his thoughts back to when she had taken her bath. When she had reached up to him from the bath and dislodged just enough bubbles that he was able to glimpse a creamy breast beneath the water, he had been strongly tempted to put his hand in the water and caress it. It had taken a tremendous amount of willpower to pretend he had seen nothing. He had, however, made a swift exit, after which he stood outside the closed door of the bathroom, resting his forehead against it and trying to convince his traitorous body that he was not turned on by that accidental glimpse. His mind palace continued to fail when it came to distracting him. In the past he was able to delve into it as easily as if he was turning on a light switch.

He had still not really gotten his emotions under control when it was time to take Molly back to the sofa. Even wearing his dressing gown over her chemise, the sleuth had been unwilling to put her down onto the sofa. As a result of their ardent kissing, he had relegated himself to a cold shower afterwards. It had been worth it though, to hold her, smell that fragrant scent on her freshly cleansed body. At least the conversation afterwards had been effective at distracting him. The whole Irene Adler thing had been a relief to finally get off his chest.

And then of course Molly had questioned him about secrets. He had successfully managed to ward that one off with kisses. Sherlock knew he would eventually have to tell Molly that it was Mary who had shot him the previous year, but he dreaded it. She had such a high regard for her friend who had died so tragically as the result of an accidental shooting. Knowing the truth might forever change Molly’s attitude and cause her to hate her former friend post-humously.

Sherlock sighed a little and closed his eyes, willing himself to sleep. At last, he did.

It was around six in the evening when the detective woke. Molly was still sleeping and he did not want to disturb her. He lay in bed a little longer, in case he should fall back to sleep, but it was no use. His mind was back on active duty.

Gently he slipped his arms out from around Molly. She made a little sound as if in protest, but was apparently too deeply asleep to be roused by him getting up.

He dressed himself back in his suit. If he had not been planning to take Molly over to the hospital later, he would have just stayed in his dressing gown. He noted that he was running out of clothes. It was time to arrange for a pick-up of his shirts and trousers and suit jackets.

Sherlock got his laptop and put it on the kitchen table, turning it on.

He set up an appointment to have his items picked up by the dry cleaners at nine-thirty the following morning. He should be back home by then and waiting for John’s arrival. Again, he would need to instruct Mrs. Hudson to get the clothes once they were delivered back to Baker Street. She could keep them in her flat until he got home. She had done that on several occasions when the detective had been on a case.
Next, Sherlock decided to check on the website from where the wedding invitations had been ordered. They had a tracking system. He was pleased to discover the invitations had been shipped and the estimated delivery was Wednesday. Yet again, the poor landlady would need to retrieve that post. Sherlock decided to tell Molly she couldn’t get the mail, due to her injury. Mrs. Hudson could keep his special surprises in her flat and just take the rest up to his fiancée.

Finally, the detective checked his emails. A couple he was able to send replies to. They were ones in which he had requested further information. That information had been enough for him to solve the minor cases without leaving the flat. He didn’t charge a fee for services rendered unless he had a personal consultation with clients or had to actually leave Baker Street. Every now and then, he would receive a cheque in the post from some grateful client. Depending on whether the case had anything to do with money, those cheques could be as little as £25 or as much as £500 when a large sum was involved. Those instances were rare though. Cases involving money usually required leg work to discover what had happened.

Sherlock closed his laptop and was just about to head downstairs to talk to Mrs. Hudson, when he heard the sound of her footsteps ascending the stairs. A few moments later she knocked as she gave her usual “hoo hoo” warning that she was coming in, and she opened the door.

“Sherlock, dear,” said the landlady, “I’ve made you and Molly some shepherd’s pie and tea. I thought you might need someone to fix you a meal with Molly’s ankle and all. You’ll have to come and get it though.”

“Thank you, Mrs. Hudson. That’s very kind of you. I was just about to go downstairs to talk with you anyway. I will have my dry cleaning being delivered later this week if you can collect and keep it for me? Would you mind also getting my post this week and bringing it upstairs? There are two packages coming I’d like you to keep in your flat though, because they are gifts for Molly. One is from Amazon and the other,” here he hesitated and coloured slightly, “is from a lingerie company.”

At the landlady’s raised eyebrow he added hastily, “It’s for our honeymoon. I want to keep them from Molly until we are at our destination.”

“Well, aren’t you the sweet one then?” smiled the elderly woman. “I’m sure you will both enjoy that.”

Sherlock flushed again. “I certainly intend to.”

“Well, come downstairs now and get your food before it gets cold.”

“Of course.” The detective followed Mrs. Hudson to her flat and picked up the tray with the shepherd’s pie and tea and took it upstairs.

He entered the darkened bedroom and walked over to Molly, gently kissing her. “Time to get up for dinner, love.”

The pathologist opened her eyes. “What time is it?”

“Around eight. Mrs. Hudson made us dinner. I would have let you sleep longer, but I thought you might like to eat the food while it is still hot.”

“That was nice of her.” Molly yawned and stretched, then started to get out of bed. She yelped when her foot touched the ground.

“Steady on,” Sherlock told her. “I’ll carry you to the kitchen once you are dressed.”
He selected some clothes for his fiancée, including loose trousers for her that could be slid over her foot easily, then left the room to allow her to dress.

A few minutes later, the detective knocked on the door and entered when Molly told him she was ready. He lifted her into his arms, enjoying the feel of her body against his. Molly’s sprained ankle had its advantages, giving him an excuse to hold her. He settled her onto a chair in the kitchen and put a plate of food in front of her, as well as a cup of tea, then got his own and sat as well.

They ate hungrily. Mrs. Hudson was a good cook, and she also brewed her tea with tea leaves, rather than using tea bags.

As they ate, Sherlock suddenly realized he hadn’t checked his phone in awhile, so he retrieved it from the sitting room. A message had come in earlier from Mycroft.

“That sounds just lovely. I’ve never seen the musical, but I’ve watched the movie with Julie Andrews a few times,” enthused Molly. “Have you ever seen it?”

“Maybe, in my college days. Doesn’t she play a governess to a bunch of children?”

“Yes, the seven von Trapp children.”

“Seven? That’s rather a nice number.”

Molly eyed him warily. “Don’t even think I’m going to pop out seven children for you. I am much too old for that. I thought we had agreed on two or maybe three.”

“Did we, indeed? I don’t recall,” he replied vaguely. “Well, we need to have enough that they can play with each other. After all, they won’t have any cousins. You have no siblings, and Mycroft is unlikely to start procreating at his age. Even if he were to take his relationship further with Lady Smallwood, she is beyond child-bearing age. And Eurus, well, it’s not likely she will have the opportunity to have her own family. Therefore, the burden falls on us to produce Holmes heirs to preserve the family line.”

Molly laughed. “You have this all figured out, don’t you?”

“Of course, it’s elementary, my dear Molly.”

Well, let’s just take it one child at a time. No promises.”

“At least two then? One of each?”

“You know very well we DID talk about this earlier, and I was okay with two or perhaps three, But what if I keep popping out just girls or just boys? Where does it end?”

“When we have at least one of each,” he said firmly.
Molly rolled her eyes. “Sherlock Holmes, you are incorrigible.”

“Yep,” said he, popping his ‘p.’ “By the way, I checked on the status of our wedding invitations while you were asleep. They should be arriving on Wednesday. I have asked Mrs. Hudson to collect our mail as well, so don’t trouble yourself hobbling downstairs to get it.”

“Okay. Oh, I just thought of something. I need to contact my former landlord to see whether he rented out my flat yet, and if I’ll be getting my bond back. Could you please bring me my phone? I’ll text him now, before I forget again.”

“Is it still in your handbag?”

“Yes, I should put it on the charger afterwards until it’s time to leave for work.”

Sherlock fumbled in Molly’s voluminous handbag and finally produced her phone triumphantly. “You must have everything but the kitchen sink in there,” he commented dryly, handing his fiancée the phone.

“Women always have a lot to carry,” she said defensively, before sending off her text and handing the phone back to Sherlock to put on the charger.

He did so and then cleared their dirty dishes into the sink.

“Should I carry you back into the sitting room now?” questioned the sleuth.

“I guess so. I hate feeling so helpless, though.”

“Enjoy it while you can. You’ll have to manage with crutches after tomorrow morning, until you are able to put weight on your foot again.” Taking her up once again, he took her to the sofa.

“Maybe there’s a movie on the telly we can watch until it’s time to leave for work. Or we can watch something on Netflix.”

“I didn’t know you subscribed to it.”

“I don’t, but you do. It isn’t television specific is it? Don’t you just log in to your account?”

“You’re right.” Molly turned on the television. It was a recent acquisition which allowed you to select netflix from a screen activated through the remote control. The Netflix icon popped up and she was able to log in to her account. “I can’t believe I didn’t think of this before,” she berated herself.

“So, what shows on Netflix interest you?” questioned Sherlock.

“Well, I have a few things on my list. All the Star Trek incarnations. I want to watch ‘The Crown,’ because it is all about Queen Elizabeth when she was young and became queen. It’s a Netflix original and apparently the most expensive one produced to date. Then there is a Netflix original Kaitlyn told me is really funny, called ‘The Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt.’”

“Interesting. I would not have taken you for someone who would be interested in science fiction.”

“Ha, I guess your deductive powers only go so far,” teased his fiancée, poking a tongue out at him. How about you? What do you like?”

“I really don’t know. I’ve rarely watched television. Solving crime always kept me busy. When I had time, I’d be more likely to read a novel.”
“What kind of novels?”

“Generally the classics, I suppose. ‘A Tale of Two Cities,’ ‘Pride and Prejudice’ and the like. I had quite a collection, before the grenade blast destroyed them.”

“I’m sorry to hear about that. Charles Dickens though? How do you find understanding his old English? I have read some of his books and had to reference sparknotes to understand them.”

Sherlock laughed. “At least you are honest about it. I confess that I too have used those for reference as well. Modern technology is marvellous isn’t it?”

“It surely is. Well, getting back to Netflix, would you watch something with me?”

“Sure.”

“Comedy, science fiction or historical?”

“I suppose if I had a preference, it would be to watch ‘The Crown.’ The lineage of our royal family has always been interesting to me.”

“Okay, ‘The Crown’ it is.” Molly selected it from her favourites list and the couple watched the first episode. The episode chronicled the engagement and marriage of the future queen.

When they had finished, Molly asked, “So what did you think?”

Sherlock thought about it. “I liked it,” he said finally. “I think the visual impact was very good, the acting quite good. The story had some interesting plot twists, although I have a feeling they may have been exaggerated somewhat.”

“We have time to watch another episode, if you like.”

“Hmm,” said the detective thoughtfully, “I think our remaining time can be better served with other, more personal pursuits.”

Molly had been sitting on the sofa with her injured ankle resting on a cushion on the coffee table as Sherlock sat beside her, his arm resting lightly around her shoulders as they watched the Netflix show.

She turned towards him questioningly. “What pursuits?”

Sherlock caressed her cheek. “You really need to ask me that?” His lips hovered only a few inches from hers. “What personal pursuits would be pleasing to you, Molly Hooper?”

Her answer was wordless as she leaned into him the rest of the way and they kissed. He kissed her possessively, bringing both hands to cup her face so he could deepen the embrace. Molly’s fingers tangled in his curls and she pulled at a lock gently as they kissed. Sherlock thought a little dazedly if heaven was anything like the way he felt when they were locked in a passionate embrace, it was going to be a wonderful place.

His hands moved downward to her shoulders, massaging them, and his fiancée gave a little sign of pleasure as they continued to kiss. The embrace continued for some time, both of them holding themselves in check from allowing their hands and mouths to wander. The detective would have trailed feather light kisses down Molly’s face and her neck, but he told himself to just enjoy her lips on his, and for once, it was enough.
When finally they parted, breathing unsteadily as always happened, his fiancée said, “that was...spectacular. Kissing you is always amazing, but that one was like something you’d read about in a trashy romance novel.”

The sleuth quirked an eyebrow. “Are you confessing to reading those types of novels?”

Mimicking Sherlock’s usual response, the pathologist answered, “Possibly.”

He laughed and then kissed her, lightly this time, before sying. “I think that was a rather satisfying way of concluding our evening before you have to work.”

“Most definitely.”

Sherlock helped Molly to the bathroom to use the toilet and took the crutches downstairs in the meantime. He then put his phone in his pocket, took hers off the charger and deposited it into her handbag, and he was ready as soon as his fiancée opened the bathroom door.

He carried her down the stairs and gave her the crutches at the bottom. He then hailed a timely passing taxi and they were on their way back to the hospital.

Chapter End Notes

What did you think of Sherlock’s idea to get some fancy body wash for Molly via Kaitlyn? How about the lingerie?

Did you find his inner thoughts about secrets interesting? It was never addressed in the show whether Molly knew about Mary’s past. Personally I don’t think so. I don’t think Mary would have been too quick to blurt out that she had been an assassin, even if she and Molly were becoming friends.

Have you watched “The Crown” on Netflix? I watched the first season, but have yet to watch the second one because I have been too busy writing!

“The Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt” is funny too, I highly recommend it.

I hope you enjoyed this chapter!
Work and a Fond Farewell - Molly

Chapter Summary

Sherlock leaves for Dartmoor, and Molly discovers how complicated it is to get married - so many rules to follow!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sherlock and Molly arrived at the hospital fifteen minutes before midnight. Upstairs, Mike was still finishing some paperwork in his office.

“How’s the ankle, Molly?” asked her supervisor.

“A lot better. I still can’t put any weight on it, but the swelling is almost gone, and I hope I can stand on it a little tomorrow.”

“Well, try and stay in the office again. Things are very quiet here for once and hopefully it will stay that way. There’s always paperwork to be done, but nothing urgent.” He nodded at Sherlock. “How’s your detective work going? Any cases on the horizon?”

“John and I are actually headed to Dartmoor tomorrow to investigate the disappearance of a racehorse and the death of its trainer.”

“I’m sure you’ll have it all solved within a couple of days and the horse returned to its owner,” said Mike confidently.

“I certainly hope so. The horse is a favourite and due to run in a race this Saturday, so time is of the essence.”

Mike stood up and moved away from his desk, procuring an extra chair once again for Molly to rest her ankle on. “Well, I’m off. Have a good night,” and with those words, he departed.

Sherlock helped Molly get situated into the recently vacated chair with her right foot upon the one her supervisor had moved over for her.

“I’m not going to stay long,” the detective said. “I really need to try and get some sleep tonight so I can be ready for tomorrow’s challenges.”

“Of course, you should go. Have a good night.”

“Whoa there. I didn’t say I needed to leave right this second,” protested her fiancé.

“I’m aware of that, but you do need your sleep, and I should get started on this mound of papers.” She indicated Mike’s inbox, which still seemed full, despite her working on it the previous evening.

“Well then, I’ll see you at eight,” said the detective lightly, turning as if to leave.
Molly made a little sound of protest and he turned back, sidling around the desk and kneeling by her chair. “I was kidding. There’s no way I was going to leave without a farewell kiss.” He pressed his lips to hers and kissed her.

Molly clung to him, not wanting him to go, despite her words to the contrary. A quiet, apologetic cough came from the doorway and the pair drew apart.

“I was just wondering if you needed me to do anything for you,” said Kaitlyn, grinning a little.

Sherlock stood and tugged down his suit jacket as Molly replied, “I’m good for now. If you want to pop in again every couple of hours, that would be good, though.”

“No problem,” said the blonde. “I have a bunch of supplies to put away anyway. I’ll be back later.” She left the office.

The detective said reluctantly, “I suppose I had better go now. I love you.” He kissed Molly, lightly this time.

“I love you too,” she responded, and he too left the office.

This time there was no late night text from Sherlock, so presumably he had gotten to sleep more easily. Kaitlyn popped in twice, the second time asking Molly if she wanted something to eat and drink from the vending machine.

“Yes please,” said Molly, rummaging in her bag for her purse and handing Kaitlyn some coins. I’ll just have a packet of crisps and a Coke.”

“Okay, I’ll be right back.”

Kaitlyn returned a short time later with the crisps and Coke, as well as her own sandwich brought from home and a Coke as well. The blonde kept company with Molly in the office on their “lunch” break.

“How’s the ankle?” asked the lab assistant.

“It’s feeling a lot better. I can stand on it a little and limp. I really hate needing crutches.”

“Sherlock is taking you home in the morning, right? You don’t need my help till tomorrow?”

“That’s right. He’s taking me home and then he and John are off to Dartmoor. I really hope he is only gone a couple of days.”

“Knowing Sherlock’s reputation, I’m sure he’ll have the case solved in no time,” said Kaitlyn without hesitation.

The girls chatted as they enjoyed their break. Molly told her how well the wedding plans were going and that the invitations were due to arrive on Wednesday.

“I’m sooooo jealous,” pronounced the blonde, bemoaning once again her boyfriend’s dragging of his heels to make a commitment.

Molly smiled inwardly. In a few weeks her friend would have her own wedding to plan. She merely said, “I should be the jealous one. You’re off to America. I’d love to visit there someday.”

Kaitlyn shrugged. “I guess it isn’t a big deal for me, seeing as I go there every year. There are definitely some differences between English and American culture. I’ll tell you about some of them
sometime.”

“That would be fun.”

“For now though, break is over and I need to get back to work. I’ll stop in again later. Do you need the loo? I can help you if you need it.”

“It’s fine. I can get to the toilets on my crutches. Thanks though.”

The two friends said goodbye and the pathologist got back to work. She only got up once to use the toilet, and Kaitlyn, as promised, poked her head in the doorway to ask if Molly needed anything, which she didn’t.

The pathologist continued to work at the pile of papers on the desk, transferring things into the computer.

She was quite surprised to hear Sherlock’s deep baritone say, “Are you planning to stay here past your shift?” The pathologist glanced at her watch and saw it was almost that time. She had been so engrossed in the work, she had lost track of time.

“How did you sleep?” she asked her fiancé as he stood over her to brush her lips with his in greeting.

“Actually, surprisingly well. I climbed into bed, and next thing I knew, it was seven-fifteen. That’s why I barely made it here on time.”

“I’m glad you got some sleep, you really needed it.” She shut down the computer as she spoke.

“I need you more,” he said, helping his fiancée to stand and handing her the crutches before kissing her again and saying, “Let’s go home, love.”

Back at Baker Street Molly watched Sherlock throw some clothes into a small suitcase, in preparation for his trip. The actions brought home to her the fact that he was really going to be absent for a couple days at least.

“I’ll miss you like crazy,” she told him wistfully.

The detective stopped his packing long enough to say, “I’ll miss you more.”

“Did you eat?”

“No. Like I said, I barely made it to the hospital before you finished work.”

“I’m going to make us breakfast,” she told him firmly.

He raised an eyebrow, gesturing at her ankle, “How do you propose to do that?”

“I’ll manage,” Molly told him, using the crutches to go into the kitchen and get bacon and eggs from the fridge. Then she used her good leg to support her and grabbed two frying pans from the cupboard, using one for the bacon and the other for frying the eggs. She supported herself on the crutches as she cooked and the end result was as good as if she had not been dealing with an injury.

“You can carry the plates to the table,” she told Sherlock, pouring tea for them.

By that time, he was all packed and ready for when John was due to arrive in a half hour. Sherlock put the plates and utensils on the kitchen table, along with the tea.
Molly was pleased to see that he ate every bite of the breakfast, and she did as well. Afterwards, he insisted on clearing the plates and doing the dishes.

When the doorbell rang at nine-thirty, and Mrs. Hudson came to inform Sherlock that a man was there to pick up his dry cleaning, the detective took his clothes and went downstairs. After the man had gone, the sleuth asked his landlady to watch for when the clothes were returned, and to just keep them at her flat until he could pick them up. Mrs. Hudson was happy to comply, having done it a number of times already.

With only twenty minutes before John was due to arrive, Sherlock said, “I hate to leave you like this,” as he seated himself next to his fiancée on the sofa. “Kiss me before John comes, or our departure will be delayed so I can give you a proper goodbye.”

They were still kissing when the doorbell sounded. Neither of them moved to answer it. Mrs. Hudson most certainly would do the honours, and their supposition was correct. That allowed them another minute in each other’s arms before the knock sounded at the door and Sherlock got up with a sigh.

He opened the door, and John stepped through. “Molly, how is your ankle?” he asked immediately.

“Much better, thanks,” responded the pathologist.

“May I take a look at it before we leave?” the doctor asked.

“Sure,” I welcome an opinion from a doctor, although Sherlock has done a great job of looking after me.”

John came over and gently removed the bandage. “Did you wrap her foot?” he asked his friend, who simply nodded. “You did a great job,” he praised. “A lot of people don’t realize you need to wind the bandage alternately around the foot in order to keep the ankle immobilized.”

Molly noticed that her fiancé looked pleased with the praise. She had a feeling he was much more used to being told off by John, than being given kudos, except of course when it came to his sleuthing.

John inspected Molly’s foot and probed it gently, asking her where it hurt. She was able to say it was only very tender in the one spot, while the rest of the ankle felt fine, or just ached more than hurt. “Just a mild sprain,” he finally pronounced. “You should be right as rain in a few days.”

Molly was delighted with his medical diagnosis. “That’s great.”

John expertly bound her foot again, saying, “Keep it bandaged for now, by tomorrow you should be able to stand on it a little. Just don’t overdo it.”

“Thank you, John, “ said Molly sincerely. “Before you leave, how is Rosie?”

“She’s doing really well, getting used to the baby cereal instead of spitting it out, finally. Harry is taking care of her while we are gone. Sherlock, are you ready to go? We have a train to catch.”

“I’ll just grab my phone and charger,” answered the sleuth. After picking them up, he went over to Molly where she sat. “Do you need anything before I leave?” he asked.

“I’m fine.”

He looked at her searchingly, then took her face in his hands and kissed her tenderly. “Goodbye,
my love. I’ll text you once we arrive at our destination.”

Sherlock gave her one last look and waved as he followed John from the flat, closing the door behind him.

When he was gone, Molly sighed. The flat would seem empty without his presence. She turned on the television and flipped through channels. There was a Harry Potter marathon playing and episodes of “Friends” on another channel, but which to watch? Comedy or serious? Molly finally decided to watch “Friends.” It was mindless entertainment that didn’t require much concentration.

Molly had seen much of the series of Friends, binge watching it with Kaitlyn during marathon sessions of the American show. This one happened to be one she had seen. It was when Ross married Emily, but said “I take thee, Rachel,” during the ceremony. Talk about Freudian slip. She wished Kaitlyn was with her, laughing about the absurd scenarios in the show, the way they had done many an evening in the past. She doubted it would be a show Sherlock was interested in.

After the episode finished, another began but it was not the next episode sequentially. Molly turned the television off in disgust. She hated the way that happened so often, random episodes of shows.

Her phone was laying on the table and she picked it up, noticing for the first time there was an unread text. It couldn’t have been from Sherlock, she thought. She would have heard his text alert.

Going to the messages, she saw it was from her former landlord. He informed her that he had been able to find new tenants the day he had placed an ad in the newspaper, and they were already moved in. Molly wasn’t surprised. She knew her flat was in a good location. Best of all was the news that she would be receiving her full bond back. He asked for her address in order to mail a cheque.

Molly texted her Baker Street address back to the man.

Then she decided to check on her email, which she had not done for the previous two days.

As always there was the usual junk, a couple of advertisements from online sites where she had purchased goods in the past. There were only two personal emails. The first was from Nancy Schmidt and it had been sent on Sunday afternoon.

In the email, Nancy expressed concern about the pathologist’s injury and apologized for calling out to her, which had resulted in Molly’s fall. The secretary had explained she wanted to make sure she was ordering the right service order cover for the wedding. Molly had given her the code, but not the description, and she wanted to make sure the cover was the one with two rings on it and the quote from Ruth.

Nancy also acknowledged receipt of Molly’s email with the details of the wedding party, and the one with the personal note to put on the back cover. She had said the message was “just lovely.”

Molly sent off an email confirming it was the correct cover, and reassuring the secretary that her fall had been an accident and nobody’s fault. She assured Nancy that her ankle was on the mend, her other scrapes healing nicely, and that she would see her soon.

The other email was from Pastor Briggs. He was asking for information for the Marriage Register.

The first information he required was their full names from their birth certificates. The next was their age (as of the marriage date). The pastor requested their birth dates to make sure he had their ages correct. The next item on the marriage register to be filled in was the “condition,” as in marital status of the two people. Pastor Briggs said he would list their conditions as “single,” unless he was
informed of some heretofore unknown previous marriage.

Molly laughed at that one. She knew that “single” definitely applied for both Sherlock and herself.

The next request was for their rank or profession, and not an abbreviation. Molly wasn’t sure what Sherlock’s official profession was. Was it Consulting Detective? She would have to ask him. As for herself, her designation was Specialist Registrar.

The address of the couple at time of marriage came next, that would be an easy one.

The full names of both fathers was then needed, and surnames would be printed in capitals, not that Molly needed to do that in her response. If deceased, that would be put in parentheses after the name. Here Molly was stumped. She knew Sherlock’s father was named William, but not his full name. She was annoyed with herself for not checking her email the day before. Then she and her fiancé could have furnished the information together to Pastor Briggs. Now it would have to wait until his return. She wasn’t going to bother him with these questions when he was busy on a case.

The final piece of information required was the rank and profession of the fathers. Even if deceased, the profession at time of death was to be named, and if retired at the time of death, the (retired) would follow the profession. For a living father who was retired, the profession would be listed with (retired) following it as well. Molly had no clue what Sherlock’s father’s profession had been, although she assumed he was retired from it. This was another question she would have to pose to her fiancé.

She sent an email back to Pastor Briggs, who had also expressed concern about her injury and assured her he was praying for her. She thanked him for his concern and said her injury was healing fast, and that she should be able to walk unassisted within a few days. She also promised to answer his Marriage Register questions as soon as Sherlock returned to town after finishing his current case in Dartmoor.

Once the email was completed, the pathologist had an idea. Writing those church emails had reminded her of the fact that Sherlock did not have his own Bible. She wanted to give him one as a gift. Bearing in mind that her fiancé seemed to be comfortable with her NIV red letter edition, Molly decided to search Amazon for a Bible. She found one that was red letter and NIV which she thought Sherlock might find interesting, with his thirst for knowledge. It was a cultural backgrounds study Bible. Molly ordered it, and noted that it should arrive later in the week. She would have to tell Mrs. Hudson to look out for a package.

Satisfied with her morning’s work, Molly glanced at the clock. It was past noon. She decided she should take a bath, feeling annoyed that she had not washed her hair the day before when Sherlock could have assisted her. She decided one more day without washing it wouldn’t hurt, and perhaps tomorrow she could take a shower instead which would make hair washing easier.

Tentatively, Molly put her injured foot to the floor and tested it with a little weight. This time she was able to place a bit more of her weight on it without feeling the sharp pain. With a little luck, another day might mean she could walk with a limp, or at least do so by Thursday.

Deciding Sherlock would be on the train and potentially able to text her, she sent off one of her own.

“How’s the train ride? When you get home, we have some information to provide to Pastor Briggs. Just letting you know now, in case I forget.”

The answer came back almost immediately.
“Train ride is boring. I need a portable charger. I’ve been using my phone to occupy my time and I’m now at under 50% charge. I should have brought a book, like John did. He can be smarter than me - occasionally.”

Molly laughed, that was a touch of the old Sherlock coming through, although she was sure it was more of a tongue-in-cheek comment.

“I need to run my bath now and then get some sleep. Stay safe, my love. Text me when you get there. Maybe we can FaceTime tonight before I go to work, if you are done for the day and at your hotel. I love you.”

His text came back quickly once more. “Wish I could ‘help’ you with that bath, my darling. Je t’aime ma petite. Is it as sexy when I write in a foreign language? I’ll try to FaceTime, and I’ll definitely text when we arrive. Sweet dreams, my love.”

Molly could not let him have the last text when he had asked her a question, so she responded with, “Quite sexy, but your deep voice makes it ten times sexier, so feel free to indulge me when we FaceTime, unless John is around.”

Molly started to get up and retrieve her crutches to make the trip to the bathroom when her phone chimed again, and again, and again. Three lines.

“Molly”

“I love you”

“Molly, don’t go!”

Sighing, she recognized how bored her fiancé surely was, so she texted back, trying to imply a firm tone, which was rather difficult over text.

“Sherlock Holmes, I need to go take a bath now. No more distracting me. I’ll talk to you later. XX”

She waited a minute for his response and when none came, figured her brooding fiancé was probably sulking. Oh well, she had things to do. The exchange had used almost another half hour. Picking up the crutches, she made her way to the bathroom. As she reached it, she suddenly remembered the text from her former landlord. Molly had intended to give Sherlock the good news. Well, she certainly couldn’t do it now. It would just start another texting conversation. She would just tell him in the evening if they were able to FaceTime. It wasn’t as if the news was urgent.

Molly turned on the taps and added some of her body wash, not as much as her fiancé had put in the previous day. There was no need to cover herself with bubbles this time.

She didn’t want to remove the bandage so decided to keep her foot elevated out of the tub. The result was a bit awkward, but she managed.

Molly used the crutches to go to the bedroom and find a pair of pyjamas. She decided it would be better to be wearing ones that would keep her warm, while she didn’t have Sherlock with her to act as her own personal heater. After putting her phone on the charger on her bedside table, she settled into the large bed, thinking it was ironic that yesterday it had been her fiancé who found it big and empty without her. This time she was the one feeling that way.

She lay there for awhile, thinking about Sherlock and whether he had found something to occupy himself with on the train. He’d probably be arriving in Dartmoor soon. She was still thinking about
that when sleep finally overtook her.

Chapter End Notes

The information Pastor Briggs requested from Molly is factual. It is quite complicated really. As usual, I do my research on these things, and it was rather interesting to find out all that had to be done. Getting married is quite a complicated process. Incidentally, from what I read, you must be married in a structure with a roof, usually a church or registry office. No garden weddings in England - unless you can find a venue with a summerhouse or structure with a roof. No beach weddings etc either. You can have a “blessing” done, but you need to follow the structure requirements to make it legal.

Sorry for the long chapter. How do you think Molly and Sherlock will cope with their first separation since becoming engaged? I look forward to your response.
Investigation in Dartmoor

Chapter Summary

Sherlock and John have a very interesting conversation on the train. Sherlock begins his investigation into the disappearance of Silver Blaze.

Chapter Notes

I have one more cre chapter to post to bring it up to to date with the other site. After that it will be 3 or 4 posts a week. I’d dappreciate more response on how frequently you’d like to see an update. Keep those comments coming, I need encouragement just like anyone else. Thank you to those of you who already faithfully comment each chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sherlock turned off his phone in a huff and sulked for some time. He couldn’t help but be irritated over the fact that Molly had rebuked him for distracting her. He had really wanted to talk for awhile.

Sitting in the train was tedious. He had played with his phone for some time, browsing random internet sites and watching YouTube. On a whim he had even looked up Gretna Green, the famous place people went to elope. He had always thought you could just run away and get married, but that was not the case. Even Gretna Green required the same notice as England. On researching further, he discovered that Gibraltar allowed you to register your intent to marry only a day ahead of the ceremony. Of course, there was Las Vegas in America, but that wasn’t really practical. Nope, he’d just have to forget about eloping.

Sherlock did wish he hadn’t decided on such a long engagement though. Yes, two and a half months by most people’s standards might not be a long engagement, but when you were waiting till the wedding night to be intimate, it was an age. Of course, he hadn’t exactly been thinking about that when he and Molly had decided on the wedding date. He had assumed their relationship would be elevated to the next level before that day arrived, the way it did with most people. Even John and Mary had been expecting a baby by the time they got married. Who ever heard of a forty year old virgin anyway, unless you watched that movie with the same title. Juggling desires and beliefs was not easy.

He would have talked to John about his frustration, but the doctor seemed disinclined to talk, pulling out a book as soon as they had left the Paddington train station and starting to read.

The detective was bored on the long journey. He was anxious to just get there and begin his work.

When Molly had texted him, Sherlock had welcomed the escape from monotony. He had fully intended to keep a conversation going with her for some time, to relieve his boredom, but of course, that had not been the case.
Ten minutes into the sleuth’s self imposed sulk, John finally noticed that his friend was in high dudgeon and engaged him in conversation.

“So, Sherlock, how are you and Molly doing with the wedding planning?”

The detective smiled with relief. Here was a topic he could discourse at length. Perhaps it would make the interminable train ride seem faster. “Things are going very well actually. Thanks to you, our DJ is booked. We have ordered invitations which are due to arrive tomorrow. Last week Molly and I ordered the wedding flowers and the cake. We booked a photographer. Needless to say, we decided not to go with the one you and Mary used. We also went to the Registry Office to state our intention to marry.”

“Wow, I’m amazed,” stated the doctor in a tone of wonder. “You really do seem to have things well in hand. Have you found the planner I gave you useful?”

“Yes indeed. we used it to determine what places to consider for the different wedding requirements.”

“Mary would have been glad,” John sighed. “I do wish she could have been here to see you and Molly get together. She always told me she was certain you were in love with Molly. I laughed it off. I didn’t think you’d ever had any sort of emotion when it came to a woman, except for the infamous Irene Adler. I figured if you had any sentiment at all, it was wrapped up in memories of a dead woman. Then of course, I found out she was alive and figured you had some secret thing going with her, although you denied it.”

“Well, I suppose you could be forgiven for thinking that. Mary had the benefit of hearing about the time Molly had spent with me after my return to London, from the source herself. I’m guessing Mary never told you about the day Molly and I spent together, when I realized she was engaged. It was when you were still not talking to me, the day I came to your aid with that blasted bonfire.”

“Mary told me that Molly was engaged, and to add Tom to the guest list, nothing about you and Molly spending any time together at all. After we discovered Molly’s engagement was broken, thanks to your comment about the lack of a ring on her finger, Mary started saying Molly was obviously in love with you. She had noticed the way Molly's eyes had followed you that whole evening, and the terse way she spoke to her fiancé. I just laughed it off.”

“Your wife was a very astute woman. Too bad she didn’t tell me to quit being a blind fool. I admired her very much. I might actually have listened to her,” remarked the detective.

“Mary was good at reading people. She told me she knew from the way you took those slaps from Molly without retaliating, that you obviously had feelings for her, but I just dismissed it as wishful thinking. After all, my wife always had a soft spot for you.”

“That she did,” smiled Sherlock. “So how are you getting on lately? I’m sorry we haven’t talked much. Things are so busy with all the wedding planning.”

“I understand. Remember, I went through it myself, and I had a much longer time frame in which to get everything done. Mary did the bulk of the work anyway, setting up appointments and the like. You seem to be taking a much more hands-on approach than I did.”

“Well, of course. I couldn’t let Molly do all the work, especially given that we gave ourselves two and a half months. With how well things are moving along, I wish we had given ourselves less time now.”
John looked at his friend and said shrewdly, “I’m guessing the main reason you’d like to move things along faster is this determination to wait till you are married before you shag her.”

“Good God, John. Don’t say that awful word. It seems so classless and tawdry. I will never “shag” my wife, we will be making love.”

“Quit being pedantic, Sherlock. I stand by my comment though. You are having a hard time keeping your hands off of her. It’s only natural.”

The detective threw his hands up in defeat. “Okay, I admit it. Of course I want to be with her, more than anything. I finally discover I have emotions and a sex drive after all, and I have to wait months before I can do anything about it. I’m a new Christian, so I haven’t had the moral background instilled in me to wait until marriage. We have discussed it though, and read about it. We’ve made the decision to keep to those values and are trying our utmost to hold to them. Anyway, I’m sure it will make our wedding night and honeymoon more meaningful as a result.”

“You mean your sex holiday?” teased John.

Sherlock cringed at the flippant words he had used on John’s blog to refer to his friend’s honeymoon. “Yeah,” he muttered, feeling himself blush.

“Well, all I can say is, good luck to you, and I admire your fortitude. I suppose other Christians hold to these ideals as well?”

Sherlock looked at him a little suspiciously. “Of course they do, why would you ask?” He stopped for a moment and then a thought struck him. “Oh my God, John, are you asking that because of Molly’s friend, Kayla?”

By the colour that crept up his friend’s face, the sleuth knew he’d hit the nail on the head. “Go on, tell me. I’m right, aren’t I?”

“How on earth did you deduce that?”

“Your comment about other Christians having the same beliefs was out of the blue. Why would you care about it unless there was someone in particular you were thinking of? The only professed Christian I have known you to interact with is Molly’s friend, Kayla?”

By the colour that crept up his friend’s face, the sleuth knew he’d hit the nail on the head. “Go on, tell me. I’m right, aren’t I?”

“How on earth did you deduce that?”

“Yes, well, I...” stammered the doctor in a manner that was quite unlike himself.

“Go on, John,” urged Sherlock. “What has been going on with you lately? You haven’t texted me much either, so I’m guessing you’ve been busy too.”

“I’ve been giving you your space,” hedged the doctor, looking as if he would like to just walk away from the conversation. Being on a train of course, made that impossible.

“Tell me, John,” ordered Sherlock.

John took a deep breath and finally let the words spill out. “Fine, Sherlock. If you must know, Kayla and I have been texting back and forth for several days. She was so sweet and concerned about Rosie, as well as how I was coping. It was so easy to talk with her. I decided to ask her out to dinner on Saturday night. It’s weird, she’s nothing like Mary in looks and she’s quiet. She has said some really thought-provoking things to me. She seems to understand me better than I understand myself. There’s like, this connection with her that I can’t explain.”
“She sounds a lot like Molly,” observed Sherlock.

“Well, anyway, after our lovely dinner, I invited her to my flat. She took a bit of convincing, but I reassured her I had no ulterior motives, just that I’d like her to meet Rosie. Harry had been babysitting for the evening. Anyway, when we got to my flat and she met my baby, the two of them bonded right away. You should have seen the way they were together. Harry was holding Rosie in her lap and Kayla introduced herself to the two of them. It was the weirdest thing. Rosie held out her arms to be picked up, just like that."

“I take it that a child bonding with a stranger immediately is not a common occurrence.”

“No at all. It took my little sweet pea weeks to warm to my sister. I know she adores you and Molly, but you’ve known Rosie since she was born ,and Molly has helped me out in the past with babysitting.”

The doctor stopped suddenly, then steered the conversation in another direction entirely. “Speaking of babysitting, I have a medical conference coming up weekend after next. Do you think you and Molly might like to babysit Rosie for a couple of days? I need to leave early Saturday, and I’ll be back Sunday night. Harry can’t do it because she has a retreat for recovering alcoholics.”

“You mean Saturday next week, just to be clear, as in not this Saturday, but the following one?”

“Yes, that’s right,” affirmed the doctor.

“I’ll check with Molly. I’m sure she’d love to babysit if it’s not a weekend when she’s working.”

“Thanks, mate. Let me know.”

“I will. It will be good practice for us to babysit together,” the detective said thoughtfully. “We need somewhere for Rosie to sleep. Perhaps we should buy a cot. Eventually we’ll be needing one anyway, if all goes well.”

“I never pictured you as a father before, but you seem such a different person since Sherrinford. Are you going to wait awhile before turning your hand to fatherhood?”

“Not if I can help it. It already takes nine months to make a baby. By the time I have a child, I will already be forty-one. If we are to have several, I don’t intend to wait longer than I have to.”

“And by several, do you have a potential number in mind?”

“Well, I did tell Molly that six was a nice number.”

John guffawed so loudly at that, that several people around the train carriage turned to look in their direction. He finally calmed down long enough to say to an offended-looking Sherlock, “I’ll bet Molly wasn’t quite so keen on that number.”

“Perhaps six is a bit excessive, given our ages,” said the sleuth stiffly, “but I did tell her I’d like at least one of each gender.”

“What happens if you have three girls in a row, or three boys?”

“How ironic you should ask. Molly posed the same question. Then we try for number four.”

“And Molly was okay with that?”

“Actually, we didn’t quite resolve that. She called me incorrigible and we started talking about
other things.”

John hooted with laughter again. “You’re daft, my friend. You have to learn how to deal with one child before you start planning to have a horde of them.”

Sherlock pouted. “It is for practical reasons I would like several children. Molly has no siblings and mine are unlikely to procreate, so the burden is on me to carry on the Holmes family name. Besides, with no cousins to play with, my children will need each other.”

“Don’t kid yourself, Sherlock. Your kids will have a cousin of sorts to play with, my Rosamund.”

“Thank you, John. There is another reason for me to have several children. Just think, John, with Molly and me as their parents, they will undoubtedly be little geniuses.”

The doctor rolled his eyes. “And the arrogant Sherlock has returned. Welcome back.”

“I am not being arrogant, merely stating a fact,” said the detective in an offended tone. “Studies show that a child of parents with a high IQ is more likely to have a high IQ as well.”

“You win, my friend. I just hope your intellectually superior offspring will not become emotionally stunted like you were.”

“That was only because of Eurus. My children will never have to endure what I went through.”

“Are you at all worried that you might have a child who turns out to be a psychopath like your sister?”

Sherlock thought about that for a long moment. Finally he said, “I believe Eurus is an anomaly. I am not concerned about having a child who will be like her.”

“I’m glad. I don’t think so either. No more high-functioning sociopaths either, right?”

“Right.”

At that moment, the train pulled into the station. The two men had to change trains to go to Paignton, from where they would take a bus to their destination in Dartmoor.

“Remind me why I took this bloody case,” grumbled Sherlock as they started the second leg of their journey (not including the short Tube ride from Baker Street to Paddington Station).

“Because you like solving crime, and murder is at least a nine on your scale,” John reminded him. “Besides, the next two legs are under an hour and then twenty-five minutes, respectively, and Colonel Ross is meeting us at the bus station.”

“Promise me you will relieve my boredom by talking to me, rather than sticking your nose in that book of yours.”

“If it will prevent you from getting into one of your moods, fine. What do you want to talk about?”

“You and a certain Miss Kayla Roberts.”

“How do you know her last name?”

“Molly had to send a list of the bridal party to the church secretary for the wedding ceremony order of service. Her full name was listed as bridesmaid. Now don’t try to avoid the subject.”
“What do you want me to say? I told you she got along well with Rosie. She’s a lovely lady. I will be asking her out again. Satisfied?”

“No,” Sherlock told him. “You didn’t tell me how the night ended.”

His friend shrugged. “I drove her home.”

“Stop acting coy. Did you kiss her or not? God knows you owe me some personal details after finding out every little detail about my relationship with Molly.”

“Okay, okay. Yes, I kissed her. It was very nice, just outside her flat before she went in. And no, she did not invite me inside. Anyway, I am not ready for an intimate relationship so soon after losing Mary. If Kayla has the same ideals as your fiancé and we continue seeing each other, I will probably be taking a lot of cold showers.”

“Yeah, I know what that’s like,” muttered the detective.

“Well at least you have less than eight weeks to wait to shag, sorry, make love to Molly.”

“You forget that I’ve been celibate for forty years already.”

“That’s different though,” argued John. “You never had any sex drive before, did you? You said you were married to your work.”

“True enough. It’s hardly a consolation for me now though.”

“You can try consoling yourself with the fact that you will be ready and primed to get her pregnant immediately. That is, if you didn’t destroy all your virility through the ingestion of those foul drugs.”

“It was to catch Culverton Smith and Mary wanted me to do it for you.”

“You damn near killed yourself, Sherlock. You went to an extreme you should never have even thought about.”

“John, you have to understand, one of my closest friends had just died, you hated me. Molly hadn’t spoken to me since the christening. I think she was a bit upset with me for using my phone during the service.”

“Rightly so too, you git.”

“Hey, I apologized for that. In any case, I blamed myself as you did, for Mary’s death. I thought I didn’t care if I died. It was only when Culverton Smith was about to kill me that I realized I didn’t want to die, I wanted to live. You know the rest. You, Molly and Mrs. Hudson basically took turns watching over me so I would stay clean, and I did. Look.” Sherlock pulled up his sleeve with some difficulty, due to the fact he had on his suit coat and shirt.

“What?” John asked. “I see the marks where you stuck the blasted needles into your skin have faded.”

“No nicotine patch,” pronounced his friend proudly. “I quit those at the same time, but you probably didn’t notice as I always keep my arms covered.”

“That’s great, mate. I’m happy for you, and for Molly too. I’ve had discussions with her in the past about the dangers of smoking. Now, can I go back to reading for a bit?”
“Fine,” groused Sherlock. He pulled out his phone to see if there was a new message from Molly. There wasn’t. He was a little disappointed, but then again, she was the one who had texted last, and she was probably asleep by now. He missed her. He decided to send her a quick text apologizing for his immature behavior, and to let her know where he currently was.

“Molly, love. I’m sorry for being such a git earlier. I was bored and missing you dreadfully, not a good combination. Just wanted to let you know we are now on the train from Exeter to Paignton, then we have another half hour bus ride to get to Dartmoor. I probably won’t be able to text again until I can put my phone on the charger at the hotel. Just know that I love you, and I miss you. By the way, John asked if we can babysit Rosie not this weekend, but next. Can you check your schedule to see if you are working that weekend or not?”

He sighed and sent the text, then turned his phone off again to preserve the battery. For the rest of the train ride he stared out the window, looking at the early summer countryside. It was a beautiful sight.

When the train stopped, the two men trudged wearily to the bus that would take them to Dartmoor and Colonel Ross.

Sherlock dozed during the half hour journey, while John continued to read his book. The doctor prodded him awake once they arrived at the bus station. The two men gathered their overnight cases and got off the bus. There was an elderly man waiting, whom Sherlock assumed immediately by his military bearing was Colonel Ross.

“Colonel Ross, I presume,” he said, extending his hand.

“Yes indeed, answered the colonel. “Thank you for coming.” Turning to John he asked, “This is your colleague Dr. John Watson?”

“Pleased to meet you.” John also shook the colonel’s hand.

As they walked to the gentleman’s waiting car, Sherlock asked, “Have there been any new developments since we last communicated?”

“Nothing new. The police still haven’t found any evidence as to who murdered my trainer, nor has Silver Blaze returned. I am hopeful you can solve this mystery, with your great reputation.”

“I will do my best,” the sleuth told him modestly.

Colonel Ross drove them first to the small hotel where they would be staying. “If you gentlemen would like to take your things to your room and freshen up after your journey, I will be waiting for you in the restaurant downstairs at the bar. Then we can discuss how you would like to proceed with your investigation.”

Sherlock and John checked into their rooms and agreed to meet downstairs in fifteen minutes.

Sherlock put his suitcase on the bed and took out his laptop. He plugged his phone in temporarily to charge, figuring he’d leave it on the charger until they were ready to leave.

Then he went into the tiny bathroom, used the toilet and looked in the mirror as he Washed his hands. The image that looked back at him was a bit tired looking. There was a flannel on the side of the tub which he used to wash his face. He noted the slight five o’clock shadow that had appeared. He hadn’t shaved the previous night and he suddenly realized he had forgotten to pack his razor and shaving foam. He recalled Moly saying something about finding his unshaven self quite sexy. Well she would get the chance to see it again by the time he got home.
He unpacked his clothes, hanging his two suits and shirts, then proceeded downstairs. John had apparently just arrived at the hotel bar before him, because he was just sitting down.

“Can I buy you a drink?” asked the colonel of the two men, when Sherlock too was seated. The gentleman himself had a beer in front of him.

“I’ll just have a Coke, thanks,” said the detective, while his friend opted for water.

Once the drinks were served, Sherlock asked, “Were you able to procure the photographs for me?”

“Yes, of course,” answered Colonel Ross, producing them from an inside pocket. Sherlock had asked the man to obtain as many photos as possible of the deceased man, in order to look for clues about the cause of his death. Obviously, he could not see the body personally, as it had been a number of days since the man’s death. There were also some photos of Silver Blaze which he had requested in addition.

Sherlock examined the photos intently, passing each one to John after he was finished with it.

“You say John Straker was found dead on the moor, victim of a blow to his head?”

“That is correct.”

“I see there is also a long, thin gash on his leg.”

“Also correct. Straker may have been defending himself from an attacker, because there was a knife in his hand when he died.”

Interesting,” murmured Sherlock, examining a picture of the knife which had been in the dead man’s hand. It was a long, scalpel-like instrument, with a wickedly sharp looking blade.

“Very interesting,” he murmured. “John, what do you think?” he asked, passing the photo to John.

John examined it for a few moments. “That looks like a scalpel. I wonder, do you think that might have been what caused the gash on Straker’s leg? Perhaps he did it accidentally after he was attacked, and he fell?”

“I think it’s entirely possible, even probable.” He asked the colonel, “May I keep these photographs?”

“Of course,” replied the older man.

“Thank you. I am going to take them upstairs to my room and get my phone. Then I would like to take a look at the site where the murder occurred.” He went to his hotel room and put the photos on the table beside the bed, then picked up his phone which was almost back to a full charge and headed downstairs to the waiting men.

The trio headed outside and back to the colonel’s car. The man pointed out his training stable on the way. “That’s where Silver Blaze was housed before he disappeared.”

The place where the trainer’s body had been found was not far from the stable, only a half mile along the edge of the moor. “Here we are, “ announced Colonel Ross as he stopped the car beside the road. “Straker’s body was found about five minute’s walk from here.” He led them to an area with sparse vegetation and pointed to a spot near a bush.

Sherlock walked around the area and carefully inspected the ground and surrounding bushes. He
could find no trace of any footprints. There was also no evidence anywhere he could see. He was rather disappointed at the dead end. “Did the police check for footprints at the scene after Straker’s body was discovered?”

“Unfortunately, the man who discovered the body didn’t call the police immediately. He was worried that he might be implicated in the murder because he had been taking a stroll on the moor. Instead, he got a couple of his mates to bring Straker’s body to me, having recognized him as my trainer. By the time I got the information out of the man, there had been a rainstorm and there were no tracks for the police to find.”

“That is annoying,” muttered the detective. “You are sure of the man’s innocence?”

“I am sure of it, because his friends happen to also be friends of mine, and they corroborated his story.”

Switching to another tack, the sleuth asked, "May we now take a look at the training stable and the stall which was used by Silver Blaze?"

“Certainly, “ said Colonel Ross and he drove them to the stable. He led them inside and indicated the stall that had been previously occupied by the prized racehorse.

Sherlock and John walked around the stall. Despite a thorough search, the detective could find no evidence as to what could have happened to the horse. He was beginning to get frustrated.

“On the evening of the murder and the disappearance of the horse, had Straker been with Silver Blaze at any time during the day?"

“Yes, he had been with him, then made sure the horse was fed and watered, according to the young man I employ to do it. Jake had taken care of that and seen Straker leave. Usually Jake keeps watch over the stable at night, but he came down with an unexpected case of food poisoning that night and the stable was unguarded.”

“Interesting,” murmured Sherlock. “It is entirely possible that someone deliberately set out to ensure that Jake was unable to guard the stable that night. This would indicate someone who had access to the young man’s food. Obviously somebody does not wish for Silver Blaze to race this Saturday.”

“That makes sense, John agreed with his friend. “Incidentally, what were the odds on Silver Blaze to win?”

“Three to one,” answered the colonel. He was the favourite. I sincerely hope you are able to find him safe and well in time.” He looked at the sleuth. “I have a huge investment tied up in this racehorse. In fact, I will gladly pay you £500 if he is found and able to race. In the event that he wins on Saturday, I will give you an additional £1000.”

“That sounds more than reasonable,” nodded Sherlock. “I am confident we will find your horse. I have found no evidence of foul play. Most likely the horse will be returned once the race is over. For now though, I think my investigation for the day is concluded. I need to spend some time in my mind palace back at the hotel.”

Colonel Ross gave the detective a questioning look. “Mind palace, what’s that?”

John answered for Sherlock. “He retreats deep into his mind to mull over his cases and sort through the evidence.”
The colonel stroked his beard thoughtfully. “I see. Interesting. Well, I’ll take you back to the hotel now. What time should I stop by in the morning?”

“Nine o’clock, I think.”

The colonel dropped the two men off at the hotel and they went inside. Sherlock was about to head upstairs when John stopped him. “You need to eat first.”

“You know I don’t like to waste time eating when I’m busy with a case. It is too distracting.”

“Sherlock, I have told you many times that eating is important for you to keep your strength up. You need to nourish your body for maximum brain function. Besides, Molly would be angry with me if I didn’t make sure you ate, and she would be mad at you too. If you don’t have something to eat, I will text Molly,” he threatened.

“That’s blackmail,” protested the sleuth.

“Whatever works,” smiled John, and he led them to the small restaurant.

Sherlock ate his meal, although he was annoyed about the interruption to his thought processes. He also was impatient to go to his room and find out what Molly was up to. A text alert from her had sounded as they ate, but he didn’t want to pull out his phone and read it until he reached the privacy of his room.

By the time the friends had finished dining, it was nearly nine o’clock and Sherlock was getting even more impatient.

“Go on then,” said John. “I expect you want to talk with your fiancée don’t you? I need to see how Rosie is doing with her Auntie Harry as well. I’ll see you in the morning. I’ll take care of the bill.”

Sherlock gave him a grateful smile and hurried off up the stairs to his room.

He sat on the bed, tapped on the text from Molly and read, “I’m sorry too, for being so short with you. I was rather tired and still needed a bath before I could get any sleep. I miss you too. The flat seems very empty right now. Can we FaceTime when you are available? Mrs. Hudson brought me up some dinner, so I will be here waiting for you to call until I need to leave for work. I love you XX”

Sherlock tapped on the FaceTime icon on his phone and selected Molly’s name. It rang twice and she answered. He peered at the tiny screen, wishing he could see a bigger image of the woman he loved, but video was still better than just hearing her voice.

“Sherlock!” she exclaimed happily. “It is so good to see your face.”

“Yours too, love,” he responded, smiling at her image. “I really wish I could kiss you right now.”

“Me too. We’ll just have to make up those kisses when you get back. How’s the case going? Did you arrive at the time you expected?”

“Yes. Because of our late start though, I couldn’t do as much investigating as I wished. There are some confusing elements to this case which I need to ponder, but I wanted to talk to you first.”

“I’m sorry, that’s my fault. If you had been able to leave when you initially planned to...”

Sherlock cut her off. “Don’t say that. You couldn’t have anticipated your injury and you are and
always will be my priority. So what do you think about babysitting our goddaughter?”

“After you sent me that text I was thinking of my schedule. With my usual rotation for working the weekend I would be free. The only problem is, I am probably scheduled to work this weekend. I’m such an idiot for not thinking of it before.”

“Well that isn’t a big deal, is it?”

“It means we have a problem with me going to the matinee with you on Sunday.”

Sherlock looked pained. “That’s not good. I can hardly go without you to act as a buffer between my parents and me. My mother would be sure to spend the whole afternoon grilling me about you and our wedding plans.”

“Well, all is not lost. I’ll speak to Mike tonight. If I am indeed scheduled for this weekend, I’ll see if I can just work a half day on Sunday, or I’ll try to swap my shift with someone else.”

“On a positive note, if you are working on Saturday, I might be back from Sherrinford at the right time to come get you from the hospital and we can go out for dinner.”

“I like the sound of that. So, do you think you will be able to finish your case tomorrow and get home on Thursday?”

“I have to be honest, love. There are two different mysteries here, the murder of the trainer and the disappearance of Silver Blaze. I can’t be certain I will have discovered the answers to both tomorrow.”

Molly sighed in disappointment. “I understand, but to have you away for three days is going to seem like an eternity.”

“I’ll make it up to you, my darling, I promise. Some good news though. If and when I find the horse, Colonel Ross will pay me £500. If the horse wins the race on Saturday, he has promised me £1000 instead. Plus he is covering our expenses, as well as paying £500 per day for retaining my services.”

“Wow, that’s a nice pay check, but then again, you are the world’s only consulting detective, so really, you are worth it.”

“I suppose that is true. I am glad he is a wealthy man and can afford it. Sweetheart, I must go and think about this case now. I’ll talk to you tomorrow, okay? Have a good night at work.”

“Okay, “Molly answered wistfully. “I’m glad we got the chance to talk a little. Good luck with your case. I love you.”

“Love you too, goodnight.”

Sherlock tapped the button to disconnect the call. He then sat crosslegged on the bed, closed his eyes and steepled his fingers, resting his elbows on his legs. Soon he was deep in his mind palace, thinking about the details he had been given so far on the case. Something was strange. The food poisoning of Jake would indicate an inside job. What would a person employed by Colonel Ross have to gain from Silver Blaze’s disappearance? And why kill Straker? Why too had Straker been out on the moor that fateful evening?

The detective spent some time trying to fit the various pieces of evidence together. Finally he decided he still needed more information in order to make any deductions as to what had happened.
It was almost midnight by the time Sherlock exited his mind palace and returned to reality. He took a quick shower and headed to bed, too tired to even think about how he missed his fiancée. Sleep came almost at once.

Chapter End Notes

Oh my goodness, I had no idea this chapter was so long - over 5800 words. So sorry, I should have split it into two.

There's an awful lot going on here. Details of the journey to Dartmoor are accurate. I researched the trains and bus necessary to get to the area. Actually I then discovered Sherlock could not really have taken an earlier train that day anyway, so Molly’s injury did not cause a late start but shhh don’t tell anyone I messed up. In fact, I just looked at train schedules and discovered there is a direct train from Paddington to Paignton, but it may only run once a day. Oh well, more time on a train means more conversation!

How did you find Sherlock and John’s conversation on the train about waiting till marriage, and Sherlock's talk about having children? How about John’s new relationship with Kayla? I hope you are willing to see him with someone new.

Then of course, there was the talk about Mary being sure Sherlock and Molly were in love, even if neither of them would acknowledge it. That is my head canon for them both being chosen by Maryas godparents for Rosie. I do think Mary wanted to push them together.

How are you finding the mystery so far? As I said, it is based on the actual ACD story, “Silver Blaze.”
Molly’s alarm woke her at eight o’clock. She turned it off and noticed that a message had come in from Sherlock.

Sherlock’s apology had been sweet and it made her feel terrible about the way she had ended their last conversation. She could have been a bit more tactful. When she read his question about her weekend work schedule, the pathologist had suddenly realized that this weekend should in fact be her working one. With Sherlock’s plan to visit Sherrinford on Saturday, that wouldn’t be a problem. The plan to see the Sunday matinee was another story. She really wanted to see the musical, as well as get to know her future in-laws better.

There was a knock on the door and Mrs. Hudson called her usual greeting, while Molly was still trying to decide what to do about Sunday if she was scheduled to work. Perhaps she could ask to just work until noon, or find someone else with whom to swap a shift.

“I’ll be right out, Mrs. Hudson,” she called. “I just need to get dressed.” She got the crutches and selected some clothes for the evening, then got dressed quickly.

Mrs. Hudson had seated herself on the sofa. “I’ve brought up an omelette and some tea for you,” the landlady said. “It’s in the kitchen, along with today’s mail.”

“Thank you so much Mrs. Hudson. That was very thoughtful of you.” Molly smiled at the sweet mother-like lady.

“It’s no trouble at all, dear,” replied the elderly woman. “I’ve brought up tea and food to Sherlock so many times over the years, it’s a hard habit to break. I often make extra food with him in mind,” she confided. Before Molly could speak, she added, “I realize you will be taking over that role, but let me at least look after you now until your ankle is healed.”

“I really appreciate it,” the pathologist said warmly.

“Well, you go on and eat now, before it gets cold. I’ll pick up the dishes later.” With that, the landlady headed back downstairs.

Molly ate the delicious omelette and drank the tea. She decided to read her devotional while she...
waited for Sherlock to FaceTime her, if indeed he did. Eating alone made her miss him even more. She missed his blue-green eyes looking into her own, the feel of his lips on hers, the warmth of his body when he held her, his gorgeous hair she always wanted to touch. It was ridiculous really, how quickly she had grown used to his constant presence in her life.

Trying to turn her thoughts away from missing her fiancé, Molly got her devotional and Bible and returned to the sitting room. Before sitting again, she tested her weight again on the injured ankle. The pain had receded further and she was able to put almost half of her weight on it she estimated, before the ankle twinged. Perhaps by the time she finished work she could manage a hobble.

Molly sat and read her “Our Daily Bread” reading, getting herself up to date. Then she waited anxiously, hoping Sherlock would call soon. She had to use the loo and was almost back at the sofa when she heard the FaceTime chime. Dropping the crutches beside her hastily, the pathologist grabbed her phone on the second round of the chime. When she saw his face looking at her through her views screen, her heart flipped inside her. He looked so handsome, and he had a day’s worth of stubble on his face. She had noticed his razor was still in the bathroom and idly wondered if he had deliberately left it behind because of her previous comment about him looking rather sexy with stubble.

Their conversation was all too brief, Molly thought. This time he was the one who had needed to go. But he had a job to do, and one which would produce a pretty decent paycheck if he solved it successfully, which she had no doubt he would. Her fiancé was absolutely brilliant after all.

Molly sighed. She still had time before work, but she felt so lonely that she decided to head into work early. She needed to speak with Mike anyway.

Before leaving however, the pathologist decided to make herself a sandwich to have during her break. Eating the crisps the previous evening had not really been sufficient.

She made her sandwich and took an apple as well. Then, gathering her things, she carefully made her way downstairs, holding the crutches under an arm and limping down the stairs, trying to put as little pressure on her right foot as possible and using her other hand to hold the railing.

If Sherlock had been with her, she would have taken a taxi, but alone, she decided to use her usual method, the Tube.

Fortunately the Baker Street Underground was only a three minute walk, although it took a little longer with the crutches. She managed however, and arrived at the hospital with plenty of time to spare before her shift was due to start.

Molly knocked on the door to Mike’s office and entered when he bade her to come in.

“You’re very early tonight, Molly,” he said in some surprise. “What’s up?”

“I was rather at loose ends. Sherlock left this morning for his case.”

“Ah yes, the Silver Blaze one. After he told me about it, I went home and watched the news. It is actually quite a high profile case.”

“Really? I had no idea. I haven’t actually paid any attention to the news for the past few days.”

“Oh yes indeed, it is the talk of London. That horse has an amazing race record and was highly favoured to win the race on Saturday. Many people are up in arms about its disappearance. A lot of them stand to lose a good deal of money if the horse isn’t found.”
“Oh my!” exclaimed Molly. “I had no idea this case had the attention of the media.”

“If Sherlock is on the case, I’m sure things will be resolved. I have to tell you though, be ready for some media attention at the end of it. They will be sure to want an interview with him.”

“Well thanks for letting me know. At least now I’ll be prepared if that happens.” Changing subjects she asked, “I guess I’m scheduled to work this weekend?”

“You are. Didn’t you check it?”

“I’m afraid I didn’t think to. I was just thinking about being on night shift and completely forgot until a few hours ago that this would be my usual weekend rotation.”

“I can understand that. You’ve had a lot on your mind lately, with planning your wedding, getting kidnapped and spraining your ankle. Never a dull moment, eh?”

“True enough.”

“I still am amazed at the change you have wrought in my old friend. He would have been the last person I’d expect to get married. But if anyone could change his mind, I’m not surprised it was you, with how much you have done together over the years. You’re also the smartest woman I know.”

Molly blushed. “Why thank you, Mike. About this weekend, is there any way I can get off work early on Sunday? Maybe I could work a half day?”

“That’s an unusual request coming from you. Did you make plans?”

“Actually, yes. Sherlock’s parents are coming up to London and we have tickets to a matinee of ‘The Sound of Music.’”

“Well, I certainly can’t let you miss an opportunity to meet with your future in-laws. You’re scheduled from seven till four on Sunday. Just leave at noon and I will find someone to cover your hours or do it myself.”

“You’re the best, Mike!”

“Shh, don’t spread it around, I have a mean reputation to maintain.”

Molly laughed at that. Mike was the most laid back supervisor in the hospital, and a popular one. “I’m going to just go to the lab and sit in a corner now until my shift starts.”

“Feel free to stay in here if you like. I have to go and check on some things anyway, so you can have it to yourself.”

“Okay then, thanks,” the pathologist said.

After Mike had left, she turned on her phone, intending to send a late night text to Sherlock. Suddenly, she realized there was an unread message from Kayla.

Kayla rarely texted her, so Molly was curious to find out what her friend had to say. She read it in astonishment.

“Molly, I need to tell you something. John and I, well, we went out for dinner on Saturday night and it was lovely. I got to meet his daughter and sister afterwards. Rosie is such a sweetheart. Anyway, he took me home and he kissed me, right before I went inside my flat. Molly, I’m so
confused. Help!”

Molly saw the text had been sent shortly before Sherlock’s, when she had been asleep. Kayla might be asleep already, but she decided to text her back anyway.

“Kayla, I think it’s great you and John went out. He has been lonely since Mary died three months ago. Why are you confused?”

Kayla was obviously still awake because the response came back almost immediately.

“Because I really liked the kiss. Because I don’t want to push him into something he isn’t ready for.”

“Kayla, he kissed you, not the other way around.”

“I know, but I’m still scared. He’s such a great guy, so sweet. I want to go out with him again, but I don’t want to get hurt either.”

“My suggestion is to let John set the pace. If he is ready for a relationship with you, he will ask you out again. The fact that he kissed you seems a good sign to me. Just take things slowly.”

“What if things start moving too fast then, and he wants to uh, do things with me?”

“Gosh Kayla, one step at a time. If that time comes, you just have to explain to him about your values and how important they are to you.”

“Did you and Sherlock have ‘the talk’ as well?”

“As a matter of fact, we did. I have to admit it isn’t the easiest thing in the world to stick to it, but we are keeping to our ‘abstinence agreement,’ at least so far ha ha. It helps that he has also become a Christian and understands my point of view. John is a good man and I’m sure he’d respect your wishes. Anyway, don’t even think of that right now, just take things as they come, okay?”

“Okay, my friend. Thanks for the talk. I appreciate it.”

“Anytime.”

After finishing her talk with Kayla, she had to share the news with her fiancé.

“Sherlock, guess what? John went out with Kayla. Did he tell you? He even kissed her! I hope he’s ready to move on and be happy again. Rosie could use another mother figure in her life and Kayla is really sweet. Anyway, I know you are probably asleep and my shift is about to start. I miss you immensely. Talk to you tomorrow.”

Mike stopped back into the office to say goodnight and Molly settled herself behind the desk to work on paperwork once again. Three days in a row was getting boring. She longed to be in the lab, looking at various samples under a microscope. Hopefully by tomorrow night she would be mobile again.

The paperwork was tedious, but she made significant progress with Mike’s inbox as the night went on.

Kaitlyn popped in several times and they ate together during their break. The blonde was full of excitement about her trip. For the first time, David was also coming along to meet her grandparents.
“Wow, I guess things are pretty serious with you after all,” said Molly with a knowing smile as she thought about David’s plan to propose to Kaitlyn on the day of her wedding to Sherlock.

“Well of course it is. We’re practically living together anyway. I usually stay at his place on weekends. Of course, my mum won’t allow him to sleep over at our house. She’s such a prude.”

“Kaitlyn!” The pathologist exclaimed, in a slightly shocked tone.

“Well, she is,” grumbled The lab assistant. “It’s not like she doesn’t know we are sleeping together. At least you and Sherlock don’t have parents getting in your way, and you are already living together.”

“Um, there’s a slight difference. Sherlock and I are not sleeping together. I mean, we’re sharing a bed, but we aren’t having sex. We’re waiting until our wedding night.”

“Really?” Kaitlyn’s eyes were round with wonder. “I can’t believe you aren’t already doing it. He’s so freaking hot, in a brooding detective sort of way. And those dark locks are to die for.”

“I don’t dispute that. I’m also not saying it’s easy either, but the Bible says sex should be kept within the confines of marriage.”

“Huh, I guess I never really paid attention when I went to church then. I must be a very bad girl,” said her friend, smirking.

“Hey, I’m not preaching to you. It’s what I believe, and you are entitled to your own views. From reading about it on the internet, there are many Christians who don’t take abstinence seriously. Anyway, I’ve waited this long, so I guess I can wait a few more weeks.”

“So, when you and Tom were engaged you never did it with him?”

“Nope. It just didn’t feel right. Besides, I had no problem sticking to my values with him. I guess I should have recognized that as an indication there was a distinct lack of passion there.” She stopped, thinking of how much the opposite was true with the detective. “Let’s just say, there is definitely no lack of passion between Sherlock and myself.”

“Oh, I can tell that by the way you look at each other. It’s like you have eyes for no-one else. How’s the separation going?”

“Well, it’s only been since yesterday, and we did FaceTime briefly last night, but I do miss him a lot.”

“God, Molly, what if you can’t keep your hands off each other when he gets back?”

“I guess we’ll have to deal with that when it comes.”

“Ha, I’m going to make a bet with you.”

“What sort of bet?”

“That you and Sherlock won’t make it to the wedding night without giving in to your obvious passion for each other.”

“Now that’s a challenge I intend to win,” said Molly firmly. “How much do you want to bet?”

“Twenty quid.”
“You’ve got it. Be prepared to pay up, my friend.” They shook hands on it.

“Don’t kid yourself, Molly. Believe me, it will be worth you losing a twenty to me. You’ll see.”

Molly just laughed.

Later, as she took the Tube home alone, having insisted to Kaitlyn she did not need her friend to come with her, she thought about Kaitlyn’s confidence about winning their bet. It should be an easy one for her to win, but deep down inside she knew it would be anything but. She knew it would be important for Sherlock and herself to really adhere to their abstinence guidelines. There was just a magnetic pull between them. If they allowed themselves to lose control, there would be no going back. She really, desperately wanted to wait for their wedding night, but she also really, desperately wanted Sherlock too. Damn, it was frustrating.

Back at home, Molly mounted the stairs to the flat with more ease than she had descended them. She found she was able to sustain more of her weight on her foot than she had earlier, and it was a relief to know she would soon be back to normal. Using crutches was such a nuisance.

She had just sat down on the sofa when she heard a text come in from Sherlock. Eagerly she pulled her phone out of her handbag.

“Good morning, my love. John and I are about to set off for the day. He did actually tell me about Kayla on the train ride yesterday. I think it will be good for him to move on. He said he felt a connection to her, which is a good sign, and Rosie likes her too.”

“I just got home,” the pathologist texted back. “Glad John told you, how did the conversation come about?”

“Actually I deduced it and he confirmed it.”

Molly smiled to herself. That was her Sherlock all over. “I’m not surprised.”

“About him being with Kayla?”

“Well that too, but I meant you and the way you deduce things.”

“I wish I could talk more, love, but I need to head out now. With a bit of luck I’ll talk to you again tonight. Sleep well.”

“And you have a good day, Sherlock. I love you.”

“Love you too.”

Molly stared at her phone for a few minutes, lost in thought. Sherlock had only been gone for a day, but it seemed longer. Perhaps it was the fact that he had such a forceful personality. He commanded attention wherever he was. She wondered about what Mike had said, that the Silver Blaze story was all over the news. She decided to do a Google search about it.

For the first time Molly wondered whether it would benefit her to have her own laptop. She enjoyed the larger screen, especially when it had come to doing things for the wedding. Or perhaps she could get an iPad. It had never bothered her in the past, only having a phone because she rarely used it for anything besides phone calls and texting. Now as she did a google search on Silver Blaze, she had to pinch out the screen to enlarge the text.

There were several articles describing the horse’s fame as a racehorse and the shock of his
disappearance. The murder of the trainer remained a mystery as well, and the police had found no clues about what had happened. The last report had been dated two days earlier, and there had been an interview with the horse’s owner, Colonel Ross. He had mentioned that he had engaged the services of "the famous London detective, Sherlock Holmes" who would be arriving the following day to investigate.

Molly put down the phone when she had finished reading. Seeing the name of her fiancé in print made her miss him even more. With a little sigh, she decided to test out her foot and see if it would bear enough weight for her to have a shower. She wasn’t hungry, having finished the cinnamon rolls from two days earlier shortly before finishing work.

The pathologist gingerly unstrapped her ankle. Her skin was all wrinkled from the day long compression of the binding. Hoisting herself up, she stood on her good leg and did a short step with the right foot, quickly returning her weight to the left one with the next step. It was actually not too bad. Molly managed to hobble her way to the bathroom and turn on the taps for the shower. She then undressed and got under the stream of warm water, putting her bad foot lightly on the rim of the tub. She was able to shower and wash her hair without any problems.

After the shower, the pathologist put on her pyjamas and sat on the bed to do her reading. With time on her hands, she decided to re-read the first book of Samuel, so she could help Sherlock with any questions he might have about it. The first book of Samuel was actually quite a long read and after an hour and a half she needed a break. She still wasn’t ready for bed, but it was past noon and her stomach was finally growling in protest.

Molly popped two crumpets in the toaster and made a cup of tea. After eating, she was finally ready to sleep.

She hobbled back into the bedroom and got into bed, curling up into a ball for warmth and slept.

Chapter End Notes

what did you think about Molly’s conversation with Kaitlyn, and the subsequent bet? Did you like her explanation about abstinence without being judgmental to her friend who does not feel the same way?

Do you find it realistic that Molly would be having significant struggles with her own values? I wouldn’t write it that way if I didn’t think there would be a distinct difference between the desires of the human nature and the flesh, and the desire to follow Biblical teaching.

Do you have any opinions on this you would be willing to share publicly? Do you feel abstinence is important throughout an engagement period, or not? Do you have any feelings about it in general, or is it not really a topic you find relevant these days when it is so common for couples to live together without the benefit of even a public commitment?
Sherlock woke at eight. He had had a pretty good night’s sleep for once and was determined to get as much done as possible that day. Rubbing his stubbled chin thoughtfully, he decided the best thing to do would be to interview the other members of Colonel Ross’s household. He knew the man employed Jake of course, and there was a live-in cook who had been there since the colonel’s wife had passed away five years earlier. There was also a woman who came twice a week to do cleaning in the house.

He got dressed and had just finished buttoning his suit when Molly’s text came in. He was interested to discover she was also aware of John’s outing with Kayla. He supposed Kayla had been eager to talk about it with her friend. Sherlock had been sorry to have to cut the conversation short, but if he had continued texting, he would have been late to meet John downstairs.

In the foyer John was waiting and they went outside together. Colonel Ross was already outside and as soon as the pair climbed into the car, the man asked, “Where would you like to go first?”

“I’d like to speak to the lady who does your cleaning.”

Colonel Ross complied, and soon they were outside of a modest little house.

Sherlock knocked on the door and a petite, middle-aged woman answered it.

Sherlock asked her a few questions about her usual activities and whether she had been working the day of Straker’s death and Silver Blaze’s disappearance.

She had been unable to furnish him with much information. The only thing she said which stood out to Sherlock was that she had noticed Straker had refused to let her into his room to clean it that day, and he had been quite agitated.

Thanking the lady, Sherlock left the house with John in tow.

“Any thoughts John?” The detective asked his friend.

“She seemed honest, but not too bright. Perhaps there’s something to the fact that Straker was agitated though. A threat from someone maybe?”

“Hmmm, possibly,” mused the sleuth as they climbed back into the waiting car.

“Where to next?” asked the older man.

“Your house, I think. I would like to talk to Jake if he is there today.”
“He is,” affirmed the colonel, and they drove to the grand old house in which the man lived.

Jake was tending the stables. He had just finished feeding the horses some hay and adding water to their troughs.

Sherlock approached the lad and talked to him at some length. He questioned the young man about the events of the evening and if he had noticed anything suspicious at all in the vicinity, any strange people, for instance.

Jake had not seen any strangers around the stables. He too had noticed that the trainer had seemed somewhat agitated though.

When the lad was asked about having food poisoning, he shrugged.

“I was fine until after dinner. Mrs. Straker had made me some stew. The meat, well it did taste a bit funny, I figured maybe it was a bit off. It was about fifteen minutes later when I started to feel really bad. I had to go up to the house and spent the rest of the evening there being sick and dashing to the loo by turns. I was okay the next day though, so I guess it was something I ate.”

Sherlock was intrigued. He had not been aware that the cook was the trainer’s wife.

“Did anyone else get sick from the food? Like the cook?”

“No, but I thought I might just have a sensitive stomach. There was something I noticed though earlier. It probably doesn’t have any bearing on the case.”

“No information is unworthy of mention, young man,” the detective told him kindly.

John, who had been silently observing the conversation, gave Sherlock a look of surprise.

The detective knew his friend was reacting to the gentle way he was speaking, quite unlike the gruff, impatient manner he had used in the past.

“Well, like I said, it’s probably nothing, but I did notice Mr. Straker and his wife having a bit of a row a little earlier that day.”

The sleuth spoke with the young man for a short while longer, then, satisfied he had gleaned as much information from the youth as possible, he thanked him and left, motioning John to follow.

“Did I miss something?” he asked his friend. “Should I have known that Straker’s wife is Colonel Ross’s cook?”

“Of course not,” said the doctor reassuringly. “The colonel never mentioned her by name.”

“It is however a piece of information that could prove critical to this case. I think we need to go back to the hotel so I can spend some time in my mind palace to consider the facts of the case we have so far.”

“Good idea, “ said John as they once again climbed into the car. “Please take us back to the hotel for now,” he instructed the colonel.

Once there Sherlock told the man, “I need to mull over this case for awhile. I will contact you when I am ready to proceed.”

They arrived at the hotel and Sherlock was ready to head upstairs when John laid a hand on his arm to stop him. “We need to eat, Sherlock. I’m hungry, even if you’re not. It’s almost one.”
Sherlock frowned. “I’m not hungry.” He was anxious to finish the case and get home to Molly. All these meals just impeded his progress.

“Not happening, Sherlock,” said John sternly.

For a moment the detective thought he meant that he wasn’t getting home to Molly soon. Then he realized his friend meant he wasn’t going to be allowed to skip lunch.

“Oh, very well,” he growled impatiently. “But let’s be quick about it. I need to think.” He gave John a suspicious look. “And what, may I ask, do you get up to when I’m busy in my mind palace?”

“Oh, just things,” answered the doctor vaguely.

“Things being texts to a certain person who shall remain nameless, I suppose.”

John flushed. “Not only her. I talk to Harry about Rosie as well.”

“Well, I’m going to just get a sandwich so I can get upstairs. How about you?” asked Sherlock, deciding to let John off the hook - for now.

“I’ll just have a sandwich as well.”

They ordered and the sleuth ate quickly, finishing before John. “I’ll knock on your door later, when I’ve made up my mind on what to do next.”

In his hotel room Sherlock again adopted his usual method of sitting with fingers steepled, using his mind palace to order the clues.

The first clue was the food poisoning of Jake, which had affected nobody else. Second was the fact that the cook was the wife of the murdered trainer. The third point was the row between husband and wife on the day of Straker’s death.

He started piecing the facts together. What if the couple was arguing over money troubles? Money was one of the most common causes for arguments within a marriage according to statistics. If they were arguing about money, could it be because of poor financial decisions? Were unscrupulous moneylenders out there who murdered Straker because he couldn’t pay up? That wouldn’t explain why Jake’s food had made him sick. Sherlock was quite certain that Mrs. Straker had put something in his food, but why?

Sherlock thought some more. Why would Jake need to be absent from his post? The horse had been taken only because Jake was not there to guard him.

Suddenly it hit him. “Oh, I’ve been a fool,” the sleuth muttered to himself. What if it was Straker himself who wanted the horse out of the way for some reason, and what if that reason was because he was in debt? It still didn’t explain the murder, but Sherlock felt he was onto something. He needed a warrant to search the Strakers’ room.

With that thought in mind, he telephoned the colonel.

He told the man what he needed and the colonel promised to call him back once he had news.

Sherlock waited impatiently, drumming his fingers against the nightstand. When the colonel called back it was not good news. The warrant would not be available until the following morning. The detective let out a groan of frustration after he hung up, and he went to John’s room to give him an update.
When John answered the door and let him in, the detective explained his theories.

“It’s damned annoying though,” he said in disgust. “I was hoping to get this wrapped up today. Now I can’t get a warrant until morning to search the room of the Strakers. It is infuriating. There has to be some clue there about his money issues.” He paced the room while John watched.

“Why is it so urgent that you wanted to get this case wrapped up today? The race is only on Saturday, so we still have a couple days.”

“It’s not about that,” answered the sleuth. “I just want to be home with Molly. If this case wasn’t so urgent, I would have delayed our departure until her ankle was better. I want to be there for her, I need her.”

“I’ve never heard you talk this way before,” observed the doctor. “Do I detect a hint of sexual frustration as well?”

“Hell, yes,” affirmed Sherlock with a growl. “But that is not going to change when I get home. It’s going to be that way until we get married.”

“I wonder about that,” John said slowly. “You are so passionate about Molly. I’m guessing you won’t last until your wedding night. How will she resist you when you are all she’s wanted for years?”

“She has been doing it perfectly well, so far,” grumbled the detective. “Although we did come close to losing control a couple of times. One of those doesn’t count though, because she had too much to drink, and I wasn’t going to seduce her when she wasn’t in her right mind.”

“As well you shouldn’t. But still, and I can’t believe I’m saying this to you of all people Sherlock, it’s perfectly natural to want to have sex with the person you love.”

“I’m not saying it isn’t, John,” ground out the sleuth. “We want to do things the right way, and God intended couples to be married before they sleep together.”

“I’m sorry, I just don’t get it. You are already pledged to marry. What’s the big deal about consummating your relationship a bit early?”

“I was wondering about that myself, so Molly and I spent some time online reading about why it is good to wait. Yes, a lot of Christians end up not waiting anyway, but I don’t want to become one of those statistics.”

“Maybe not, but even the best of intentions don’t always work out. I admire your resolve, Sherlock, I really do. I have to wonder though. You’ve been engaged for just over three weeks and you still have what, seven and a half to go?”

“Don’t remind me,” groaned Sherlock, running a hand through his hair in frustration.

“Look at yourself, mate. I’d be willing to bet you don’t make it to your wedding day with your virginity intact.”

Sherlock looked at his friend with a speculating gleam in his eye. “Well, I do like a challenge. How much are you willing to bet, John?”

“Twenty quid, but I’m counting on you to be honest.”

“Let’s make this more interesting. Fifty quid. And of course I’ll be honest.”
John hesitated, but finally held out his hand. “Fifty quid it is, and I look forward to spending your money.”

Sherlock just laughed, but inside he was a little worried about his overconfidence.

Despite the abstinence guidelines he and Molly had put in place, he felt their hold was a tenuous one at best. He knew Molly felt more strongly than he did about it and he was counting on her to keep things under control. It wasn’t that he wasn’t also trying, it was just that she was such an enchanting little temptress, and his body betrayed him whenever they were together.

“Well, I’m going to call the colonel back now. We might as well take a look at some competing stables and see if Silver Blaze is being kept at one of them. Or at least we can see if anything looks suspicious if we aren’t allowed to inspect their training stables,” he told John. “I’ll come to your room after I’ve gotten hold of him.”

With that, the sleuth headed back to his room. Before calling the colonel, he decided to give Molly an update via text.

He turned on his phone and texted, “Molly, love. The investigation may take an extra day. I was hoping to have this finished today or early tomorrow, but I’m waiting for a warrant to search Straker’s room. There’s something fishy about his death. The warrant won’t be ready until morning. This evening I am going to search for the racehorse. If I can find him tonight, I might be able to wrap things up and head home tomorrow. Just wanted to let you know. I will try to FaceTime later tonight. You have no idea how much I’m missing you right now. I want to be holding you, kissing you...”

Having sent the text, Sherlock called the colonel and arranged to be picked up in a half hour.

He knocked on John’s door, and when it was opened told his friend to meet him downstairs in a half hour.

Sherlock sat in his hotel room until it was time to head downstairs, planning what to do next.

When the colonel arrived, the sleuth and his best friend got into the car.

“Colonel Ross, I’d like to see some of Silver Blaze’s competitors if that is possible. Do you know which local stables have horses entered in the same race?”

“There are three other local stables. The closest one belongs to a friend of mine. I am sure he would not have taken my horse. He’s an honourable man.”

“nevertheless, it would be good to rule him out.”

“I’ll take you there first, then.”

When the colonel arrived at the training stables, the owner was very accommodating. He was quite willing to show Sherlock around, and allow him to inspect the premises, including the horses.

Sherlock concluded that this man, at least, was not in any way related to the horse’s disappearance.

At the second stable, the owner was actually a woman. She seemed surprised at Sherlock’s request to inspect the premises, but she too was accommodating, anxious to prove she had nothing to do with the events of the night of Straker’s death. Sherlock was confident that this woman was also innocent of any wrongdoing.
At the third training stable, the owner of Silver Blaze’s main competition was not so forthcoming. He demanded quite belligerently that the detective leave his premises, saying, “I will not be treated like some sort of criminal.” He flatly refused to allow Sherlock to even view his horses.

Although the man had been rude, the sleuth felt it was as a result of the potential accusation he may have been complicit in taking the colonel’s racehorse. That did not make him a criminal. They had met a dead end.

Frustrated once again with his inability to find the missing horse, Sherlock was in a bad mood when Colonel Ross dropped him and John off at the hotel. The colonel had told him the warrant would be ready at nine, so that was the time they were going to meet the following day.

In an effort to distract his friend from his black mood, John suggested they have a beer or two to relax as they sat in the restaurant for dinner. Sherlock moodily complied.

“So, who do you think took the racehorse, then?” John asked him as they sipped their beers before dinner.

“I don’t know, John. I don’t like not knowing. I keep thinking I’m missing something important but I can’t put my finger on it.”

“Well perhaps it will come to you if you sleep on it.”

“I hope so. I also hope we can turn up some tangible evidence when we search the Strakers’ room tomorrow.”

John ordered two more beers for them as they ate their dinner. Sherlock drank his, almost absent-mindedly. He was thinking about Molly, wondering when he would be able to FaceTime her. Two more beers later and the detective was in a decidedly more mellow mood as he bade John goodnight and returned to his room.

He glanced at his watch. It was almost eight o’clock. Surely Molly would be awake by now?

He turned on his phone, tapped the icon to FaceTime his fiancée and waited impatiently.

Chapter End Notes

The mystery deepens. Are you enjoying it?

So John and Sherlock have made a bet as well. What do you think of that? Did you enjoy the conversation? It is important to note that it is Sherlock in this case who took John's "bet" mention seriously and impulsively wanted to prove himself despite his own own doubts. John just went along with it.
Molly woke to the FaceTime chime. She drowsily picked up her phone and hit the “accept” button. Still half asleep, she said, “Hello?”

Sherlock’s face appeared on her screen. He had another day’s growth of beard.

“Molly? Where are you? Why is it so dark? I can’t see you.”

“Hang on, Sherlock. You woke me. I’ll turn on the lamp.” She switched it on, then settled back against the pillows.

“Your face is still in shadow, I want to see your beautiful face, my angel. Go somewhere brighter.”

Molly was surprised at the way he had called her his angel. That was a new one. He didn’t seem quite himself. She complied with his request though, hobbling into the sitting room, turning on the light. “Better?” she asked.

“I suppose so. I miss you. This case is taking too damn long.”

“You only left yesterday,” his fiancée pointed out reasonably.

“Well, it feels like more than a month has passed. I need you so much, baby.”

Baby? Molly thought, surprised once again. She said carefully, “Sherlock, have you been drinking?”

“Just had a couple rounds with John at dinnertime. Nothing for me to do until tomorrow. Didn’t you see my text?”

“Honey, I just woke up when you FaceTimed me. I didn’t get a chance to read it.” The endearment slipped out from her lips. She had always just called him by his name, but he was indeed her honey, so sweet these days that the name fit.

“I’m sorry for waking you,” said the sleuth penitently.

“That’s okay,” Molly assured him. “I was planning on getting up soon anyway.”

“Molly,” her fiancée said in a confiding tone, “Can I tell you something?”

“Of course you can.”

“John doesn’t think we are going to make it to the wedding night.”
The pathologist gave him a confused look. “He thinks we are going to break off our engagement?”

“No, no, not that. He thinks we are going to you know, ‘do it’ before the wedding night. He bet me fifty quid on it.”

Molly’s mouth opened and closed again. What could she say to that? His next words astonished her further.

“Molly, my angel, I have to be completely honest with you,” he said in a conspiratorial whisper. “I think...I think I wouldn’t mind losing the bet.”

The pathologist didn’t know how to respond to that. It was obvious the alcohol was affecting him. Alcohol had a tendency to remove inhibitions and lead people to confide their innermost thoughts. Heaven knew, she’d already done that the previous week with Sherlock, even though she didn’t remember it. How ironic it was that he and John had made a bet about the same thing as she and Kaitlyn had done earlier.

“Molly, are you going to say something?”

“I...,” she hesitated, “I understand what you are saying. It’s funny. Kaitlyn made a bet with me about the same thing, although we only bet twenty pounds.”

“John suggested that too, but I was so damn sure of myself, I made it fifty instead.”

Molly rolled her eyes. “Why do you think our friends are so interested in our sex life, or lack thereof?”

“You are so much stronger than I am. I’m trying to not think about how much time is dragging, but John kind of guessed why I was in a bad mood when I realized I need at least another day here. I told him I wanted to be back home with you. He’s the one who suggested I was sexually frustrated. I guess he was right.”

“Sherlock, you’re only talking this way because you had a bit too much to drink.”

“Perhaps so. I only know that if I was with you right now, you’d be in my arms and I’d be kissing you and possibly doing other things as well.”

A tingle went through Molly as she thought of what those “other things” might be.

Sherlock continued. “I wasn’t going to tell you this, because I didn’t want to make you uncomfortable.” She saw him visibly swallow, before he added, “the other night, in the bath, I saw it, your breast I mean, when you lifted your arm from the water. I, well I pretended not to, but I did, and I had to get out of the bathroom in a hurry or I might have pulled you into my arms, suds and all, and taken you to our bed. I love you so much, and I want you just as much. God, Molly, do you have a any clue about how hard it is for me to keep my hands off you?”

The pathologist had been blushing fiercely since Sherlock had admitted to seeing her breast. Then, his words just made her catch her breath. “Sherlock...,” she began, but he wouldn’t let her finish.

“Let me just get this off my chest. I think one of the reasons my mind palace is not operating at peak efficiency is because part of it is constantly obsessing about what it would be like to be with you in every sense of the word. Be strong for me, my love. It’s probably the beer talking and maybe tomorrow I will be feeling stronger. Just be aware that when I get home I will probably be feeling desperate for you. You’ll have to be the one to make sure we keep to our agreement, okay?”
“Talk about pressure,” the pathologist said at last. “You should probably just try and forget this conversation. We’re in this together, you know.”

‘Yeah,” said the detective despondently. “I know I’m being a complete arse to you. Maybe I’m going back to my old, selfish ways.”

“Of course you are not. The old Sherlock never admitted to acting like an arse, well, except for John’s wedding, and the Christmas party a few years ago when you apologized to me.”

“I guess I’m gonna let you go now, before I say any more stupid things. Just know I’m missing you, and thinking of you constantly.”

“Me too, honey.” She blew him a kiss and disconnected the FaceTime call. Then she sighed.

She sat on the sofa for some time with her head in her hands. The thought came to her that it would have been much simpler if she had stayed with Tom. She would have easily made it to the wedding night without these conflicting emotions. Then she mentally kicked herself for even thinking it. Would she really have been content in a passionless marriage? There was certainly no lack of it with Sherlock. She should be thanking God on her knees for giving her such a powerful love and to be receiving it in full measure. There weren’t enough words in the world to describe the depth of her emotions. Sometimes it was almost a physical pain, how much she adored the man who was to be her husband in a few weeks.

Finally, the pathologist had to get up. Mrs. Hudson had brought her dinner again. As she limped to the door, she realized her ankle was hardly bothering her at all and her limping was not as noticeable as earlier.

“Looks like your ankle is healing nicely,” commented her landlady as she placed a tray of food on the table. There was a pile of post under the lady’s arm which she also put on the table. “One of those is Sherlock’s credit card bill. Make sure he pays it, won’t you? I’ve had to remind him about that every month for years. Without me, he would have forgotten on most occasions.”

“I’ll make sure he knows,” promised the pathologist. She thanked Mrs. Hudson for the food and settled down to eat. As usual, it was delicious, as was the freshly brewed tea.

After the meal Molly headed back to the bedroom to get dressed. She applied some makeup and pulled her hair into its usual ponytail to complete her ensemble. Suddenly she realized she hadn’t read the text Sherlock had sent earlier. She was about to look at it when Mrs. Hudson poked her head into the flat again.

“I forgot to bring this up earlier,” she said, handing Molly a box.

“Oh, it’s the wedding invitations! Sherlock had said they were due to arrive on Wednesday. Thank you so much!” After her landlady had departed once again, the pathologist set the box down on the coffee table. She took out her phone again and read the text. When she got to the end where her fiancé had said he wished he were holding her and kissing her, her heart beat accelerated. Apparently he had been missing her a lot and thinking about her before having those beers. She was glad to know he was finding it as hard to be away from her as she found being left behind. Reading about him probably needing to stay in Dartmoor an extra day was disappointing though.

Molly decided not to text back right away. Instead she decided to look at the wedding invitations to make sure they were all done correctly. She opened the box and lifted out the invitations. They looked beautiful. She saw Sherlock’s name and hers and was once again filled with the excitement of knowing this was real, it was actually happening. No more fantasizing about them being
together, this was the proof that she was actually going to marry the man she had loved for years.

Molly thought that she would start writing out the invitations the following day, when she got home from work. As the guest list was not huge, she might be able to at least write out the ones for the people she had addresses for. She would need to get addresses of a couple of her work colleagues as well as Mike Stamford’s. For her church friends she had a church directory with the members’ names and addresses so that wouldn’t be a problem. The pathologist hunted till she found the guest list and on a piece of paper wrote the names of the people for whom she needed addresses. She would give it to Mike once she got to work.

After this was done, Molly decided it was time to text her fiancé back. At the very least she could tell him the invitations had arrived.

Bringing up his message on the phone, Molly typed her reply.

“Our wedding invitations arrived. Mrs. Hudson brought them upstairs. No backing out now, it’s there in print for all to see - you and me. Just seeing our names gave me chills, in a good way, I mean. How I love you. I wish you were home too. I miss the feel of your lips on mine, running my fingers through your hair, everything. I am going to work on the invitations tomorrow, so if you don’t get home until Friday, at least I can be productive in some way. Oh, by the way, Mrs. H. told me one of the items in the post was your credit card bill, and to remind you to pay it. Anyway, I’m heading off to work soon, talk to you tomorrow. I love you, honey. Xx”

Molly sent the text. She then got her things together for the Tube ride to work. She did not bother strapping her ankle again, managing to put a sock over it and her shoe as well. Just to be safe, she used the crutches once more, but decided she could leave them at the hospital after her shift and manage without them on the way home.

The pathologist arrived at work a little early and she furnished Mike with the list of names she needed addresses for. Her supervisor was quite pleased to see his own name on the list.

“You’re really inviting me then?” he asked with a smile.

“Of corse we are. You made both of our lists of people we wanted to invite. You’ve known both of us for years, and I know Sherlock appreciates all the things you have facilitated in order for him to do his experiments. Kaitlyn told me you worked behind the scenes to make sure there were no consequences to him being given various body parts. I didn’t realize it could have been a problem.”

“Well, when you send a corpse with missing body parts to be cremated, there could be questions. I just did the paperwork to make sure there was a paper trail showing I had authorized them to be used for scientific means. No biggie.”

“Well, thanks anyway,” Molly said warmly. “Excuse me, that’s Sherlock’s text alert. I’ll be back before my shift starts,” she told Stamford, after hearing the distinctive chime.

She left Mike’s office and read the text. Apparently the hours since they had FaceTimed had cleared his head.

“Molly, I’m sorry for what I said earlier. I know it’s a two-way street for us to keep our relationship limited to kissing. I promise I’ll continue trying to keep up my end. It shouldn’t be all on you. As for the invitations, I look forward to seeing them. I’m sure it will make me happy to see our names on there as well and I could say the same to you about backing out. It would never, ever happen on my end. Maybe tomorrow you will wake up and decide I’m not worth the maintenance. Just kidding, I’m not really worried. If you stuck with me and loved me through my worst, I guess
you’ll stick with the new, improved Sherlock. Thanks for the heads up on the credit card. Remind me again when I get home. I need to add you to the account once we are married. If you are bored, text me. I kind of fell asleep after I texted you earlier and now I’m wide awake. How is your ankle doing?”

That reminded her, she needed to give Mike the crutches back. She returned to his office, where he was just getting ready to leave.

Offering him the crutches, she said, “You can have these back. I don’t need them anymore. Thanks for getting them for me.”

“Glad you’re doing well enough without them. If you want to roam around a bit and do your usual rounds feel free. But don’t overdo it. By the way, here’s the list of addresses you asked for.” He handed it to the pathologist.

“Thanks for being so speedy. I wasn’t sure you’d have time to do that before you left tonight.”

“Oh, it was no trouble. Have a good night.” With that, Mike left the office and Molly sat in his recently vacated chair.

Pulling out her indispensable phone once more, the pathologist read her fiancé’s previous text once more before texting back.

“I probably shouldn’t spend too much time texting now that my shift has started, but it’s quiet so I can talk a little. I just gave the crutches back to Mike. I can manage pretty well now, just by limping a little. I should be almost as good as new soon. I’m so grateful it wasn’t worse. If you hadn’t caught me, I know it would have been. I got the addresses of the work colleagues I plan to invite. I gave Mike the list and he got their addresses for me already. I plan on writing out some invitations tomorrow. I need to get Lestrade’s address and Anderson’s too. Should I call the Yard or do you want to do that? I’ll also need your parents’ address, but that can wait until you are home. I’m thinking we should try and get the invitations out early next week. Wow, it takes so much longer to text than talk. I wish we could FaceTime again, but with me being at work now, I guess it isn’t a good idea.”

She pressed the “send” button, then added another shorter text. “I am a tiny bit excited about getting a credit card with the name as Molly Holmes.”

After sending that text, Molly got a piece of paper and practiced her new signature, “Molly Holmes.” It was probably silly, but even writing it was rather exciting. She gazed dreamily at her future signature, ignoring the paperwork she should be working on.

The text tone roused her from her reverie. Molly eagerly looked at it. If she couldn’t be with Sherlock, at least their conversation made her feel closer to him.

“I’ll speak to Greg when I get back. I should probably see if he needs my help with any case too. Off the crutches? That’s good news but don’t overdo it. I think that is one of the hardest things about being away from you, not being able to take care of you. Of course the single most difficult part is not being able to touch you and kiss you. I think I’ve discovered why my mind palace has been under performing. Usually I can delegate things into categories in my mind, compartmentalize them. I can’t do that with you though. You occupy such a huge part of my thoughts that it is difficult to put aside my thoughts of you in order to work. I suppose I will adjust to that in time, sharing my mind palace with you.”

Molly read that and felt a little guilty. “I’m sorry I’m such a distraction as to come between you and
your work. I don’t really know how I can help you with that.”

“I do, but it has to do with replacing fantasy with reality. Right now, fantasizing about you is what distracts me most. After we are married I am almost certain things will be easier.”

Molly bit her lip. She knew exactly what he was talking about. The whole fantasy thing, obsessing over what it would be like to actually be together in every sense of the word was definitely an ongoing distraction. She supposed it was a little like anticipation of a wonderful holiday, when the thought of it gave a person sleepless nights due to the anticipation of coming events. Or it was like a child’s anticipation of Christmas morning. Thoughtfully she texted back what she had been thinking.

“I think I understand because I feel the anticipation of being with you. It is how I felt each year waiting for Christmas. You’re my best gift ever and I can’t wait!”

The response came back. “I never liked Christmas. I thought it was just an excuse for people to get together and have a party or get pissed. This year will be the first time I understand the real meaning of Christmas so I am looking forward to it. You though, I’m very glad I don’t have to wait until Christmas to unwrap you my lovely Molly. I shall cherish that as I cherish you.”

With the conversation taking a decidedly personal turn, the pathologist decided she probably should end it for now so she could at least make an attempt to work.

“Much as I hate to say goodbye, I should get some work done and you should get some more sleep. I love you, Sherlock.”

“I love you too. Perhaps yet another cold shower will get my mind off these thoughts I’m having.”

“I’m sorry;” she responded back.

“Don’t be. Talking to you is worth some discomfort. Goodbye for now Molly Hooper, my love.”

“Goodbye, honey XX”

Molly settled in to work. She saw Kaitlyn periodically but they did not talk too much. She also moved about in the lab and other areas, checking over things and making suggestions to facilitate the progress of some lab tests. She really liked doing them herself, discovering the causes for the symptoms of patients, knowing she was making a difference. Doing post-mortems was interesting, when trying to determine a cause of death, but it was much more satisfying to discover a problem and treat it before it was too late.

When Molly wasn’t doing rounds, she worked hard on paperwork, trying to make up for the time she had been in conversation with her fiancé. She was surprised when Kaitlyn popped her head into the office at eight o’clock, saying, “Are you planning to stay here all day?”

“Oh, I didn’t even realize what time it was. Thanks for letting me know.” She packed up her things and took the Tube home.

Once home, as she ascended the stairs, the pathologist realized she was hardly even limping any more. She made herself some breakfast and then decided she should do some washing. She fished out bras, pants and boxers from the laundry basket in the bathroom and turned on the washing machine, noticing it actually had a dryer setting unlike the washing machine at her previous address.

Finally Molly settled into the kitchen chair and began the task of writing out invitations and
addressing envelopes. She had put her phone on the charger in the bedroom so that she would not be distracted if a text came in from Sherlock.

Writing out the invitations in her best handwriting was laborious work and she soon found her hand cramping. She was so used to using a computer or phone when it came to writing things, that actually using pen and ink was a rare occurrence. It was no wonder her hand was sore at the extended use of a pen.

Needing a break, she headed to the bathroom for her shower, after which she got comfortable in her pyjamas and sat on the bed, reading her devotional after finding the Bible passage for the day. That reminded her that the Bible she had ordered for Sherlock was due to arrive the following day.

When she was done with her reading, the pathologist returned to doing more invitations, but her hand was soon hurting again and she had to stop. She had done about half of them anyway, so was content.

Back in the bedroom, Molly picked up her Bible again and read more of the first book of Samuel. The text alert from Sherlock caused her to pause in her reading. She picked up the phone and saw she had also received a text from him earlier, when she had been in the kitchen. The first text read,

“Heading out now with the warrant, wish me luck.”

She grimaced, sorry that she hadn’t seen the message earlier to do that. The second message which had just come in read,

“Made an enlightening discovery. I know what happened to Straker but I still need to find Silver Blaze and time is running out for me to leave here today. Sorry, love.”

Molly texted him back, “Sorry I missed your text earlier, I was working on the invitations in the kitchen and my phone was charging in the bedroom. I got about half of them done. I’m glad you’ve made progress. If you can’t make it home today, at least I have stuff to keep me busy.”

She saw that Sherlock read her text, but he didn’t respond and she figured he was probably busy. It was time for her to get some sleep.

In bed the pathologist tossed and turned for some time, trying to get comfortable. She wondered if Sherlock would find the horse soon, she hoped so. At last, she slept.

Chapter End Notes

Do people even read these I wonder? Well, the separation is tough on Sherlock and Molly. What did you think of his tipsy talk? At least he apologized about it later!

I wish I could see a wedding invitation with Sherlock and Molly’s names! Have you ever doodled a married name as Molly did? I think I practiced my new signature when I was engaged.

Are you looking forward to their reunion?

Some of you may wonder why you should bother with leaving feedback. I’d like to share something with you.
Here is a quote from C. S. Lewis's book, "Mere Christianity"

Pleasure in being praised is not pride.....the saved souls to whom Christ says, "well done," are pleased and ought to be.

For here the pleasure lies not in what you are, but in the fact that you have pleased someone you wanted and rightly wanted to please.

When I ask for your feedback it is because I want to know that I am touching you in a positive way. Think of it this way. I get no compensation from this except for that feedback which encourages me. Just as you would tip a waiter at a restaurant for good service, leaving a comment is my "tip" for the constant arm/hand aches from so much typing.

If it were not for those few who really take the time to respond to my story, I probably would have stopped writing by now. You know who you are, my dear readers who have become dear friends as well. Thank you!
Solving the Case - Sherlock

Chapter Summary

Sherlock Solves the case, but is disappointed he will have to wait another day to see Molly.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

After Sherlock had finished his FaceTime conversation, he lay on the bed, thinking about Molly and drifted off to sleep, despite the fact that it was not late. His slight inebriation was obviously a factor.

When he woke a little before midnight, his brain was no longer fuzzy from the alcohol. He remembered what he had said to Molly over FaceTime and sent her an apology. Even though he had been telling her the truth about his feelings, the detective knew it was important that he continue to make an effort to abstain from going further than kissing for Molly’s sake, even if he didn’t feel as strongly about it. If and when she made the decision to go further, whether it be before or after the wedding, it would be her decision ultimately. He knew he would not be the one to say no if she was ready. Losing the bet to John really wouldn’t bother him. It might embarrass him a little, but he could deal with that if it happened. If, on the other hand, their first night together intimately was there wedding night, winning the fifty pounds would have been justly earned.

Molly answered his text quickly and they went back and forth for a little while until she said she needed to work.

Afterwards, the sleuth remained awake for some time. He took a bracing cold shower and it did help him focus his thoughts on the case a bit better. He was still mulling over the facts he had learned so far when he did finally get to sleep.

In the morning the Colonel called Sherlock's hotel room to say he was picking up the warrant at nine o’clock and would be at the hotel soon afterwards.

Sherlock and John ate a quick breakfast downstairs and were ready when Colonel Ross arrived. The detective sent off a quick text to Molly, just to let her know he was leaving the hotel.

When they arrived at the house, Colonel Ross first asked Mrs. Straker, who was in the kitchen, if Sherlock could take a look through her bedroom, hoping to not have to produce the warrant. The woman seemed hesitant and refused, after which the colonel had to produce the warrant and insist upon it.

The woman followed the men upstairs and nervously watched as Sherlock and John started methodically searching through the drawers and cupboards. After about ten minutes of fruitless searching Sherlock spied some papers that were hidden inside an innocuous looking book on the nightstand. One tiny corner of the paper was sticking out from the book. The detective had been more concerned with things being potentially hidden in drawers rather than in plain sight.
Picking up the book and opening it, he found two betting stubs. The bets were for the upcoming Saturday race. Most telling was the fact that neither was a bet in favour of Silver Blaze. They were for either a win for Dark Matter, or a place by the same horse. Dark Matter was the horse who was Silver Blaze’s main competition. The sums that had been bet were for a significant amount of money as well.

The picture in Sherlock’s mind was becoming clear. This was good evidence of Straker’s foreknowledge about Silver Blaze. He was obviously certain the horse would not win the race.

“What do you know about this?” the detective asked Mrs. Straker sternly.

She had been acting more and more frightened. The woman turned to flee but was blocked by both John and the colonel.

“I didn’t mean any harm, I promise,” she sobbed. “My husband told me to do it.”

A little more kindly, the sleuth asked, “Why don’t you tell us what you know and we will decide what to do next.”

“It was John,” she wept. “He got deeply into debt. He told me he had a plan to get our financial situation back to normal. On the day he was murdered, he asked me to put something in Jake’s food to make him ill. I didn't want to do it. In fact, we argued about it for a long time. In the end though, I agreed because he was threatening to hit me. I suppose he had made a deal with somebody to steal the horse that night. But I don’t know who did it, I swear I don’t. I didn’t know about those stubs either. I didn’t want you to search the room because I was afraid you might find out he had been a gambler or that he abused me. Please believe me Mr. Holmes,” she pleaded.

“I do believe you,” he told the stricken woman. “There is something not adding up here though. I am going to take these stubs with me. I will find out what happened to your husband today, I promise.”

“Thank you,” said the woman gratefully.

Turning to the colonel, Sherlock said, “I’d like to return to the hotel now so I can ponder this new evidence.”

The three men left the house and returned to the little hotel. Once inside, the detective said goodbye for now to his friend and to the colonel and headed upstairs to think.

On the bed, Sherlock adopted his usual posture and started to compartmentalize the different clues. He knew now that Jake had been deliberately given something to get him out of the way that evening. Mrs. Straker’s admission, and the betting stubs were a clear indicator of the fact that John Straker had had a hand in the disappearance of Silver Blaze. But who had been his accomplice? Who had betrayed him and struck the killing blow?

A moment of idle conversation on the way back to the hotel cane back to him.

Colonel Ross had pointed out a sheep pasture and said, “My friend Peter owns that sheep farm. I was speaking to him last night and he said the strangest thing. Perhaps you might like to take on another case after this one. Over the course of two weeks a month ago, he noticed each night a different sheep had gone lame. It’s the most curious thing. What could have caused that, I wonder?”

Sherlock had not been listening very intently, too absorbed in his own meditation on the case. Now that odd conversation came back to him. He had a niggling feeling that the sheep had a bearing on
On impulse, Sherlock decided to take another look at the photographs Colonel Ross had given him. He carefully inspected the pictures of the dead man, concentrating on the strange blow to the forehead that had killed him. That was puzzling already. Wouldn’t an attacker have come from behind and caused a blow to the back of the head? He continued to look at the photographs, pausing at one which showed the knife Straker had with him when he died. This also puzzled the sleuth. The knife was of surgical steel, not an ordinary one by any account. He had not really thought about it before. This knife had an extremely sharp edge, like a scalpel.

And then it hit him all at once and the puzzle pieces fell into place at last. There had been no accomplice to Silver Blaze’s kidnapping. Straker had led the horse himself out to the moor. Sherlock had read about the way a horse could be lamed with a slight nick in the tendon. Nobody would know it had happened, and would just assume the horse had strained a tendon in some way. Of course, the animal would be permanently lamed and no longer able to race.

Straker had evidently decided to practice the delicate procedure on some sheep. That was the final nail in the coffin for the man’s guilt. As clearly as if he had seen it in person, the sleuth knew what had happened. Straker had led the horse out to the moor, intending to use the knife to nick his tendon and lame the poor creature. The animal had instinctively struck out his hoof at the man when he bent to do his grisly task. As Straker had fallen, he had himself been nicked by the sharp instrument. There was no mystery murderer, the threatened horse was the culprit!

Sherlock heaved a great sign of relief. So Straker’s death was accounted for. The horse had obviously run away afterward and must be found.

In exultation, Sherlock texted Molly. He wanted her to know he was close to finishing the case, but he still needed to find the racehorse. He read her response but decided not to get distracted with a texting conversation. He would text when he had wrapped things up.

Sherlock glanced at his watch. It was past lunchtime. He decided to call the Colonel and inform him of his deductions when the man arrived. After the call, the detective went to John’s room and explained what had happened as they walked downstairs to grab a quick bite to eat before the Colonel’s arrival.

They were eating sandwiches when the colonel called, telling them apologetically that he would be a little late. He had a personal matter to attend to first and would only be able to come by at around three o’clock.

When the detective hung up, he sat at the table, the rest of his sandwich forgotten, and brooded.

“What’s got into you, mate?” asked the doctor. “You should be thrilled that you figured out what happened and I’m sure we’ll be able to find the horse, now that we know he wandered off. He has to be in the vicinity.”

“I know. The Colonel can’t be here until three. I was hoping to find the horse and head home tonight. Those extra couple of hours will likely mean we will probably miss the last bus leaving here for the train station tonight.”

“Even if we got home tonight, it would hardly mean you would spend extra time with Molly. She’d be off to the hospital straight away wouldn’t she?” pointed out John reasonably.

“I suppose so,” agreed Sherlock grudgingly. “God, John, I feel like I’ve been away from her for a month already.”
“You’ve really got it bad, haven’t you?” teased his friend. At the detective’s sour look, John added, “Just think of the reunion you will be able to have tomorrow, and she won’t have to leave for work. You can enjoy spending time catching up.” With a rather wicked smile, he said, “And perhaps you’ll be stopping by my place to give me my fifty quid the next day.”

“Oh, shut up, John,” snapped the detective. He didn’t want to be sidetracked right now into thinking about his homecoming with Molly. He needed to be alert to discover the horse’s whereabouts.

The men lingered in the restaurant awhile longer then went back to their rooms. Sherlock rubbed his bristly chin and thought about where they should look for the missing racehorse. Obviously it would have to be somewhere local, a neighbouring farm perhaps? He supposed the horse could still be out there somewhere, but it seemed far more likely that Silver Blaze had been found wandering the moor and for some reason, not been returned.

When Colonel Ross returned at three o’clock, Sherlock was ready and anxious to get going. As they travelled first to the place where Straker’s body had been discovered, the sleuth explained to the man what had happened. The colonel was flabbergasted.

“He worked for me for five years as a trainer, and was a jockey for me before that, until he got too heavy to continue. Why would he do such a horrendous thing?”

“Men do a lot of strange things when they are in debt. Apparently he felt his best option was to prevent Silver Blaze from winning the race, and betting on his competitor.”

Reaching the moor where Straker had been struck down, the detective asked, “How many farms are there in this area?”

The colonel thought for a moment. “There are five, I believe.”

“How many of those farms have horse stables?”

“Three of them. My friend only has his sheep and another one has milking cows only.”

“Very well, we will start with the closest farm that has a horse stable. Take us there please.”

At the first farm the garrulous owner insisted on showing them his property. He enthused about his crops and what a good season it was for a bountiful harvest. Sherlock was bored and anxious to see the horses, but he restrained himself and patiently waited until the man took them to the stables himself.

“I’m proud of you, Sherlock,” murmured John, as they made their way to the stable.

“Why?” questioned the detective.

“Because you didn’t cut the old man off when he was speaking and demand to see the horses. I could tell you wanted to, but you didn’t. That’s a clear indication of a man who has changed.”

“I daresay I shall slip up once in awhile and revert to my less than patient ways, but I am trying to be more agreeable in general, and to take into consideration the feelings of others.”

“I can tell,” approved the doctor.

The old man insisted on showing them his six horses, discoursing at length about their breeding
and how he had acquired them.

Sherlock stifled a yawn. This was getting them nowhere, he knew Silver Blaze wasn’t here. Besides, from the photographs he knew Silver Blaze was a jet black bay with a white diamond shape on his forehead and mottled white on his left foreleg. There were no black horses whatsoever at the first stable.

At the second farm, the friendly woman was no less accommodating. She insisted on them coming inside for a cup of tea and scones.

Sherlock agreed reluctantly. He had the sinking feeling he would be staying overnight again in Dartmoor, although he had already resigned himself to it. Anyway, he told himself consolingly, John was right. If he got home the following afternoon instead, he and Molly would have the rest of the day together.

After their tea and scones, the three men inspected the woman’s horses. She had only four. There was a black horse, but it was a mare and she had no white on her. A beautiful animal though, the detective observed.

By the time they got to the third farm, it was almost seven o’clock. Here they were able to see several horses in a training yard in front of the house.

“Wait,” Sherlock said, before the colonel and John could walk closer to the farmhouse. “There are some horses here in a yard, and I see one that may be yours, Colonel Ross.”

He walked closer to the yard. From his perspective, he was not able to see the front of the farmhouse.

“I don’t suppose you keep any little treats on you for your horses, do you?” he asked the colonel.

“As a matter of fact I do. I usually have a few lumps of sugar in my pocket.” He produced two and handed them to the sleuth.

Sherlock carefully made his way along the fence until he was closest to a black bay horse. Then he made some clicking noises with his tongue and held out his palm with the lumps of sugar on it.

The horse, curious, drew nearer and Sherlock spoke to it in a soothing tone. Eventually the bay nickered and slowly walked towards him.

As the horse bent to take the proffered sugar, Sherlock gently rubbed his forehead. The horse gave a slight whinny and backed away.

Triumphantly, the sleuth held up his hand. “I knew it,” he said exultantly. His hand had a black streak on it. He sniffed his hand. “Boot polish,” he announced.

The colonel looked at the retreating horse wonderingly. “Well I never,” he exclaimed. ‘You’re right! But why is he here, and disguised as a regular black horse?”

“Now we go to the door and confront them,” declared the sleuth.

He marched to the front door of the farm house and rang the bell. A middle aged man opened the door. “May I help you?” he asked politely.

“I certainly hope so. Can you help me to understand why you have been hiding Silver Blaze here since his disappearance?”
The man paled and moved as if to shut the door, but Sherlock stopped him.

“It will go better for you if you tell me the truth about what happened.” Seeing the frightened look on the man’s face, he said more gently, “I know you didn’t intend to steal him. You obviously found him wandering on the moor.”

“Who are you?” asked the man nervously.

“My name is Sherlock Holmes, and Colonel Ross engaged my services to discover what happened to both his trainer and his racehorse.”

“I’ve heard of you. My wife has told me about you. She follows everything that happens in London. Just my luck that you would turn up here. You had better come in.”

The man opened the door wider and ushered in the detective, John and the colonel. He bade them sit and then sat as well.

“I’ll tell you the whole story. When the horse disappeared, I heard about it on the news, and it was in the papers. The reporters said they believed someone had taken the horse and killed the trainer. I was as shocked by it as anyone.”

He continued, "The day after it hit the news, I saw the horse wandering near my farm. I managed to bring it here but I was afraid. I thought if I gave the horse back I would be suspected of taking it and killing that trainer. You see, I have a police record from many years ago. I was involved in a horse racing venture where we faked the bloodlines of some horses. The truth was discovered and I went to jail for fraud. It was many years ago, but I was sure the police wouldn’t believe my story because of my history. I also happen to have placed a bet on Dark Matter for the race this Saturday, which I figured would seem suspicious."

“Indeed,” nodded Sherlock. “If I had investigated the disappearance before the apparent murder, I might have not believed you either. The question remains however, what did you plan to do with the horse?”

“I was going to wait until the police found out who killed the trainer, and then I was going to set the horse free close to his home.”

“You do realize if the truth hadn’t come out before the race on Saturday, Colonel Ross would have incurred significant losses, as well as all the people who placed their bets on Silver Blaze?” said the sleuth sternly.

“I know. But I didn’t want to go back to jail when I was innocent. I had no alibi the night that man disappeared, except for my wife.”

“Even so, what you did is a criminal offence. It will be up to Colonel Ross as to whether he wishes to press charges.”

The man looked stricken, and Sherlock glanced over at the colonel who said, “Well, I guess there is no permanent harm done here. Now that Silver Blaze has been found and can race on Saturday, I see no reason to ruin your life and that of your wife.”

“Oh, thank you sir,” exclaimed the farmer in great relief. “I have many free range hens and I sell their eggs. Please let me deliver fresh eggs to you whenever you need them as my thanks.”

The colonel nodded and stood up. "I shall have one of my men come and collect Silver Blaze and we shall leave it at that. I shall say the horse was found wandering the moor by a neighbour and
that he had been keeping him for me.”

After receiving more effusive thanks, the three men left the farmhouse.

“I need to inform the police that the case has been solved,” said the colonel to the sleuth. “I’m sure they will require a statement from you.”

“And I guess we are staying here overnight once more,” commented Sherlock a little wistfully.

“I’m sorry about that,” said Colonel Ross. “I read in the papers that you became engaged recently. I suppose you miss your fiancée very much.”

“Indeed I do,” agreed the detective.

“Well, I will take you right now to the police station, and then arrange for Silver Blaze to be picked up. I suppose I’ll have to inform the media as well, seeing as they have been covering the story. Would you make a statement to the reporters? I’m sure I would not be able to do it as well as you.”

Sherlock hesitated.

“Go on,” said John. “Things have been rather quiet lately for you. It will be good for people to see you are still out there solving crimes, even though you will soon be a married man.”

“Oh, very well,” said Sherlock unenthusiastically. He wanted to send a text to Molly but figured it would be rude to do it while he was in the car with the colonel. Besides, he was certain she would be asleep.

The colonel dropped the sleuth and his friend off at the police station, promising to return once he had arranged for Silver Blaze to be transported home. “Thank you so much for your help. I knew if anyone could solve this case it would be you, and I see that my faith was not misplaced. I will have a cheque for you when I come back.”

Sherlock and John entered the police station and the detective gave his statement about all that had happened. He deliberately did not mention the details of the location at which Silver Blaze had been kept. He said truthfully that he did not even know the man’s name.

While Sherlock was giving his account of the events of the night in question, John waited near the front entrance.

When the detective came out of the room, the doctor said, “I hope you are ready to address the reporters. There’s a slew of them outside.”

“Already? I think I’ll just send off a text to Molly to let her know the case is solved and that we will be coming home tomorrow.”

He took out his phone and texted his fiancée. “Molly, love. The case is solved. I had to make a statement to the police and now have to explain it to the media outside the station. I suppose you will be able to see me on the television at some point as this was quite a high profile case. I would much rather be coming home to you, but we will leave in the morning. Love you.”

Taking a deep breath, Sherlock opened the front door of the police station and was immediately inundated with flashing camera bulbs and microphones being thrust in his face by the eager reporters.

He gave the facts of the case and how he had deduced that John Straker was killed by the horse
rather than an unknown assailant. He also explained the horse had been found and was on its way home.

When he had finished his statement to the reporters, he was taken a little off guard by a question posed to him that was unrelated to the case.

“Mr. Holmes, this case has taken you away from London for a couple of days. As a newly engaged man, how does your fiancée feel about you leaving the city?”

“Dr. Hooper supports me and my detective work, wherever it may take me” he stated firmly.

Another question followed that one. “Have you and Dr. Hooper set a date yet for the wedding?”

Sherlock contemplated whether to give the usual “no comment,” but decided this was probably as good a time as any to let the media know, without having to arrange a press conference just to inform the media. “Seven weeks from Saturday. I would rather not disclose any further information at this time.”

The reporters were keen to keep Sherlock talking, but he felt he had told them enough and waved them away with a “I have no more to say at this time.”

Colonel Ross arrived to take Sherlock and John to the hotel. He handed Sherlock the promised cheque for £1500 for the three days of work, and invited them to stay to watch the race in person, offering to pay for their accommodation.

“I’m sorry,” said the sleuth. “I have already been away from my fiancée for too long. I would like to get the earliest bus in the morning to return to London.”

“The first bus to Paignton leaves at around nine o’clock. I’ll be happy to take you to the station at half past eight. If my horse wins on Saturday, I will send you a cheque for the promised £1000.”

“Thank you,” smiled Sherlock. “I am glad I was able to be of service to you.”

Upon their return to the hotel, the detective was ravenous. He was always extra hungry after solving a case, probably due to his lack of appetite while in the process of finding the answers he sought.

He ordered dinner and dessert as well from the menu. John too ate very well.

“Are you looking forward to going home as well,?” the detective asked his friend. “Do you perhaps have plans to see Kayla?”

“Not yet. I wanted to make sure I would be back by Saturday.”

“You doubted my ability to solve the case quickly?”

“Not at all, especially knowing how hard a time you have been having without Molly. I just didn’t want to take a chance on making plans I might have to change. Great job, by the way. I would never have figured out it was the horse that killed his trainer.”

“I should have realized it sooner myself, with the killing blow on the front of his head. However, I’m satisfied with the conclusion, and that Silver Blaze will be able to race on Saturday.”

“And that extra money when he wins will make it easier for you to give me that fifty quid you will soon be owing me.”
Sherlock rolled his eyes and refused to comment. John’s words however caused him to think again of Molly and their impending reunion. Would he really be able to restrain himself from attempting a seduction? He hoped so, but he really wasn’t sure. Oh well, he would find out when he saw her.

After dinner, Sherlock bade his friend goodbye and went upstairs. It was already after nine, so he figured he’d be safe to FaceTime Molly without disturbing her from sleep as he had done the previous day.

When she answered, he saw immediately that she was indeed awake and had obviously just finished eating. He was about to tell her how much he missed her, when her words stopped him.

“Mrs. Hudson is here. She brought me some dinner and stayed for a bit to chat. Say hello to her.”

Molly’s face disappeared from the screen and was replaced with that of his landlady.

“Molly told me you solved the case, Sherlock, congratulations! We just caught your interview on the telly as well. I was surprised you told the reporters when you are getting married. It’s too bad you weren’t wearing the hat. But heavens, when did you last shave?”

Molly’s voice came from off-camera. “He hates the hat and so do I.”

“Um, I forgot my razor,” Sherlock told his landlady, running a hand over the three day growth. He really wished he could talk alone with the woman he loved, but Mrs. Hudson seemed in no hurry to turn the phone back over to Molly.

“Well, I guess I’ll get going now. Can you put Molly back on so I can say goodbye?”

“Of course”, the elderly lady answered and Molly’s face came back in focus.

Sherlock felt a little frustrated that he couldn’t speak privately, so he just said, “We are leaving at eight-thirty in the morning. With the transfers I should hopefully be home by quarter past two. I look forward to seeing you.” In his mind he added, ” and holding you and kissing you.

Molly’s instant blush made him realize those last word hadn’t been in his mind after all. Oops.

“I look forward to it too, Sherlock,” she said with a soft note in her voice.

“Well, have a good evening,” he said a little stiffly, too embarrassed that his landlady had witnessed his affectionate words.

“And you sleep well, my love. See you tomorrow.”

Molly disconnected the call.

Sherlock felt decidedly irritated by the less than satisfying conversation. Why did Mrs. Hudson have to choose to be there right at that time? He wished he had called earlier, or perhaps somewhat later.

He went to the bathroom and took his shower, thinking the entire time about seeing Molly on the morrow. It was extraordinary how much he missed her. He determined to not take on any cases again before the wedding that would keep him away from her overnight. Thinking about his fiancée made it hard for him to sleep and it was past midnight when he finally succumbed to it.

Chapter End Notes
Well, there goes another very long chapter, but it took awhile to get in all the info necessary to solve the case. How did you find the case in general? Have you read the original story? Obviously most of this came from my mind, but the basic details were the same.

Did you enjoy John’s teasing of Sherlock about their bet? Do you think it will be hard for Sherlock to control himself when he gets home? Did you think it was funny how Mrs. Hudson was with Molly and the frustration Sherlock felt?

I hope you enjoyed this very long chapter. Please do respond with your thoughts on it!
Anticipation and a Shock - Molly

Chapter Summary

Molly is anxiously waiting for Sherlock's return. Just before he comes home, she gets a terrible shock.

Chapter Notes

I have an especially important question to ask of my readers. If you don't usually comment, please make the effort for once. This chapter mentions a diary Molly has been writing in for years. It dates back to just before she met Sherlock. If I start posting it, will you read it? Will you comment on it? It means a lot of extra writing and a big commitment on top of what I am already doing each week. If I don't get enough interest or support, I'll probably just ditch the idea here as I've had to do with other stories due to the lack of apparent interest in them. It would be nice to hear from some new people too, I know you are out there!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Anticipating the Reunion - Molly (Thursday night/Friday)

Please read and respond to the author's note at the end.

When Molly woke, she picked up her phone from the nightstand next to her, expecting a text from Sherlock.

She was not disappointed in that, as indeed there was one from him. She was however a little disappointed to know her fiancée would only be home the following afternoon. She reflected however that at least she would not have to leave him to go to work. The pathologist decided she would perhaps take a short nap after work so that she would be alert when Sherlock arrived. She felt a tingle of anticipation at the thought.

She dressed quickly and went into the sitting room, tuning to a local station in the hopes she could see Sherlock’s interview with the reporters.

There was a knock on the door and Mrs. Hudson poked her head in.

“I’ve brought you some dinner again,” she said.

“Oh, Mrs. Hudson, you shouldn’t have. I could have made my own. I’m not even using crutches anymore. My ankle is almost better.”

“Nonsense,” said that lady. “You don’t want it to start hurting again by exerting yourself. Besides, it gives me a chance to make a meal for more than just myself. In fact, if you don’t mind some company, I thought I’d join you for dinner.”
“Of course, please do stay. Sherlock sent me a text awhile back. He’s solved the case and was about to do an interview. So we might catch him on the telly. I’ll turn up the sound and we can listen for it while we eat.”

Soon after the women began to eat, the voice of an announcer came on, saying they had breaking news in the case of the stolen racehorse.

“Oh, it’s going to be on,” exclaimed Molly. “Let’s go into the sitting room now so we don’t miss it.”

The two women seated themselves on the sofa. The scene cut from the announcer to the reporters surrounding Sherlock. Molly felt her heartbeat accelerate at the sight of her beloved fiancé on the screen. He looked incredibly handsome with his coat collar turned up and the pronounced stubble on his face. She wanted to put her hands through the TV screen and touch his curls. Okay, she wanted to touch more than his curls, his face as well.

The women listened as Sherlock gave a brief explanation about the deductions he had made which led to the horse being found. Molly couldn’t help feeling a surge of pride at how clever her fiancé was.

When Sherlock revealed the time remaining until their wedding, Molly was a little surprised, but she figured Sherlock had done it to avoid having to tell people later. She didn’t have a problem with it.

The scene cut back to the announcer who said, “And there you have it, folks. London’s favourite detective has apparently not been idle since becoming engaged. It seems he is able to juggle his work along with preparing for his upcoming wedding.”

Molly turned off the television and went back into the kitchen to finish her meal. She was barely even limping anymore. Mrs. Hudson followed her.

They had just finished eating, and were companionably sipping tea when Molly’s phone indicated the FaceTime call coming in.

Not wanting her fiancé to be embarrassed by saying something indiscreet, she immediately let him know she was not alone. She knew Sherlock was disappointed. Actually she was a little sorry that she and the landlady had lingered so long over their meal. She would have liked a private conversation with the man she loved, but it was not to be.

The conversation was shorter than the pathologist would have liked, and she knew Sherlock was a little uncomfortable with not having her to himself. He was also a little embarrassed by his landlady’s comment about his facial hair.

After the FaceTime call was over, Mrs. Hudson said goodbye. She had left some post on the table, but there was nothing urgent.

Molly saw that the washing machine was finished with the washing and drying cycle and she removed the items, folding them and putting them away. She then put in a load of jumpers and blouses so they would be done when she came home from work.

Then she went into her bedroom and took out a slim volume from the bottom drawer of her nightstand. This was something she had not told Sherlock about. It was her diary. It had been where she had opened her heart out about Sherlock over the years, chronicling her crush on him right up to after the events at Sherrinford. She had only made a couple entries since then. The night
he had come to her after Sherrinford and proposed she had expressed her feelings of joy and thankfulness into her diary. Molly had written a few lines also on the day before Sherlock had surprised her with the trip to "Confetti and Lace." She had updated her diary when Sherlock had been in the shower after the day they had spent sleuthing, when they had helped the Greek professor.

Suddenly she had a thought. Why not give this diary to Sherlock as a wedding gift? Most of the entries concerned him in some way. Even when he had been absent for two years, she had poured her heart out into the diary at times, saying how she missed him. Of course, some entries mentioned Tom, but even during that time she still mentioned Sherlock - probably more than she should have, considering she was engaged to someone else. Yes, she decided, she would continue to secretly update her diary, but now her entries would be written to Sherlock instead, rather than her diary, with the intention of him reading it.

Now, Molly wrote about her fall and how she was missing her fiancé terribly, as well as anticipating the reunion to come. By the time she was finished and had returned her diary to the bottom of the drawer, it was almost time for her to leave for the hospital.

She left the flat shortly before eleven-thirty and took the Tube to work. For the first time, a fellow passenger recognized her as Sherlock’s fiancée and wished her all the best with her wedding. The encounter was not an intrusive one, so Molly was not worried about a stranger talking to her. It was probably going to become a commonplace thing as their wedding drew closer. She had to concede though that she could understand why Sherlock preferred to travel by taxi. He would surely be recognized constantly by people and inundated with requests for help or autographs if he used the Tube to go from place to place.

When she got to the hospital, it was only a few minutes after starting her shift when Kaitlyn poked her head into Mike’s office.

“Oh. My. God!” she exclaimed to Molly. “I was watching the telly before work and I saw the news story with Sherlock. What is it about a man with stubble on his face? He looked so hot, Molly. I almost swooned. That man is gorgeous at any time, but wow.”

Molly had to laugh at her friend’s exuberance. “Yeah, I know. He did look pretty amazing, didn’t he? I’ve missed him so much. I can’t wait for him to get home tomorrow.”

“I’m sure it will be quite the reunion.” Kaitlyn winked at her.

“Don’t even go on about our bet, Kaitlyn. It’s kind of funny. John made the same bet with him, but theirs is for fifty quid, so you should be glad I’m not going to be taking that much from you.”

“Like that’s gonna happen,” scoffed her friend. “You’ll be paying me my money as soon as I get back from America, I’m sure.”

“No way, I’ll buy a nice souvenir on my honeymoon with your money.”

“Speaking of honeymoons, do you have a place in mind?”

“No idea. Sherlock asked me what I wanted and I said somewhere quiet. I don’t want an exotic locale with lots of travelling. He booked it, I think, but he isn’t telling me anything.”

“I still can’t get over it. I never would have pictured your fiancé as the romantic type until recently. Do you think David looks at me the way Sherlock looks at you? Like he’s insanely in love with you?”
“You really think Sherlock looks at me like that? I can certainly see that David adores you.”

“Oh, Molly, he’s always looking at you with this tender expression on his face. When we went out to dinner last weekend he couldn’t keep his eyes off you.”

Molly sighed happily. “It means a lot to me to know that others can see that he cares about me. For so long I had that unrequited love thing going on. Even now I sometimes have to almost pinch myself to know it isn’t some absurd, amazing dream.”

“You deserve to be happy, Molly.”

“It’s funny you should say that. He told me that too, the day he found out I was engaged to someone else. I felt this weird knot in my stomach, this sick feeling that I had made a terrible mistake. I think even then I knew Sherlock was my true soulmate.”

“It’s too bad it took him so long to recognize it.”


As Molly did her rounds, checking on lab tests and pathology results, some of her other work friends mentioned the interview with Sherlock. Word had spread throughout the department about her engagement to the detective. Most only knew him by reputation, but one or two had seen him around the lab when he was using it for a case.

As the night wore on, Molly felt increasingly impatient for her shift to end. She did not hear from Sherlock at all, so assumed he was having a good night’s rest before leaving Dartmoor.

As the clock finally moved to eight, Molly packed up her things and went downstairs. In the lobby, she noticed the gift shop and decided to go inside. It had just opened for the morning. She remembered that the Bible she had ordered for Sherlock was due to arrive that day. She wanted to wrap it for him. The pathologist was still undecided as to whether she should present it to her fiancé as a welcome home gift, or give it to him as a wedding gift. Of course, now that she had decided to give him her diary as a wedding gift, Sherlock could probably make use of the Bible sooner, rather than later.

Molly found some wrapping paper and ribbon and purchased them. She was sure Sherlock had scissors and sticky tape at the flat. It was probably in the miscellaneous items drawer in the kitchen.

At home once again, Molly made some breakfast and had a cup of coffee. She was walking quite well now, barely limping at all.

After breakfast, she took her shower and brushed out her hair, choosing to leave it hang loose around her face. She dressed in one of her new outfits and reapplied her makeup. She wanted to look her best for when Sherlock came home.

Then Molly got to work on doing more invitations. She got about half of the remainder done before her hand started to hurt again and she had to take a break.

The pathologist decided to check for the post and went downstairs. It was about fifteen minutes before noon and the post had just arrived. There was a package for her from Amazon which was obviously the Bible.

Mrs. Hudson opened the door to her flat and saw Molly getting her items.
“Looks like your ankle is almost better,” the woman commented. “You must be excited that Sherlock will be home soon.”

“I am,” Molly agreed. “I can’t wait to see him.”

“Perhaps you can convince him to shave,” the landlady said tartly and Molly laughed as she returned upstairs.

Once there, she pulled out her jumpers and blouses from the washing machine. Despite using the dryer cycle, the jumpers were not quite dry, so those she took upstairs to the second bedroom and placed them on the airer in front of the radiator. The blouses she was able to hang back up in the wardrobe.

Back in the kitchen, Molly inspected the post. One was addressed to her from her former landlord. Opening it, she found it was a cheque. She was pleased. She would be able to deposit it into one of the joint accounts she and Sherlock had opened, probably on Monday. With her working the weekend, she would get Monday and Tuesday off as usual.

Upon opening the package from Amazon, she looked at the Bible, taking a quick glance inside. It was beautiful. There were pictures with historical information included, cross-references throughout the tome to find correlating verses. There was also a timeline that gave an approximation of events in the Bible, from the Old Testament through the New Testament. Molly hoped Sherlock would like it. In fact, it seemed such an interesting volume that she hoped they could look at it together.

Taking the wrapping paper and ribbon out of the gift bag from the shop, Molly set them on the table. Then she opened the kitchen drawer and searched for scissors and sticky tape. There were many pencils, pens and other items in the drawer and a pair of scissors. She couldn’t see any sticky tape at first and had to dig further down in the drawer. She finally located some tape. As she reached to pull it out, the pathologist felt the hard case for a DVD towards the back of the drawer, under some random pieces of paper.

“What a strange place to put a DVD,” she thought to herself. Extricating it from the drawer she saw the words “MISS ME?” in block letters on the disc.

Could Sherlock have intended for her to somehow find this? It didn’t seem possible that he could anticipate she would open that particular drawer. Then again, he had told her where to go two weeks in advance when she had gone to examine him during the Culverton Smith case. Sherlock had sent her a strange, ambiguous text about two weeks earlier with a date and address where to meet him and examine him. She was to come in an ambulance. She had thought it incredibly odd, but had complied with the request. That was one of the worst days of her life, when she had discovered his body was shutting down from the drugs he was using. She had told him he’d be dead in a few weeks at the rate he was going and it had broken her heart to see the man she loved killing himself.

Suddenly tears sprang to Molly’s eyes as she remembered that day, but she blinked them away.

Setting the DVD aside, she resolved to watch it later, after she had wrapped the Bible and eaten lunch.

Suddenly, her text alert sounded. Finally, a message from Sherlock.

She eagerly grabbed her phone which had been charging and looked at the message.
“We’ve been on the train now from Exeter to London for almost an hour. I can’t Stop thinking about you. We’re still on track for getting home a little after two. John is just going to take the Tube to his place from the station instead of coming to Baker Street. He’s anxious to see Rosie, of course.”

Molly texted back immediately, “I’ve been thinking about you too. It’s probably selfish, but I’m glad you will be coming home alone. I’ve missed you so much, and I can’t wait to see you. I love you.”

“Love you too. See you in a couple hours, my darling.”

Molly put down her phone. That short conversation was enough to make her shiver with anticipation. He would be home soon!

She carefully wrapped the Bible, finishing it with the pretty gold ribbon she had bought. It reminded her of the long ago Christmas party when she had spent just as much time and effort on wrapping Sherlock’s present. She decided to put the wrapped Bible under the bed. She would leave it there until she had decided when to give it to him.

It was after twelve-thirty when Molly made herself a sandwich and cup of tea for lunch. She thought about watching the DVD as she ate, but decided to wait. She didn’t want to be distracted if it was indeed a special message for her from her fiancé.

Afterwards, she spent some time doing the rest of the invitations, at least those she had addresses for. She still needed addresses for Sherlock’s parents and Greg Lestrade, as well as Philip Anderson.

Molly glanced at her watch. Quarter to two. It wouldn’t be long now.

Leaving the invitations on the kitchen table, Molly took the DVD and put it into the player. She turned on the television and set it to view the Blu-Ray player, expecting to see an image of Sherlock.

It was not an image of Sherlock that came onto the screen however. To her utter surprise, it was Mary. She listened in shock and then horror to what Mary said.

Mary, the woman she called a friend, had told Sherlock to save John Watson. She had told the detective what to do.

_The only way to save John is to make him save you. Go to hell, Sherlock. Go right into hell and make it look like you mean it. Go and pick a fight with a bad guy. Go and put yourself in harm’s way. If he thinks you need him, I swear he will be there._

Betrayal, complete and utter betrayal. Molly’s so-called friend, Mary had been the cause of him almost killing himself. She had asked, no, demanded that he put himself in deadly danger. Sherlock had almost died as a result, from the overuse of drugs, and then at the hands of Culverton Smith.

Molly had been there to see the shell of a man as he recovered afterwards, how he had to fight the tremors that told him it was time for a fix, how his body had almost shut down due to lack of proper food.

How could Mary have done such a thing? How could she have wanted to save John at the expense of his best friend? Molly felt hatred surge through her and then she felt nothing but coldness. Sherlock had kept this from her, but why?
Molly sat there in silence and looked at the television screen which had gone blank after the short DVD was ended. She barely registered the door to the landing opening and the voice of the man she loved saying her name.

She didn’t look at him, but stared straight ahead as he cane closer with a questioning, “Molly? What’s wrong? What’s happened?”

Without turning to him, the pathologist said in as even a tone as she could manage, “When were you going to tell me about Mary?”

Chapter End Notes

So finally, Molly knows why Sherlock returned to drugs. How is this going to affect their relationship? Do you think Molly's feelings are justified?

From being so excited about seeing Sherlock to this - how is her fiancé going to explain things?

The Bible in question that Molly bought, which I also purchased, really is beautiful and colourful. If you need a Bible of your own, it's a bit more expensive than most, but it is worth it, in my opinion. Actually, I told my hubby I wanted it and added it to our Amazon shopping cart. He was the one who bought it for me LOL.
Sherlock woke at seven o'clock with a sense of excitement. He would soon be heading home to his beloved Molly.

He packed his things into the small suitcase, went to the bathroom to use the loo and wash his unshaven face. Then he grabbed his fully charged phone and his laptop and headed downstairs to meet John.

His friend was already waiting in the foyer. They checked out and prepared to pay the bill, expecting to be reimbursed at a later time, but were informed that the colonel had instructed he would pay the bill upon his arrival.

The colonel arrived right on time, but it took a little time until they were underway to the bus station, because he paid the hotel bill first.

They arrived at the bus station and the colonel said, "Have a safe journey back to London, and keep an eye on the race tomorrow." He extended his hand to Sherlock.

"We will," said John, offering his hand as well for Colonel Ross to shake in farewell.

The two men boarded the bus for the half hour journey to Paignton. They were quiet on the ride, both lost in their own thoughts. The train ride from Paignton to Exeter also went by fast, it seemed to Sherlock. He was busy in his mind palace, thinking of his impending reunion with the woman he loved.

There was a little wait at the station in Exeter because the first train to London only left just before eleven. As they waited, the friends discussed their weekend plans.

"Did you make plans with Kayla, then?" The detective asked.

"I will see her tomorrow. She is going to come over to my flat and get to know Rosie a little better."

"And you as well, I expect."

John flushed a little. "Well, that too. How about you and Molly?"

"She's scheduled to work the weekend, but was able to arrange to leave work at noon on Sunday. Mycroft procured matinee tickets for 'The Sound of Music' for my parents and us. Saturday I'm going to Sherrinford to visit my sister again."

"First the opera, now a musical. You are becoming positively pedestrian, Sherlock."
The sleuth shrugged. "If that is what it takes to be with Molly and have a relatively normal life, I'm okay with it. I guess my life has just taken a new direction."

"I'm happy for you, but I hope that doesn't mean the world is going to lose its only consulting detective."

"Of course not," scoffed Sherlock. "Being a detective is part of who I am. I'll be a little more selective in choosing what cases to work on, though."

"Well, at least I have a new one for the blog. It's been awhile. By the way, I obviously will not be going back to Baker Street with you. I'll take the Tube home when we get to Paddington Station. I want to see my baby."

"Of course you do," nodded Sherlock. He wanted to see his baby too, but not an infant one. He was extremely pleased that he would arrive home alone.

The men lapsed into silence. When the train arrived they boarded and John pulled out his book once again to read.

Sherlock stared out the window at the passing countryside. He wasn't bored this time, just anxious to get home, and thinking about how he was going to kiss Molly breathless when he got there.

After almost an hour, he decided to let Molly know they were on the train from Exeter and that he should be home on time.

He had just ended that brief text conversation when another text alert came through.

It was Mycroft, asking to see him.

"I'm going to be home only after two. I'd prefer you don't come and see me right away. I'd at least like an hour of privacy with my fiancée," he texted his brother.

"I will be around at some point. Congratulations on solving the case."

"Thanks," responded Sherlock.

He closed his eyes and let himself think again of getting home to Molly. He thought of her soft hair, the way she looked at him, the way her body felt pressed against his. This last, longest leg of the journey seemed interminable. He wished he could sleep to make the time go faster, but that eluded him and he shifted restlessly in his seat time and again, unable to get comfortable.

"Do you have ants in your pants?" asked John finally, distracted from reading his book after Sherlock had readjusted his position for the fifth time.

"I just want to get home already," the sleuth complained.

'Look, I got a couple sandwiches wrapped up for us before you came downstairs at the hotel this morning. We might as well eat. I have a couple bottles of water too." Rummaging around in his bag, the doctor pulled out the sandwiches which were a little squished but still edible, and the water. He handed one of each to Sherlock.

"Thanks," said the detective gratefully. Eating would give him something to do for a few minutes at least. He ate the sandwich, suddenly realizing how hungry he was, having not eaten any breakfast or lunch. Typical John, to always think of everyday needs like eating.
After he finished the sandwich, Sherlock once again thought of Baker Street, this time wondering if Mrs. Hudson had taken his dry cleaning into her flat. He hoped she had also taken the other two packages for him, the wok and the lingerie. Molly had not mentioned any packages coming in the post, so he assumed Mrs. Hudson had been successful in retrieving those items without Molly's knowledge.

Finally the train arrived at Paddington Station in London. The two friends parted ways to take their respective trains home.

Sherlock sat in the train carriage, or car as that train enthusiast Shillcott had informed him on the day he and Molly had been working on solving crimes together. The thought brought a smile to his face.

Sherlock kept his head down during the short Tube ride, but despite doing so, was recognized by several passengers who either congratulated him on solving his latest case or asked for an autograph. He reflected that he should have taken a cab home, but it had been convenient to take the train because he was already at the station.

When he reached the Baker Street Underground Station, Sherlock pushed his way through the passengers and got off, suitcase in hand. He waited until the other alighting passengers had gone in different directions, before beginning his own walk home. Every step he took made his anticipation grow.

When he arrived at the outer door of 221B, Sherlock unlocked it and headed upstairs. He took off his Belstaff and put it on the coat rack just by the door. He was not surprised to find his flat unlocked as usual. He was however, a little surprised that Molly was sitting on the sofa, staring straight ahead, not looking at him.

He put down his suitcase, saying, "Molly?"

When she still didn't look at him, he asked, "Molly? What's wrong? What's happened?"

Then a cold feeling washed over him as she said, still staring ahead, "When were you going to tell me about Mary?"

How had she found out? Had Mycroft already stopped by and let something slip? It must have been him. "How did you find out Mary was the one who shot me? Was it Mycroft?" he said angrily.

She looked at him at last and said slowly, "She was the one who shot you?" Then she stood and left the room. Limping slightly, she went to their bedroom, closed the door behind her and Sherlock heard the click of the lock.

He stared after her in utter confusion for a few moments. If she hadn't been talking about Mary shooting him, what had she been saying?

He looked around the sitting room, and his eyes fell upon the open DVD case on the coffee table. The silent, blank screen of the television registered that it was turned on and set to display DVD's. Suddenly he understood, and he was filled with horror.

The DVD from Mary. He had tossed it into a drawer awhile ago, planning to get rid of it, but had forgotten about it. The DVD where Mary had told him what to do, in order to save his friend. That DVD which damned Mary as someone who was willing to do anything to help her husband, even if it meant his friend had to pay the price.
Walking down the hall, Sherlock knocked at the bedroom door. "Let me in, Molly. I need to explain."

"Leave me alone," he heard her say in a choked voice.

She said it in exactly the same way she had done after he asked her to say the words "I love you" during THAT phone call. Oh God, he thought. Not again.

He stood at the door for a few moments, trying to decide what to do. Should he leave her to process this in peace, or force her to listen? He decided he needed to explain, he couldn't let her suffer. Silently he opened the bathroom door and then the communicating door to the bedroom. She had obviously forgotten that the bathroom communicating door could only be locked from the inside.

He walked the few steps to stand beside her side of the bed. She was sitting there with her head in her arms, which were resting on the knees she had curled up towards herself, and she was crying, anguished, heart wrenching sobs that broke his own heart.

Gingerly, he perched on the edge of the bed and said desperately, "Please, Molly, just listen to me. I can explain." He tentatively reached his arms out to her and folded her into his embrace. She didn't resist, instead dropping her knees and allowing him to hold her as she wept.

He stroked her back, rocking her back and forth as she continued to cry. His own eyes felt the Sting of tears. He had seen her cry before, but never like this, never in this broken fashion, as if she had lost her best friend. Perhaps she had. "It's okay, darling," he told her. "Everything's going to be alright."

It was a few minutes before her sobs subsided. He kissed her forehead and cupped her face in his hands.

"Will you let me explain about the DVD?"

She nodded silently, looking at him with an expression of such pain in her eyes, he almost broke down and wept himself for being the cause of it.

"Mary made that DVD in the event something would happen to her. It's a very long story and not one too many people are aware of. Until a few years ago she was an Intelligence agent, a highly trained assassin."

Molly's eyes widened in astonishment.

"Something went wrong during an extraction in Tbilisi, Georgia, six years ago. Her team was betrayed and the hostages killed as well as her team members, or so she thought. A few months ago, it was discovered that another of her team members had survived and escaped after six years of imprisonment. He thought Mary was the one who had betrayed them, and he wanted to kill her. He ended up being killed later in a shoot out. To cut a long story short, I discovered the real culprit was Lady Smallwood's secretary. I confronted the woman at the aquarium, asking Mary and John to join me."

The detective took a deep breath and continued. "I taunted the woman with my knowledge, and she admitted everything. Mary arrived first, then John who had called the police and Mycroft too."

He continued, "The woman pulled a gun on me just as the police arrived with my brother. I told the woman there was no way out and held out my hand for the gun. She decided it would be more 'fun' to shoot me instead. Mary," his voice broke a little as he said her name, "Mary jumped in front of me and took the bullet that was meant for me. She saved my life, Molly, at the expense of her own.
I didn't want to tell you the truth, because it really isn't my story to tell. It's John's."

Molly put her hand up to touch his face. "So she saved your life. But I don't understand why she wanted you to put your life on the line to save John. Furthermore, I don't understand why you did it."

"Sweetheart, you have to understand the burden of guilt I felt after Mary died. If I hadn't taunted that madwoman, so confident in my superiority, she may not have tried to kill me. Mary knew, she even tried to warn me. I think she realized the woman was unhinged, but no, I had to show off. Mary died because of me. When that DVD came in the post, sent by one of her friends, I felt obligated to follow her instructions."

"Sherlock, this is hard for me. I know the Bible says not to hate anybody, but right now, I hate her, for betraying our friendship, for also betraying yours by asking you to do what she did. My God, Sherlock. You almost died because of her request. I saw the result of your use of drugs, I nearly lost you. We might have never gotten to be together. And now, I find out she was the one who shot you as well. Why? Why did she do that?"

"It was when I was trying to get at Magnussen, when I was going out with Janine. John and I went to Magnussen's office one night to try and get some letters. Janine let us in, she was his personal assistant. When we got upstairs, Janine and a guard had been knocked out. Magnussen was supposed to be out of the office but he was still there. He was being held at gunpoint. I didn't know it was Mary until she turned around."

He continued, "Magnussen knew about Mary's past life and was going to blackmail her. She thought her only way out was to kill him, so that John wouldn't find out about her past. When she saw me, she asked if John was with me. When I said yes, she apologized and shot me."

Molly's eyes teared up again at the sleuth's words.

He stroked her face with his thumbs, wiping away the new tears. "Please just listen. Mary could have killed Magnussen and me, but she knew John would be suspected. Instead she made a precision shot into my chest and escaped. She even called the ambulance before John found me, and that is what saved my life. I...I was going to tell you everything eventually, I swear. I didn't want to tarnish the friendship you had with Mary, though. Also, as I said, it wasn't my story to tell. The only people besides John and me who know about Mary's history are Mycroft and his government associates. Even Greg doesn't know why Mary took that bullet for me."

"I want to see it," Molly said unexpectedly.

"See what?" asked Sherlock.

"The scar from where she shot you. I've seen it before, but I need to reassure myself that she knew what she was doing."

"Very well." The detective shrugged out of his suit jacket and dropped it on the floor. Then he unbuttoned his white shirt and tossed it onto the floor by his jacket. Sitting there with his bare chest exposed, Sherlock suddenly felt a surge of heat rush through him. He watched as Molly reached out a hand to touch the small scar on his chest. The touch of her finger tracing it made his heartbeat immediately accelerate. Trying to remain casual, he said conversationally, "After I was shot, I only had a few seconds of consciousness. I retreated into my mind palace and you were there, telling me what to do. It was really strange."

Molly looked at him, "Did you know you died on the table? One of my surgeon friends told me.
Your heart stopped and you weren't responding to resuscitation. They had given up on you. Then suddenly they heard a blip on the heart monitor, then another, and finally your heart was beating steadily once again. I believe God saved you for a reason then, and now I know why. He saved you for me. And I see now, the bullet missed your major organs and arteries. I guess Mary wasn't trying to kill you, although it still was a near miss.

Sherlock took her hand in his. "So you forgive me for not telling you?" he asked urgently.

Molly gave him the sweetest smile he'd ever seen. "Of course I forgive you. Nothing on this earth would make me stop loving you or forgiving you. It's...it's going to take some time for me to forgive Mary, though."

"She's gone, though," pointed out Sherlock. "Not forgiving her will not hurt her, it will only hurt you."

"I know. I'll work through it somehow. Please promise me you don't have any more secrets, Sherlock," she said earnestly.

"Not a one," her fiancé assured her with relief in his face. *Well except for booking that room at the Ritz for next Valentine's Day, but that wasn't a secret that would hurt Molly.* "And now that we've talked about this, can I please kiss you the way I've been longing to do since I left Dartmoor?"

Molly nodded.

Then he put his arms around her and held her tightly, pressing kisses to her cheeks, her forehead, her chin and finally, her mouth.

Molly's arms went around him, holding him even closer and their kiss deepened.

He felt her mouth opening under his and he delicately flicked his tongue inside it, exploring the recesses of her mouth. Their tongues touched and tasted each other briefly, before withdrawing.

He kissed her then urgently, in a haze of desire. He had been aching to kiss her for so many hours and oh, it was so sweet. The knowledge that he no longer had any secrets from her made him want to utterly give himself to her. He loved her, and he wanted her, desperately

Molly made a noise of contentment as they continued to kiss, her hand stroking his back and he longed to do the same.

Without conscious thought, he reached under her blouse and jumper to feel the skin of her back also. She did not resist. They were both lost in a passion so strong it overwhelmed them. When his hands reached inwards to work at the fastening of her bra, he hesitated, waiting for any indication that he was going too far. Instead of pulling away, Molly made another sound as her breath hitched and she held him tightly.

Bra successfully unfastened, he moved his hand ever so slowly from his fiancée's back to lift her bra upwards and gently cup her breast.

She gasped at his touch and his heartbeat accelerated further. Sherlock's hand moved around her breast, feeling its softness. She was so lovely. She arched into him and he moved his other hand to encircle her other breast. She responded with a low moan, as caught up in the moment as he was.

He had never wanted anything in his life as much as he wanted Molly at that moment. He wanted to make love to her, to hear her gasp at his touch.
He removed his lips from hers and said in a deep whisper, "I want to feel your skin against mine. Is that okay?"

Her eyes were closed and at her nod of assent, he tugged her jumper and blouse upward as she lifted her arms above her head so he could remove them. Then he took her bra and threw it onto the floor, looking at her exposed skin in wonder and delight. **God, she was perfect.** Her breasts weren't large but they fit perfectly into his hands as he squeezed them gently once again.

He crushed her to himself, thriling at the feel of bare flesh against bare flesh and began to kiss her again. How utterly sweet and captivating his Molly was.

He was not to know if things might have gone further with them because he heard the sound of the doorbell.

He groaned, pulling away from Molly.

"What is it?" she asked, her pupils dilated as his undoubtedly were from the passion of their embrace. She had obviously not heard the doorbell.

Flinging himself off the bed, he swore and muttered, "Mycroft is here."

Molly's eyes snapped open as she said in astonishment, "What on earth is he coming here for?"

Sherlock looked at his fiancée, taking in her thoroughly kissed appearance and her creamy breasts exposed to him, which she suddenly placed an arm over in acute embarrassment.

A peremptory knock sounded at the door. Sherlock grabbed a dressing gown from the wardrobe and secured it about himself, trying to slow his breathing as he called, "I'll be right there."

Molly too was breathing hard, panting slightly from their shared passion.

"You had better get dressed," he ordered gruffly. "He told me he was coming today but I didn't know when. Dammit," he swore again, wishing Mycroft would have just stayed away.

As he walked to the door, he really wished he could just ignore the knock. Unfortunately, as the door was not locked, he had a feeling that his brother would consider that an open invitation to enter. He flung the door open an scowled.

"Mycroft," he hissed. "Your timing, as always, is impeccable."

The older Holmes merely raised an eyebrow. "Did I come at an indelicate moment? Your dressing gown would certainly seem to indicate it."

"Yeah, I was about to go to bed," replied the detective sarcastically.

"I'll just bet you were." He gave Sherlock a knowing look.

"Oh, shut up, Mycroft. What did you want anyway?"

"To show you this." The older Holmes sibling waved a newspaper in front of Sherlock.

Sherlock glanced at it. On the front page was a picture of him and John, and the article heading was, "Detective back in action."

The detective shrugged. "So what?"
"Why did you tell them when you are getting married?"

"What's the big deal? The press was going to be on me about it until I told them, so I figured I'd save them the trouble of snooping around for it."

"Sherlock, you are so obtuse sometimes. You offend our parents and they call me."

"Why? What did I do this time?"

"You told the reporters when you are getting married before you told our parents."

Sherlock smacked a hand to his forehead. "You're right, I'm an obtuse arse."

Molly came into the room. "Hello Mycroft," she greeted her future brother-in-law.

"Doctor Hooper, apologies for my untimely arrival."

Molly glanced at her fiancé. "That's okay, we were just, ah, catching up."

"Of course you were. I won't stay long. I know you have a lot of catching up to do."

Mycroft smiled indulgently at the pathologist.

Sherlock thought he saw a hint of affection in his brother's eyes. "Would you like a cup of tea?" he asked grudgingly.

"I think I'll pass, but I do suggest you call our parents as soon as possible to officially let them know the date of your wedding, not that they are unaware of it, thanks to your interview."

Molly gave Sherlock a surprised look. "You didn't tell them the date when you saw them at Sherrinford? I would have told them myself if I'd known that."

"I just didn't think of it," her fiancé admitted sheepishly.

"Nevertheless, do call Mummy. Don't wait until you see her tomorrow. Remember too, I am having the car pick you up at one o'clock tomorrow, brother mine."

"Yes Mycroft," answered the younger Holmes brother. "I'll bring my violin of course."

"Very well, I shall leave you now to do more 'catching up.'" With a conspiratorial wink at Molly, he said, "Don't do anything I wouldn't do."

Molly blushed as Sherlock said, "Well that gives us carte blanche to do whatever we want, thanks big brother."

Mycroft gave a bark of laughter. "Touché. Have a good evening." He left the flat, leaving behind the newspaper and the detective made sure to lock the door behind him.

"I'm sorry, love," said Sherlock when his brother was gone.

"For what?"

"For being interrupted, or maybe for what we were heading towards. You choose."

Molly smiled at him. "Well, we did break one of our biggest rules, and that was to get too close in the bedroom. We allowed ourselves to get carried away."
"Believe me, I did not come home with the sole intent of seducing you. Yes, I want to be with you, but only when it's right."

"And obviously I want to be with you too. I knew what I was doing. It isn't like I had too much to drink. Anyway," here she blushed, "it isn't like you haven't already seen my breasts."

"God, Molly, you have no idea how beautiful they are. Touching them was exquisite. Feeling you skin to skin too. Dammit, I need to stop talking about it or I'll take you to the bedroom and there will be no Mycroft next time to interrupt us."

"I do have one request."

"Yes?"

"I think you look incredibly hot right now, with that three day growth, but before you kiss me again, can you shave? It's a bit prickly."

Sherlock laughed. "I'll do that in a minute. There's one thing I have to do first." He walked over to the Blu-ray player and pressed the eject button. Taking the ejected disc, he went into the kitchen and tossed it into the rubbish bin, saying, "Neither of us needs to be reminded of that."

"You know, when I found it, I thought maybe you had mysteriously figured out I would go into that drawer and had left it for me. I still don't know how you told me two weeks in advance to examine you at that address."

"Technology. Before I got too high on drugs to know what was going on around me, I had deduced where John would go for psychiatric help. I knew I was travelling down a dangerous path, so I set myself a reminder on my phone to get there that day by any means necessary. Mrs. Hudson did the honours. Elementary really. I should not have involved you, but I needed John to see I wasn't faking."

"I think we need to just move forward," stated Molly emphatically. "Are you hungry? Do you want me to make something to eat?"

"Actually, I guess I could eat, but let's go out somewhere. It would probably be good to get out of the flat and spend some time in public."

"Okay, well you go and shave off that beard and put your shirt back on so we can leave."

"As you wish."

"Did you just make a reference to 'The Princess Bride?' asked Molly.

"I may or may not have seen that movie several times on video during my college years."

Molly grinned. "I think we need to do a 'learn something new about each other' game every day. I love finding out these little tidbits from your past."

"Sounds interesting. I like that idea." Sherlock smiled back at his fiancée and headed for the bathroom. It took several minutes to remove the beard, but finally he was once again clean-shaven. He went into the bedroom and took off his dressing gown, then dressed again in his shirt and jacket.

He found Molly sitting on the sofa waiting for him. It was hard to believe the demure angel sitting there had been half-naked in his arms less than an hour earlier.
"I called Angelo's and booked a table. I hope that's alright," she informed him. At his nod, she added, "Do you want to call your parents before we leave?"

"It can wait until we get home." He helped Molly put on her jacket before putting on his Belstaff and they headed outside to hail a taxi.

Chapter End Notes

This was a pretty heavy chapter, with both the revelations and explanations to Molly about Mary, and the passion that followed. What did you think of these events? Could you see how the intense circumstances could have let to Sherlock and Molly getting so close to consummating their relationship?

Did you enjoy the conversation between the brothers?

Isn't it fortunate that something always happens to stop Sherlock and Molly from giving in to temptation?

I'm anxious to hear your thoughts on this chapter, especially as it such a big one in terms of their history together and their struggle with temptation.
Dinner and Discussion - Molly

Chapter Summary

Molly talks with Sherlock about possible consequences if things don't go as planned.

Chapter Notes

I'm sorry. This chapter somehow did not get posted. It Belongs as chapter 72.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

On the cab ride to Angelo’s Sherlock and Molly sat quietly, holding hands. Molly’s thoughts kept drifting towards their most recent encounter. She wasn’t absolutely sure how far things might have gone between them if Mycroft hadn’t arrived. It was a little disconcerting to find herself so weak, so human, when confronted with the powerful emotions her fiancé evoked in her.

She decided they needed to have a conversation about consequences if the unthinkable happened and they consummated their relationship before the wedding. It was all very well to have the best intentions, but there was no point in hiding their heads in the sand and saying it wouldn’t happen again. But that was definitely not a conversation to have in a taxi or in a public restaurant. It would wait until they came home.

When they had reached Angelo’s and went inside, Angelo came up to them immediately and clasped Sherlock’s hand.

“It is so good to see you,” he said enthusiastically. "I haven’t seen you or your fiancée since the night you came here when you were first engaged. I also read the newspaper article where you said your wedding is only a little over seven weeks away."

“Indeed it is,” said Sherlock.

“Well, I am putting you at the same table as last time. Enjoy your meal.” He led them to the same round table they had sat at weeks earlier.

The engaged couple sat and perused their menus, then made their selections. As they waited for their dinners to arrive Molly said, “When we get home, we should look at the email Pastor Briggs sent the other day, with the things he needs for the Marriage Register. That way I can send an email back with the information. I’ve almost finished writing out our wedding invitations as well, but I need your parents’ address and addresses for Greg Lestrade and Anderson.”

“You’ve certainly been busy,” her fiancé said. “After I call my parents, we can take care of those things. As a matter of fact, I’ll text Greg now. I’m sure he can give me Anderson’s address, and first name for that matter.”

Molly laughed at that. After all these years he still didn’t know Anderson’s first name? At least he got Greg’s name right these days. Funny how such a clever man could be so ignorant at times.
when it came to names. She watched him pull out his phone and send off a text.

Reaching across the table, Sherlock took her left hand which had been resting on the table, in his right one. “Molly, I wanted to tell you I made a decision today.”

She looked at him a little apprehensively. “What kind of decision?”

“About my detective work. I’m not going to take any cases outside of London for now, nothing that will take me away from you overnight. It was just too difficult. There were aspects to the Dartmoor case that took me longer to deduce because my thoughts were too full of you. I usually compartmentalize things in my mind palace so that I can file things away that aren’t currently relevant, like things in my personal life. I couldn’t do that with you, no matter how hard I tried. So the easiest solution is to stay near you. That way I won’t be longing for you when I’m supposed to be working.”

“Oh, Sherlock, it seems life has become so much more complicated for you now that we are together.”

“Don’t misunderstand me, sweetheart. I’m not complaining. It’s a good complication to have, and I’m merely making adjustments to accommodate for them. I have no regrets about us, and I would never want to change anything about what has happened since we’ve been together.”

“I know. It seems like we are constantly going back and forth, reassuring each other, doesn’t it? I’m not really sure why. It isn’t as if I doubt your love because you have been devoted to me since the night you came to my flat. We haven’t even really had an argument, unless you count what happened today.”

“I wouldn’t really call it an argument, more of a talk that required an explanation.” There was a slightly wicked gleam in his eye as he added, “I must admit, I enjoyed what came after our ‘talk.’”

Molly blushed. “Yeah, about that. I think we need to talk about it some more when we get home.”

“You mean actually talk, or non-verbal communication?”

“Sherlock! I mean actually talk of course, but here is not the place.”

“Well now you have me all anxious,” pouted the detective. He looked so cute with that lower lip thrust out.

“Quit looking at me like that,” she ordered. “I’m trying to be sensible here.”

“Sensible is so not fun.”

“Maybe not, but one of us has to be,” she retorted. Inwardly she was delighted though. She adored playful Sherlock.

Their food came then and they began to eat. After a few minutes, Sherlock said, “Tell me something I don’t know about you.”

“Like what?” she asked.

“I don’t know, favourite author, favourite book. Things a man should know about his wife, or fiancée.”

The pathologist had to smile at that. His wife, she liked the sound of that. “Well, I’m a big Disney
fan,” she stated.

The detective rolled his eyes. “I said tell me something I don’t know, Molly.”

She thought for a moment. “I like cats better than dogs, but I am actually slightly allergic to them. When I had Toby, I had to take allergy medicine every day to counteract the symptoms.”

“Really? Well, that is definitely something I didn’t know. I suppose I could have deduced it when I was staying with you until after my ‘funeral,’ but I didn’t notice any allergy medicine around your flat. Of course, it isn’t as if I snooped through your things.”

“I know you wouldn’t have done that. So how about you tell me something about you?”

“How about the fact that I’d really like to be kissing you right now?”

“No fair,” protested Molly. “How about something from your childhood?”

His face clouded. “Most of my childhood memories were fiction I concocted to deal with Victor’s death at the hands of my sister. For example, the dog I thought was the family pet turned out to be my mind altering reality to deal with Victor’s loss, to think it was losing Redbeard the dog instead.”

“Oh, Sherlock. I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to dredge up bad things from your past. How about something more recent, from your Uni days or something like that?”

“My university days were boring. Lots of experimenting, sadly some of which was on my own body to discover a method of preventing boredom. Picking up bad habits like smoking. It’s really not pretty, Molly.”

“It’s still part of what made you into the man you are today. You really didn’t ever have a crush on a girl, or have a girl crush on you?”

“I just wasn’t interested in romantic entanglements. I saw how distracting they were for my roommates and I was focussing on my education. I did not enjoy hearing them discuss their girlfriends, and I especially did not appreciate them getting drunk and bringing equally drunk girls back to our room for sex when I was trying to sleep. I tried to close my ears to what was happening, unsuccessfully, unfortunately. Made for some awkwardness next morning.” He cringed and Molly realized he had really been repulsed by things of a sexual nature even then.

“I was very glad to rent an off-campus flat when I did my one year post graduate degree in Forensic Medical Sciences. As for girls crushing on me, well, there were one or two bold ones who asked me out, but I rebuffed them. I barely paid attention to them. You were the first person I actually noticed had a crush on me.”

“Was I that obvious?” Even as she said the words, she remembered her college roommate Meena had been one of the girls who had asked him out. Meena had been at Queen Mary's the year before Molly started there, but had failed, due to her concentrating on her social life, rather than studying. In fact, Molly had been on target to start a year earlier, after completing her A levels in one year, but she had ended up delaying her entrance to university when her dad was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Spending his last months with him had been her priority.

“In the beginning, yes. But then you started going out with Moriarty and I thought you were over it.”

“I only went out with him three times! And I ended it. There was something...not right about him.”
“Possibly the fact that he was a psychopathic killer. Thank God he didn’t try anything with you.”

“You really thought I got over you?”

“Well, after I kissed you in the lab, when I asked for your help, you never said anything about it afterwards when I stayed with you for those days after my supposed death.”

“I...I thought you were just being kind. Besides, it couldn’t have gone any further because you had to leave.”

“And then when I did come back you were engaged. What was I supposed to think? Anyway, why should you still be holding a torch for me after years of me being absent from your life? It wouldn’t have made sense.”

“But I broke it off with Tom after John’s wedding.”

“That’s when I started to really notice you, although I didn’t recognize it as love. Oh well, what matters is now and that we love each other. Also, I’m finished with my food and so are you. Let’s pay the bill and go home.”

Molly was only too happy to comply. It was interesting, getting these hidden insights into Sherlock’s mind. To know she had affected him even before he had known he loved her. It was like a validation that they really were meant to be together, but it had to be the right time. Molly idly wondered if things might have been different if she had gone to uni a year earlier, when Sherlock was still there. Would she have met him? But now wasn’t the time to discuss that time period - they had more important current matters to discuss.

When the pair arrived home, the sleuth pulled out his phone and grimaced.

“I suppose I’d better call Mummy now.”

Molly could not hear her future mother-in-law’s side of the conversation, but she had to smother a few giggles at the upbraiding her fiancé was obviously receiving.

“Hello...yes, of course it’s me...I know...yes Mummy, I’m sorry I forgot to tell you the date...no, it wasn’t my intention to hurt you...of course you are more important than the press...for God’s sake, Mummy, I’ve been too busy to call. Molly had a fall last Sunday and sprained her ankle...yes she’s okay now...of course she’s coming on Sunday...yes, I’ll tell her. Goodbye.”

Sherlock hung up and said, “Mummy says hello, and that she hopes your ankle is feeling better.”

Molly couldn’t help but laugh at the cowed expression on Sherlock’s face. “Wow, she really told you off, didn’t she?”

“I know, it’s horrendous the way she treats me like a child sometimes. She was acting like I was four years old, instead of forty.”

Molly laid a hand on his arm. “My poor darling, I’m sorry.”

“I could use some tender, loving care.” He stepped close so he could tilt her chin upwards and then his lips were on hers for the first time since that passionate embrace of a few hours earlier. This kiss was different, more controlled than before, but still one that sent tingles running through her. All too soon, he released her saying, “I guess we should take care of those things you mentioned earlier. Do you want to show me that email from Pastor Briggs?”
“Of course.” Molly pulled up the email on her phone and showed it to Sherlock. “I’m sorry it’s so hard to see. It never bothered me before, but I really think I need my own laptop or an iPad.”

“We can look into doing that, perhaps next week if you like.” He looked at the email and the two of them answered the pastor’s requests, after which Molly sent off the email. She had noticed Sherlock squinting to read the words, but said nothing.

“Invitations next,” she said.

“Let me see if Greg got back to me.” The detective checked his messages and fortunately there was one from Lestrade, listing both his and Anderson’s addresses. “It appears that Anderson’s first name is Philip.”

“Great,” said Molly. “Do they have significant others we need to invite?”

“Hmm, Greg is always seeing somebody or other. Anderson was married at one time, but I think his affair with Sally Donovan a few years ago put an end to that. I’d suggest we invite them and a guest, and they can decide if they want to bring someone or not.”

The pathologist wrote out the invitations and addressed them. She had already written the one for his parents and addressed the envelope when Sherlock gave her their address.

“Okay Sherlock. Remember how you promised to lick the envelopes? Here you go.” She pushed the pile of invitations and he made a face.

“Do I really have to lick them?”

“They won’t seal themselves,” laughed his fiancée. “I had to put up with writer’s cramp to write them out, so it’s only fair.”

“If you help me, it will take less time and we will have more leisure time,” he said reasonably, giving her a not-so-innocent smile.

“Oh very well,” she huffed and joined him at the task of sealing the envelopes. “I guess we need to buy some stamps for them on Monday and then we can mail them,” she said when they had finished.

“Enough work for now, anyway,” Sherlock told her, taking her by the hand and leading her from the kitchen to the sitting room. He sat on the sofa and pulled his fiancée down beside him. “You said we needed to talk when we got home. What about?”

“Us of course, and these situations we keep getting into.”

“You mean getting carried away by our emotions.”

"Tell it like it is, Sherlock. It's more than just our emotions."

"you're right, our desire, our sexual desire."

“Yes. I think we need to be realistic.”

Sherlock quirked an eyebrow. “I’m all ears, sweetheart.”

“Well, here’s the thing,” Molly felt herself blush as she said, “I still think we should wait to be together until we are married, but..I..I think we need to discuss the potential consequences if things don’t go..uh..according to plan.”
Sherlock looked at her seriously. “You’re right, of course you are. I’m willing to keep trying to keep to this abstinence agreement, but it isn’t easy and, although I’m ashamed to admit it, I don’t feel the same commitment to it as you do. I would never, ever force you into something you’d regret later, though.”

“The more time we spend together, the harder it is for me to remember the things I was taught as a child. I probably shouldn’t be saying it, or even thinking it, but neither of us is in the first flush of youth. Perhaps that is what makes it so difficult because of that. In any case, we probably need to discuss what could happen.”

“You mean if you got pregnant?”

Molly felt the heat rising in her cheeks again. “Exactly.”

Sherlock took her hands in his. “It wouldn’t matter to me. You know I don’t want us to wait to have children. I know you’ll be a wonderful mother and will make up for all my shortcomings.”

“You’re so silly,” chided his fiancée. “You’ll be a great dad.”

“Well, do you have any other concerns you want to bring up?”

“Not really. It’s not like we need to worry about any diseases.”

“So,” he asked cautiously, “were you concerned that you could get pregnant if we had made love earlier?”

“I...I don’t think so. I’m on day seventeen of my cycle and it’s a pretty regular twenty-eight day one, so I think that window has passed. Anyway, I’m not trying to say what’s in our future, just that I’m acknowledging the possibility it could happen.”

“I understand. So now we’ve had this discussion, can I at least kiss you? I promise I won’t do anything you don’t want me to do.”

“That’s the problem,” she said in a low voice. “My mind says one thing but my body says another. Can we just try to keep our more, um, passionate encounters out of the bedroom? That might at least help.”

“Whatever you want, sweetheart.” He put his arms around her slowly and held her to him. “I love you, Molly Hooper. Whatever happens is not going to change that. I will do anything you want me to do. If it means I have to wear more clothes to bed, I’ll do it. If it means we don’t sleep in the same bed, so be it. I can live with just your kisses if that is what you want for now. If you decide you want more, I’ll follow your lead, okay?”

Molly nodded and her eyes met his. She knew he was talking from his heart. When he kissed her, it was tender and loving, as if he was proving he could restrain himself if he had to. The pathologist knew he was not going to make any move to seduce her. In fact, come to think of it, he always let her lead. He had even asked her if he could remove those clothes earlier in the afternoon. It was such a comfort that he was so considerate of her and her feelings. It just made her want to give herself to him even more, but she too restrained the urge, just lightly stroking his hair as he kissed her and enjoying the feel of his clean shaven face once more.

Eventually he pressed his forehead against hers and said, “You must be tired, my darling. You haven’t had any sleep since you finished work this morning and you have to work tomorrow. What time do you start your shift?”
“Nine.”

“Oh good, that’s not too early then. It should work out well too for me to come to the hospital after I’m back from Sherrinford. I’ll probably be a bit early. Will you mind if I hang around you until you are finished with work?”

“As long as you actually let me do my work and don’t distract me.”

“Not even a little bit?”

“Well, maybe a little bit,” she allowed with a grin. “I meant to tell you too that I’m finishing work at noon on Sunday so I can go to the matinee. Did you tell John we can babysit next weekend?”

“Bloody hell, I have a mind like a sieve lately. What have you done to me, woman?” He gave her a playful tap on her nose. “I’ll text him now to say we’ll do it and ask what time.”

“While you do that, I think I’ll get ready for bed.” Molly went to the bedroom. Should she put on the pyjamas she had been using for warmth while Sherlock was away? She finally decided against it. She wanted to feel his warmth again. After changing into her pink chemise, she took one of Sherlock’s dressing gowns and put that on too, then returned to the sitting room.

Sherlock looked up as she came in. “Being modest I see,” was his only comment about her wearing his dressing gown. “I got a text back already from John. He said the conference starts at nine next Saturday, but it is more than an hour’s journey away so he can either bring Rosie here early, at around seven-thirty, or drop her off the night before.”

“Oh, I’d be happy if he brought her over Friday night. We need to buy something for her to sleep in though first.”

“I’ll let John know. As for buying a cot, I’ll check Amazon tomorrow. If I can’t find one there we can go out and look for one on Monday. You do get Monday and Tuesday off again when you work on the weekend, right?”

“Right. We need to go to the bank too. My former landlord sent me a cheque. He got new tenants right away. That reminds me too, you need to pay your credit card bill.”

“I can do that online.”

Molly watched as Sherlock got his laptop and went to the bookmarked site for his credit card. She couldn’t help but notice the bill was for over £5000 when he went to pay it using the bank account already listed as his default. “Oh, that won’t work. I need to change that to the new bank account,” he commented. He picked up an envelope from beneath the coffee table that held the new account details, changed them on his laptop and submitted the payment. Then he set the laptop on the coffee table and stood.

“I don’t mean to be nosy,” said the pathologist, “but are your bills usually so high?”

The detective shrugged. “It’s more than usual. I guess the closing date for the card was after I bought your engagement ring.”

Molly looked at the ring on her finger. “I hope you didn’t spend more than you could afford on my ring.”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” her fiancée chided gently. “If anything, I didn’t spend enough. Then again, no amount of money or gem size could express to you how deeply I love you.”
"How is it that you always know exactly the right thing to say? It’s like you are the polar opposite of the man you once were."

“I don’t know. I’m just speaking from my heart.”

Molly stood on tiptoes to kiss him. "My Sherlock,” she murmured against his lips.

He put his arms around her and returned the kiss, finally pulling away to say, “Time for me to have a shower and for you to get into bed, love.”

She obeyed, putting the dressing gown back in the wardrobe before settling under the duvet and listening as he turned on the shower.

Afterwards, when Sherlock got into the bed, he reached to pull her against him as he always did. It was so good to have him home and beside her once again. She cuddled into his delightful warmth, sighed in contentment and slept.

Chapter End Notes

Goodness, these last few chapters have all been quite lengthy!

Did you notice Molly's little flight into fancy of wondering what might have been if she and Sherlock had met earlier at Uni? This is not when she has the dream about it that I am currently publishing, but it is setting the stage for it later. Did you like their conversation about what happened years earlier, and Sherlock opening up about it?

How about the conversation at home? Was it good for them to discuss what might happen, or do you think that just exacerbated the situation with their emotions?

Some chapters, more than others, I really want to hear from my readers about their opinions. This is one I'd especially love to get feedback on. Please consider doing it.
Molly’s alarm woke Sherlock. He felt his fiancée stirring as she prepared to get out of bed. “Press the snooze button so I can have a few minutes with you before you get up.”

She did so, then turned towards him.

He stroked her hip through the fabric of her chemise and said, “I was half expecting you to put on the pyjamas I saw on the floor yesterday that give you slightly more, uh, coverage.”

“I was contemplating it, but to be honest, the only reason I was wearing them was for extra warmth while you were gone.” She grinned at him. “I missed my personal heater.”

Sherlock chuckled. “As did I.” He traced her face gently with his fingers. “It’s funny how quickly one can get used to something they have never even thought about in the past. I’ve become spoiled since you started sharing my bed. I don’t want to spend another night alone again.”

“You will be sleeping alone at least once more.”


“The night before our wedding. You’re going to have to ask John if you can stay with him and Rosie that night.”

“I can live with that. Just don’t ask me to stay away from you any other time.”

Molly rolled her eyes, “As if I’d do that.”

He kissed her then, knowing she would have to get up soon and leave him. Everything about her was so soft and sweet. His Molly, his woman.

The alarm went off again and reluctantly they parted. Molly kept her back to him as she dressed. The detective watched her openly, noting the deft way her hands reached behind her to fasten her bra. It was amazing the way she could twist her arms around and turn her hands in such a way as to make those tiny hooks and eyes meet.

When she was dressed, the pathologist said, “I’m going to make us some breakfast, unless you plan on staying in bed awhile longer.”

“I’m getting up. I want to spend as much time with you as I can before you go to work.”

“Alright then. Don’t feel the need to escort me. My ankle is almost completely healed so I’ll just
take the Tube.”

Sherlock looked a little uncertain. “I do have some things to take care of, but are you sure? I don’t mind going with you.”

“Sherlock, I don’t expect you to go everywhere with me. I’ve been taking the Tube to work for years without your assistance.”

“Fine, fine. Well, just don’t forget I’ll be there for you after work today.”

Molly just nodded and left the bedroom.

After the detective was dressed, he went into the kitchen. The smell of bacon filled the air and he sniffed appreciatively. “I could get used to this breakfast thing. I’m sure I’ve already put on a couple of pounds since you’ve been living here.” He wrapped his arms around his fiancée from behind and kissed her cheek.

“If you distract me, this bacon is going to be extra crispy,” warned Molly.

Reluctantly he withdrew to sit at the table and took his phone off the charger. “There’s a message from John,” he commented.

Molly looked over at him as she placed the bacon on plates along with scrambled eggs. “Did he say we can take Rosie overnight on Friday?”

Sherlock read the message. “Yes, and he is also asking if we want to go out for dinner this evening with him and Kayla. Apparently it was her suggestion.”

“Oh, that sounds nice. We could meet them after work. Do they have a place in mind?”

“John said the Bengal Tiger Restaurant. Let me just see how far it is from the hospital.” He did a quick search for the restaurant. “It’s only about a half mile, if you want to walk there.”

“Exercise is always a good thing, and now that the weather is getting warmer, I think it would be lovely just to walk instead of taking a cab. That is, if you are okay with it.”

“Only if you will permit me to hold your hand as we walk.”

Molly batted her eyelashes at him as she put their plates down on the table, “Kind sir, I would be honoured if you would hold my hand as we stroll through the streets of London together.”

The detective had to laugh at her quaint turn of speech. He quickly texted back a response to John, and the pair ate their meal quietly, smiling at one another every now and then.

Just as they were cleaning up the plates, Sherlock’s phone chimed with a message from John. He glanced at it. “John says six-thirty at the Bengal Tiger. If we get there first, reservations are under his name.”

“I think it’s lovely that he has started to see my friend. She has been lonely for a long time.”

“Just think, if things work out for them, it’s all because of you.”

“You too, Sherlock. I doubt they would ever have met if we hadn’t gotten together.”

“Perhaps not. It will be interesting to see how their relationship progresses.” Walking over to the sink, he took the plate from Molly’s hands and dropped a kiss on top of her head. “I’ll take care of
As the detective did the simple household chore, he thought about the day ahead. He needed to see Mrs. Hudson and retrieve the items he had purchased without Molly’s knowledge. He wanted to check his emails for any urgent cases or easy ones he could do without leaving the flat. He also thought it might be a good idea to see if he could find a cot for Rosie, perhaps one he could assemble himself. Surely it wouldn’t be too hard? The detective resolved to look on Amazon once Molly had left for work.

He had just finished drying the dishes when Molly came back into the kitchen. Her hair was in its ponytail and she had applied a pretty shade of pink lipstick that complemented the light pink jumper she now wore.

“Did you change your outfit?” asked the sleuth in surprise.

“I figured if we were going out somewhere special to eat, I had better make sure I was dressed for it.”

“Sweetheart, you look beautiful in anything you wear.” He flashed a cheeky grin and added, “even more beautiful when you aren’t wearing them.”

Molly blushed. “You’re such a tease, Sherlock.”

“Your body is nothing to be ashamed of, my love.”

“I’m not ashamed of it, just embarrassed that you have seen so much of it,” she said, looking down.

Sherlock walked to her and tilted her chin up so she could meet his eyes. “Don’t be embarrassed either. Adam and Eve were naked in the garden of Eden, were they not?”

“Before they sinned, yes. So now you are trying to use the Bible to support your views?”

“Is it working?”

“Well I am proud of you for remembering what you’ve read in the Bible.”

“I only delete files from my mind palace that are not relevant. In any case, just know that I think you are beautiful, always.” He kissed her tenderly, lightly, knowing there was no time for a longer embrace if she wanted to get to work on time.

After his fiancée had left, Sherlock put his laptop on the kitchen table. He looked at John’s blog. Apparently his friend had not wasted any time in uploading the new case about Silver Blaze. There were already several comments about it. Interestingly enough, some of the comments were of a more personal nature, talking about him and Molly and wondering how he could juggle his work with the demands of planning a wedding. People were so nosy, he thought. Why did they care about what his personal life was like?

After reading John’s blog article about the Dartmoor case, which was, as usual, very well written, the detective looked at his emails. He counted his unread mail. Fifty-four. Well, it had been a few days. There was the usual spam that the filter had missed, also a number of other ones that were basically fan letters.

He had noticed a significant decline in the amount of fan emails asking him out, or asking if he actually liked women. It was funny, he mused, after Janine had told those lies to the tabloids, he had stopped receiving propositions from men, although he still got a few from women.
The most recent emails were more of an “if things don’t work out between you and your fiancée, I’m available to heal your broken heart.” He had to laugh at those emails. It would be nice to stop receiving them once he was actually married.

Sorting through that rubbish to find an actual case was quite tedious. He would have to thank Molly for being instrumental in making at least one aspect of his life less complicated.

Well, there were six legitimate requests for assistance with a case. He was pretty confident that two of them were solvable if he was furnished with some more information. He sent off the questions the people needed to answer. One request was for him to travel to Glasgow and investigate the mysterious disappearance of the heir to a large estate. In the old days, he would have been intrigued, but he felt no compunction now in writing an apologetic refusal to tackle the case. There was no way he was taking a long journey away from Molly again.

Then there was the email from another wife who suspected her husband was cheating on her. It was those types of cases that had helped him come to the erroneous conclusion that love was a waste of time and energy. Who needed to deal with a broken heart? Of course now he knew and understood love, real love. He couldn’t begin to understand why people fell out of love so often, he just knew that Molly was his soulmate. She was the one God had intended for him since the beginning of time. It had just taken him a long time to recognize it.

Pushing away those thoughts which would undoubtedly lead to him spending too much time thinking about Molly instead of doing anything productive, the detective referred to his mental checklist of things to do. The most logical one was to look for a cot next because he was already on his laptop.

Sherlock tapped on his bookmarks list and selected Amazon. He typed in “cot” and was gratified to discover several he could purchase through the site. He checked reviews and star ratings and finally selected a cot bed that could be converted from a cot to a child’s bed. Therefore the age range was from birth to about age four. It even came with a mattress. The sleuth ordered it, noting that it should arrive on Monday. Having Amazon Prime was very handy when it came to fast shipping. That was good, it would give him time to assemble it before Rosie came.

He allowed his mind to briefly think about his own baby one day occupying the cot. Strange how he had never thought about fatherhood before the events at Sherrinford. Yet here he was, desperately wanting to have his own child with Molly, a child who would never grow up the way he had, shut off from emotions or sentiment of any kind. His child, or hopefully children, would learn the value of caring for others and believing in a God who loved them, who would give their life purpose.

Sherlock closed his laptop and headed downstairs to Mrs. Hudson’s flat. The dear lady seemed very pleased to see him, and ushered him in for tea and biscuits.

“I don’t have any ginger nuts I’m afraid, but I do have home made shortbread or store bought florentines.”

“One of each?” asked the detective hopefully.

“Why of course, dear,” stated Mrs. Hudson, as she brought out a plate with the biscuits on it, then started to make tea for them both.

Sherlock contentedly munched on the biscuits as he watched his landlady putter about her kitchen. She really was a dear soul. She had seen him at his worst, when he had been high on drugs and acting like a complete git, yet she still put up with him, just like a mother would. In many ways he
was closer to her than his own mother.

The landlady placed a cup of tea before Sherlock and said, “I expect you’ve come to get your special items that arrived in the post. I’ll be right back.”

Sherlock sipped his tea. There was something about her tea which always calmed him. Perhaps it was the way she always used loose leaf tea instead of the more convenient tea bags.

“Here they are,” she announced, coming back into the kitchen with a large box and a smaller, soft package. She set them down onto the table in front of them. “Large package, that one.”

“It’s the wok I ordered for Molly. I’m not sure when to give it to her though.”

“Why don’t you just put it on the stove and see how long it takes for her to notice it?” suggested Mrs. Hudson.

“I’ll probably do that. It’s a bit large to hide.”

“And what about your other package?” she asked impudently. Mrs. Hudson was certainly not one who exhibited a lot of tact. She definitely liked to know what was going on.

Sherlock shrugged. “I’ll check to make sure I got the right items and then put them away for the honeymoon.”

“My husband really liked it when I wore lingerie. Every time I wore that black lace he couldn’t keep his hands off me. We spent many a night...”

“Erm, yes,” interrupted Sherlock. He really didn’t need to know the intimate details of Mrs. Hudson’s youth. “I must get back upstairs. So much to do and not enough time in which to do it. Thank you for the tea and biscuits.” He stood up to leave, taking the box and the package. “Thanks again for keeping these for me. On impulse, he leaned down and gave the elderly woman a kiss on the cheek.

“Oh my,” she said, rather flustered at his display of affection, “you are most welcome. Are you going to watch the race later this afternoon?”

Sherlock had actually completely forgotten about it. Too much of his mind palace was occupied with Molly-related thoughts. “Actually, I won’t be home,” he said. “Were you planning to watch the television broadcast?”

“Most definitely, I even placed a little bet on that horse you found. Did you put any money on it?”

“No, but his owner offered me some of the prize money if he wins.”

“That sounds nice. I’m sure you have a lot of expenses with the wedding and all.”

“That is certainly true. But it is worth the expense to give Molly the type of wedding she deserves. I would have been quite happy eloping to Gretna Green. But apparently you can’t just go off and get married there these days anyway. You still need four weeks advance notice. Not that I was seriously considering it in the first place...”

“I think I know why you are in such a hurry to tie the knot,” said Mrs. Hudson, giving him a broad wink.

Sherlock felt a flush creeping up his neck as he backed away, spun around and headed back
upstairs, calling a goodbye over his shoulder.

Mrs. Hudson called after him, “Sherlock, your dry-cleaning is here too.”

He walked back downstairs, gave a quick thanks to his landlady and took his clothes back to the flat.

After hanging the clothes up, Sherlock went into the kitchen and deposited the packages on the table and sighed. It seemed the whole world was watching and waiting for him and Molly to fail in their resolve to wait to be together until they were officially married. He had to try harder. It would be rather embarrassing to have these high ideals and fail to stick to them. If only his traitorous body would not keep taking control of his higher intellect whenever he was within three feet of his adorable fiancée. Why did she have to be so good, so perfect in every way?

He opened up the big box and pulled out the wok. It was larger than he had expected. It would easily make enough food for several people. He put the wok on the stove.

Then he eyed the other package. He really didn’t want to open it. Those babydolls would undoubtedly turn his thoughts to what Molly would look like in them. Perhaps he should just give her the package when the time came? But no, that was silly. The packing slip would be inside and he had to check the contents for accuracy. Yes, a purely logical thing to do.

The detective opened the package and extracted the contents, drawing in his breath. The three garments were very...sheer. And the matching G-strings were just scraps of lace.

“Breathe, Sherlock, breathe,” he told himself. Scraps of fabric, nothing unusual. Just undergarments that Molly might like to try on for him. She would look exquisite with her form clad in those undergarments. Quickly he thrust those thoughts aside, doing the same to the lingerie, hiding them out of sight in the bag. They seemed to be what he had ordered. The right colours anyway. He would just trust that they were not damaged in any way. He went to the bedroom, pulled a suitcase from the bottom of the wardrobe and deposited the package inside. He would not look at them again until he was packing for the honeymoon.

Back in the sitting room Sherlock spied his violin in the corner and it made him realize he wanted to compose a piece for Molly. He had barely made any progress on it. If he did some work on it now, he would be ready to play for Eurus later.

Picking up the violin and bow, he tuned the fine instrument and began to play. He didn’t play a familiar tune but rather let the music come out from within. He played a sweet melody that represented his love for Molly, long, slow notes that depicted the balance she had brought to his life. Every few bars he stopped playing to notate what he was playing on some manuscript paper so he would remember it and be able to play it again. Perhaps he would play it for Eurus when it was finished.

Sherlock had been working on his labour of love for some time when his stomach rumbled. Glancing at his watch he saw it was twelve-thirty. In half an hour the car would be arriving to pick him up. He ate two crumpets with honey and drank a cup of tea. He sent a quick text to his fiancée to let her know he was leaving shortly for Sherrinford and reminding her he would be at the hospital before her shift ended. There was no response, so apparently she was having a busy day.

Violin case in hand, the detective was ready to go when the car arrived for him. The helicopter ride was uneventful as well. His parents had apparently already gone to Sherrinford earlier to spend time, in a manner of speaking, with their daughter.
The detective greeted his family when he reached the room he had been in previously to play his violin. “How is she doing today?” he asked Mycroft.

“The same. She hasn’t uttered a word to anyone since that syllable she spoke to you two weeks ago. We might as well not even be here.”

Sherlock heard a slight note of disappointment in his brother’s voice. His parents also looked drawn and unhappy.

“Well, let’s see if she will play with me again.” He got out his violin and began to play. After a few bars, she moved silently over to where her Stradivarius lay. She picked it up and joined him, the way she had done previously, blending the violins into a masterful symphony of sound. She smiled as she played and the detective felt compelled to continue playing for some time, to encourage her.

“You keep playing for me, Eurus,” he eventually said. She complied with a haunting melody that brought tears to her mother’s eyes and almost to Sherlock himself.

When the Holmes sister finished, her parents stood and applauded her efforts. Sherlock joined in an finally Mycroft as well.

Violet Holmes walked to the separating glass and put her palm on it saying, “That was beautiful, my daughter.”

For the first time Eurus walked over to the glass and placed her palm against it, as if to touch her mother. Just a simple gesture, yet it was a start.

Perhaps there was some hope for his sister to at least be somewhat rehabilitated, at least to a point where she could communicate again.

The Holmes family returned upstairs and went back to the director’s office. Instead of talking about Eurus, Violet Holmes decided to ask Sherlock about the following day’s outing.

“Should we meet you for lunch before the matinée?” she asked her younger son.

“I’m afraid that won’t be possible,” said Sherlock, inwardly glad he had a legitimate excuse. “Molly is only finishing work at noon, so we will probably just get something quick to eat rather than a proper meal. We will meet you at the theatre at one-thirty.”

“Then we can go out for an early dinner afterwards,” said his mother confidently.

Sherlock cringed inwardly. So much for getting out of spending extra time with his parents. Unfortunately he had no excuse to put forth about going out to dinner, unless he were to say he and Molly already had other plans. He had the feeling she would not approve of him lying to his parents.

“Very well,” he agreed. “But please don’t embarrass me in front of my fiancée about my shameful behaviour in neglecting to inform you of our wedding date. I am truly sorry. It was very remiss of me.”

A rare flash of intuition showed on his father’s face. “I get the feeling son, that you are more embarrassed by us, because we are ordinary and not the kind of people one would have expected to produce a family of geniuses.”

Sherlock didn’t know what to say. Was he embarrassed by his parents? Why did he feel so uncomfortable in their presence. He was lucky to have two parents. Molly only had one. He had
allowed himself to let down his guard when he had realized his true feelings for Molly, so why did he continue to hold his parents at arm’s length? Perhaps it was just habit. He had spent so much time feeling superior to his mother and father and the simple life they led. Yes, they had not been perfect parents. They had allowed him to forget he had a sister, but they undoubtedly felt it was for the best. They couldn’t have foreseen how repressing those memories would also have the effect of turning him into a man who abhorred sentiment, one who had turned to drugs for a time to escape from the emotionless reality of his own making.

These thoughts flashed through his mind in a matter of seconds and he resolved to make an effort to get closer to his mum and dad.

“I’m sorry,” he said sincerely. “I’m not embarrassed by you. It’s just, well, I’m not accustomed to expressing sentiment.”

“You seem to have no problem with Molly,” said his mother, a little tartly.

“It’s different. I love her and she has always been able to see the real me. She loves me despite my flaws. I guess I subconsciously pushed you away because I was ashamed not of you, but of myself.”

Mycroft spoke for the first time since they had entered the office. “Mummy, Daddy, I think I must accept some of the blame here. I have always shown disdain towards you as our parents. I was the one who looked down at you for not telling Sherlock the truth about Victor. I felt you did the wrong thing in allowing him to forget he had a sister, but I went along with the ruse. In protecting him from the truth I fear my coldness towards you may have rubbed off on him.”

Sherlock looked over at Mycroft in surprise. It was indeed true he had idolized his big brother for years, following him around like a puppy dog and trying to impress him. He had indeed adopted a cold, unfeeling attitude with his parents because he wanted to be like his brother.

“It seems to me there is plenty of blame to go around,” the detective said finally, thoughtfully. “I believe the best way to move forward is to forgive each other for our past mistakes.”

He turned to his brother. "Mycroft, I forgive you for keeping the secret. You’ve been a good big brother to me, despite the insults you’ve directed towards me in the past. You were the one who was always there for me, the one who forced me back into the real world when I started using drugs. I’d probably be dead if you hadn’t stepped in.”

Then turning to his parents. "Mummy, Daddy, I forgive you too. I know you did what you thought was best. You were not to blame for the man I became. I made my own choices, many of them to my own detriment. You can however take credit for instilling within me a strong sense of right and wrong. Without your guidance I would never have felt compelled to use my gifts for good.”

Tears were trickling down Violet Holmes’ face and even William was moved, a single tear sliding down his cheek. Mycroft too seemed affected by the words of his brother.

Mrs. Holmes rose from the chair in which she had been sitting and crossed to stand by Sherlock. She pulled him down and hugged him tightly. “Thank you, son. You have lifted a burden that has been on my heart for so long.”

The sleuth hugged her back. “I do love you, Mummy,” he declared, and looking over to his father, “you too, Daddy.”

“And we love you, and your brother and sister too, despite our past actions,” said William.
Mycroft nodded. “I feel the same,” he said finally.

It was quite the admission for him, Sherlock thought. His life had changed so much in the past few weeks. His broken family was healing at last.

“Well, brother mine, we should probably be leaving now if you want to get to the hospital to pick up your fiancée,” remarked the older Holmes sibling.

The Holmes family were presently on their way back to London. For the first time there was a feeling of warmth between them as a family. Sherlock found that now he was not dreading spending additional time with his parents the following day.

As Mycroft’s chauffeur drove him to the hospital, Sherlock checked his watch. He would be fifteen minutes early, which was fine with him. He thought he might sneak up on Molly just to see her reaction. He chuckled at the thought.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed reading about what happened at Sherrinford, and the way Sherlock showed his new Christian attitude by offering forgiveness.

Now a question for you - are you one to hold a grudge or are you quick to forgive? Do you try to always lead by example and let the light of Jesus shine within? I am always humbled by your responses and grateful for them.
When Molly arrived at the hospital it was to hear the unwelcome news that two of her colleagues had called in sick. That alone meant it would be a busy day.

There were two post-mortems scheduled which kept Molly busy for most of the day. She barely had time to grab a sandwich for lunch. Both of the autopsies were for cancer victims. Although both of the bodies were elderly women, Molly always found it more difficult to work on the bodies of those who succumbed to cancer. It brought back memories of her own father’s struggle with the disease. However, Molly was a professional who never let anyone see her fazed by anything. She always kept a clinical detachment mask in place, even during those horrible post-mortems of children who had suffered untimely deaths. Only in the quiet of her own home would she sometimes allow herself to cry for those lost souls.

Fortunately, she was not in a fragile emotional state today and was able to concentrate on her work. Without the assistance of the colleague who had called in sick, Molly worked alone. She didn’t even have time to wonder how Sherlock was doing, although she did hear his text alert go off at one point.

It was also quiet without Kaitlyn’s presence. She had been leaving for America early this morning and Molly hoped she would have a wonderful time with her boyfriend at her side while visiting with her relatives from the States.

The second autopsy completed, Molly had recorded the results and given instructions to have the body returned to the morgue. She had just finished giving her hands a thorough cleaning and was wiping them when a voice spoke in her ear saying, “Hi, beautiful,” and she jumped, startled.

Turning towards the man she loved, she swatted his arm playfully. “Why did you sneak up on me like that? I swear you have the stealth of a cat.”

He just shrugged. “You didn’t answer my text earlier, so you’ve obviously been busy.”

“Yeah, two post-mortems and nobody to help me with them. Two people called in sick today. How was your visit to Sherrinford?”

“Not bad. My sister played the violin with me for awhile although she still didn’t speak.”

“I’m sorry. I hope that one day you can get through to her. And how were your parents?” As she spoke, she inspected the lab to make sure there was nothing still lying about. Satisfied that things were in order she turned once again to Sherlock.

“We had a good talk afterwards. I realized I haven’t treated my parents very well in the past and I want to change my ways. Will you help me with that? Kick me under the table at dinner tomorrow
if I say something I shouldn’t?”

“I wouldn’t kick you, but I could squeeze your arm if you need me to. I really like your parents. They are not at all pretentious as I would have expected with sons like you and Mycroft, and a daughter like Eurus.”

She took off her lab coat and put it into a bin to be washed, then left the lab to retrieve her handbag, Sherlock following her close behind.

“Are you going to follow me to the toilet too?” She asked, trying to move past him. “I wanted to tidy myself up a bit before we head out to dinner.”

“Just waiting for my ‘hello’ kiss,” he responded, leaning towards her.

“Well, I was going to make you wait until I’d freshened up, but if you insist.” She wound her arms around his neck and kissed him, not a long one, but more than a peck, just enough to leave them both wanting more.

“You know,” Sherlock said huskily, “we still have a half hour and it only takes about ten minutes to walk to the restaurant.”

“Well if you let me get myself ready now, that will leave us ten minutes before we need to leave.”

“Oh, very well,” said the detective, stepping aside so she could pass him.

When she returned a few minutes later after straightening her ponytail and applying a little more lipstick, he was impatiently tapping his foot and looking at his watch. “Why did it take you so long?” he complained. Surely it doesn’t take more than five minutes to adjust a ponytail and put on lipstick? You took seven.”

“Um, Sherlock, sweetheart, do I really need to tell you I also had to empty my bladder?”

“Oh,” he said, looking a little ashamed of himself. “I’m sorry, I’m just anxious to spend time with you. I missed you, and I’ve been thinking about you throughout the day.”

“I would have been thinking about you too if I hadn’t been so busy, but guess what? I’m free now so why are we wasting time talking when you could be kissing me?”

Sherlock needed no further invitation. He kissed her for several minutes, deeply and thoroughly, making Molly’s heart race. It was just as well they had somewhere they needed to be or she would have been content to kiss him for much longer. As it was, she had to pull out her tube of lipstick to reapply it before they left the hospital. She also wiped her thumb across his beautiful mouth saying, “I guess I should not have put on the lipstick until after we had finished kissing. Your lips are definitely pinker than usual.”

“And now you are just making them tingle,” he said, pulling her hand away and wiping his mouth on his Belstaff. “Better?” he asked.

“Yes, except now you have lipstick on your coat.”

“Whatever, better there than on my lips. I’m going to have to buy you some lipstick that doesn’t come off when we are kissing.”

Molly chuckled and they left the hospital together.
True to his promise, Sherlock held her hand, interlocking their fingers, and they walked to the Indian restaurant.

Their timing was perfect. They entered the restaurant to see that John and Kayla were waiting to be seated.

Kayla noticed Molly first and greeted her friend with a hug. “It’s good to see you. I guess your ankle must be better. I heard about your fall last Sunday.”

“It was just a sprain and Sherlock took good care of me, didn’t he, John?”

“He most certainly did. I was quite surprised to discover my old friend was so knowledgeable about sprains.”

Sherlock flushed a little. “I never had cause to use that knowledge in front of you.”

The waitress showed the foursome to a table and gave them menus. The two couples looked at the extensive menu and placed their orders. John indicated a bottle of wine from the menu and said, “I’d like that too.” Then he looked at his friend. “This is my treat.” Sherlock was about to expostulate, but the doctor held up his hand. “I invited you and Molly,” he told the sleuth firmly.

“I should be the one paying, John,” began Kayla. “It was my suggestion that you invite them.”

“Nonsense,” John told her, giving her a soft glance that Molly did not fail to observe. “It was a good idea. I haven’t actually spent much time with Sherlock and Molly together since they became engaged, so this is a good opportunity to see how things are going.”

“I’m very glad to have him home,” said the pathologist, smiling at Sherlock, who smiled back. They were sitting together, with John and Kayla across from them, and Sherlock took her hand in his, giving it a gentle squeeze as she spoke.

“I saw the broadcast on TV,” commented Kayla. “I’m glad the horse was found safe and sound. Isn’t the race today?”

“Yes. Actually it has probably already happened,” the sleuth said. “I guess they will mention it on the news tonight, seeing as the whole thing was such a big deal.”

“Well, I hope that horse won, after you went to such trouble to find him,” smiled Kayla, but she wasn’t looking at Sherlock as she spoke, she was looking at John.

The doctor said honestly, “I had nothing to do with it. I was just there for moral support, as usual.”

"You did make some useful observations too, like the accidentally self-inflicted wound," pointed out the sleuth.

The waitress poured wine into each of the foursome’s glasses and left the bottle on the table for them. As they waited for their meals some light conversation ensued.

"You must be looking forward to the school holidays. I am glad you will be free around the time of our wedding," Sherlock commented to Kayla.

"Oh definitely. It will give me a chance to work on getting things done around my house too, afterwards. Did Molly tell you I was a teacher?"

"I didn’t say a word," said his fiancée. "Sherlock is particularly good at deducing things. That's
why he's such a wonderful detective." She flashed a smile at the handsome man sitting next to her.

"It was just some observations I made when I met you at Molly's flat. I presume you teach young children as well?"

"That's also true. You figured all that out from one meeting?"

"Not at all. The school teacher part, yes. John told me you had an instant connection with Rosie when you met, so I deduced you are very comfortable with young children. You also have a slight smell of disinfectant about you, and I detect a little speck of paint on your blouse."

Kayla turned to John, seeming to not have paid attention to his observational skills, but just about what he had said about John. "You talked to Sherlock about me?" she asked, looking quite pleased.

Molly could see John’s slight flush as he answered, "Ah yes, your name came up in conversation." By the way John said the words Molly could tell her name had come up unexpectedly. She remembered Sherlock saying he had deduced that John was seeing Kayla and resolved to ask later how it had come about.

Kayla really was a sweet soul. Not only did she teach young children, she also taught them at Sunday School. Molly had often wondered why Kayla was still single. She supposed it was because her friend was not the type to actively pursue a relationship and was naturally shy. She was glad she had encouraged the brunette to text John.

Kayla was more than just a school teacher though. She had been raised in a household with parents who were police officers and had toyed with the idea of becoming one herself. After her father was wounded in the line of duty, she had decided against it. Having a natural affinity for young children, she had chosen that path instead.

After the meals were brought, they ate with minimal conversation. When Molly wasn’t gazing into the eyes of the man she loved, she looked across to the other couple who seemed similarly absorbed with one another. Her friend looked so happy, and John seemed more relaxed than he had been since Mary’s death. Yes, the pathologist decided. There was a definite spark between those two.

After John had paid for the meal, he invited Molly and Sherlock to come back to his flat with him and Kayla, who was going to say hello to Rosie. Apparently Harry was on babysitting duty again.

Sherlock glanced at Molly who gave her head a slight shake. She wanted to spend some time alone with her fiancé. She thought Kayla would probably prefer some alone time with John as well.

“Regrettably, we shall have to decline,” said the detective. We have had quite a long day. Speaking of Rosie though, I wanted to let you know I ordered a cot bed from Amazon today and it should arrive on Monday."

“That’s great,” said his friend. “Once it comes do you want me to help you put it together?"

The detective waved dismissively. “It can’t be too hard. I think I can follow a few instructions on where to put the screws to set it up correctly.”

“Well, if you’re sure. If you run into trouble, you can always text me.”

“Trust me, John, it will be fine.”

After John and Kayla left to go to the doctor’s car, which he had driven into the city, Sherlock
hailed a taxi to take him and Molly back to Baker Street.

As they rode home, Molly rested her head against Sherlock’s shoulder. It had been a nice dinner, but the combination of the long day and a couple glasses of wine were making her rather sleepy.

Once home, Molly went to the kitchen to make some tea for them. She was astonished to discover a huge wok sitting on the stovetop. “Where on earth did this come from?” she wondered aloud.

Sherlock, who had followed her into the kitchen said, “I bought it for you. You mentioned the other day that it would be nice to have a wok. I thought it would be a nice gesture.”

“You are such a darling!” Molly threw her arms around her fiancé and kissed him fervently.

Sherlock returned her kiss, saying with a grin afterwards, “Obviously I need to buy things for you often, if you thank me with such enthusiasm each time. Forget the tea. I’m not thirsty anyway.”

He led his fiancée into the sitting room and tuned the television to a local channel.

“I might as well find out whether I’m going to get that extra £1000,” he said as he sat on the sofa and put his feet on the coffee table after removing his shoes. Molly curled up beside him, eyes drooping as she struggled to stay awake.

Before long a news report came along about the day’s racing events. Sherlock gently nudged Molly, who jerked to alertness and she heard,

“...and if you missed the big race today, Silver Blaze, the recently recovered racehorse who has been in the news lately had a big win, finishing a full two lengths ahead of Dark Matter.”

Molly clapped her hands at the news. “He won!” she exclaimed.

“I guess I’ll be getting a nice cheque after all,” remarked her fiancé. “What should we do with the extra money? Perhaps I’ll buy you some jewellery. We need to replace all those fake gems in your jewellery box.”

“Hey, it was one of those fake gem earrings that led you to find me when..” She broke off suddenly, reminded of the trauma of that evening not so long ago.

The detective squeezed her hand. “I’m sorry you had to go through that. But one good thing came out of it.”

“You became a Christian,” she smiled softly at him. “If that was what it took to make you a true believer, it was worth it.”

Sherlock put his arms around her and kissed her gently. “You are the most unselfish person I’ve ever met.”

“That’s only because you haven’t encountered a lot of Christians. There’s this book I read by a Christian author Max Lucado called “Just Like Jesus.” It encourages us to live that way. Jesus was the most humble person who ever lived. He never sought glory for what he did. He lived for others, and I try to be that way too, not that I can even come close to His example. You exhibit a lot of unselfish qualities yourself. You’ve had to deal with becoming somewhat of a celebrity due to your profession, but you don’t seek glory for yourself. You solve crimes because you have a desire to do good for others.”

“I have to give credit to my parents for that. They really took great care in teaching me how to
discern what was right and just.”

“T’m glad you are saying something positive about your parents. They seem like lovely people, and I’m looking forward to seeing them tomorrow. I think I might ask them to tell me some stories about what you were like growing up.”

Her fiancé groaned. “Oh, don’t get them started. Mummy will take pleasure in dredging up every embarrassing thing I did.”

“Thanks for telling me that. Now I will definitely be asking,” said Molly mischievously. “Little minx.”

He kissed her again, lingeringly. His lips moved from her mouth to travel along her jawline and to the pulse at her throat which sped up at the touch as always. The feel of his lips on her skin was always so exquisite, she thought dazedly.

“Oh, Molly,” murmured the detective, “your skin is so soft. It makes me want to kiss every part of your beautiful body.”

“You...you shouldn’t say things like that,” she said breathlessly. “It will just lead us down a path we shouldn’t tread right now.”

Sherlock sighed and withdrew a little from her. “I know you’re right, my darling. It is the truth though, and one day I am going to do it, kiss you everywhere I mean.”

The pathologist felt herself shiver with anticipation at the thought. “Something I will look forward to,” she said, taking a deep breath and exhaling slowly. “For now though, I think I had better hop into the shower and get ready for bed. It has been a long day and I have an early start tomorrow. Do you...do you think you’ll go to church tomorrow?”

“I don’t know,” replied Sherlock slowly. “I’m a little hesitant to go without you, but I’ll see how I feel in the morning.”

“That’s fine,” she said, pressing a kiss to his cheek. “I wouldn’t want you to feel uncomfortable, but at least you know a couple people now. If you do decide to go, you could always sit by Kayla.”

“Maybe.”

Molly headed off for her shower then. She really was getting tired. The warm spray of water on her body soothed her. Afterward she went straight to the bedroom and got her devotional out. She was a couple days behind again. She heard Sherlock taking his turn in the shower. Taking the opportunity, she quickly pulled out her diary and wrote in it, then returned it to the drawer and began to read her devotional.

Molly replaced her “Our Daily Bread” on the night stand just as her fiancé entered the bedroom, fresh from the shower. His chest still had a few drops of water on it, probably from his wet hair. For some reason, his hair looked wetter than usual.

Sherlock came over to her side of the bed and sat on the edge. She thought he was going to kiss her, but to her shock he instead shook his head from side to side, spraying her with the water that had been trapped in his curls.

“Sherlock!” she shrieked as the cold water made contact with her skin. “What was that for?”

“Well,” said the detective with a hint of laughter in his voice, “you seem to have this obsession with my curls, so I thought I’d show you what a pain they can be to manage.”
His hair was certainly unruly, but oh, did he look even more adorable with it rioting around his head. “I think your curls are even more beautiful then ever,” she said, tugging at one particularly springy one.

He groaned. “Don’t call them beautiful. Men are not beautiful, women are beautiful.”

“But you are beautiful,” Molly insisted. “You’re more than just handsome. Your hair makes you look like a dark angel.”

“You are not helping matters. I think I need a haircut, maybe get it cut short to get rid of the curls.”

“Don’t you dare! The curls are part of your charm. The way they come down over your forehead, oh it makes me hot all over.”

“Well then,” he said gravely. “If they make you hot all over I suppose I must keep them after all.” He pouted then. “I suppose you wouldn’t love me if I didn’t have the damn curls.”

“Of course I’d still love you. My love for you is so much more than physical. You know we are connected on an intellectual and spiritual level as well. I just happen to think your hair is one of your most impressive physical characteristics. That is why I hate that silly hat so much, it hides your crowning glory. Anyway, I like running my fingers through your curls.” She reached up and tugged on another curl so he was compelled to lean towards her. “Now kiss me and then go dry your hair a bit so you don’t catch a cold from your wet hair.”

He complied, kissing her thoroughly before returning to the bathroom briefly. When he came back, his hair was only slightly damp. “You don’t really believe that old wives tale about catching a cold with wet hair, do you?

“Of course not, but I do think it would be a little uncomfortable if you got your pillow all wet.”

The detective slipped into bed beside her and took her in his arms. “Happy now?” he asked.

“Mhmm,” she murmured snuggling against him. “Very happy,” she managed to get out just before he claimed her lips with his in a most satisfying, long goodnight kiss. Then they slept, still wrapped in each other’s arms.

Chapter End Notes

This was a more fun, fluffy chapter. What did you think about the way John’s relationship is developing with Kayla? I hope it is coming off as believable that he could find someone else. He needs love, just like anyone else.

Did you enjoy the little curls conversation? I love writing stuff about Sherlock’s curls because I think that is what makes him so gorgeous (and apparently, so does Molly haha).
Off to Church Again - Sherlock (Sunday)

Chapter Summary

Sherlock learns some more truths about salvation.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Off to Church Again - Sherlock (Sunday). acts

When Molly’s alarm went off soon after six, Sherlock woke up enough to kiss her before she got out of bed. He settled back to sleep immediately, only waking a couple hours later.

He was still undecided about going to church. He had a time still before he would have to leave. After dressing and eating some breakfast, the detective made himself a cup of coffee and decided to do some more Bible reading. It had been a few days since he had looked at hit. A sort search revealed Molly’s Bible in the top drawer of her bedside table. He took it out and found the page he had bookmarked in Acts.

After reading, Sherlock had the strong feeling he should attend the church service, even though he wouldn’t have Molly with him. He decided he would take Molly’s advice and seek out Kayla when he got to church.

The detective sent his fiancée a text to let her know he was going to church and would stop by the hospital afterwards. He wasn’t sure when the service would let out, so wanted to make sure she was aware that he might be late.

When Sherlock arrived at church he immediately sought out Kayla. He saw her almost immediately and then his mouth dropped open in surprise. She wasn’t alone. Standing with her was a man holding a baby in his arms. He shook his head in amazement. What was John doing here? Wasn’t he Catholic? Things must be moving faster than he thought if John was willing to accompany Kayla to church. Oh well, he supposed it was no more amazing than he himself attending church for the first time with Molly.

He walked up to them with a casual, “Hi John, hi Kayla,” as if this were the most normal thing in the world that they would see each other at church.

“Sherlock,” John nodded, looking slightly embarrassed.

“Sherlock, Molly texted me you would be coming this morning while she’s at work. Would you like to sit with us?”

“I would, thank you,” responded the sleuth.

Kayla led them to a pew. Sherlock went in first, then Kayla and finally John, who sat with Rosie on his knee.
As soon as church began, Rosie started to whimper and Sherlock heard Kayla ask John, “may I take her?”

At John’s nod of assent, Kayla took the baby from his arms and rocked her gently, while she made soothing sounds. The sleuth watched in fascination. The brunette was a natural. Before long little Rosamund had dropped off to sleep.

Kayla remained seated with the baby as the man on either side of her stood and resumed their seats along with the rest of the congregation at the appropriate times.

Pastor Briggs’ sermon that day was on a parable which he read out to the congregation first.

Matthew 25:1-13

(1) “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. (2) Five of them were foolish and five were wise. (3) The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. (4) The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. (5) The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. (6) “At midnight the cry rang out: Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him! (7) “Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. (8) The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ (9) ‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ (10) “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. (11) “Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’ (12) “But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’ (13) “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”

The Pastor finished the reading and said, “When we read this passage, do you wonder at the selfishness of the wise virgins who refused to share their oil with the others who had not thought to bring extra?” There were several murmurs of agreement from the congregation. Sherlock wondered at that. It did seem a strange thing. Weren’t Christians taught to be unselfish and to share what they had?

“This is what I have to tell you about this passage,” the pastor continued. “This passage is not about sharing something with someone else. It is about being prepared. We are to be prepared for when Christ returns.”

He looked at one of the congregants and said, “George, do you know Jesus as your Saviour?”

“I do,” responded the man confidently.

“So how about we say that Lisa here is saved because of your faith. You are sharing it, right?”

There were general murmurs of disagreement around the church and some “no’s.”

“What was that you said George?” asked Pastor Briggs, returning his gaze to the first man again.

“I said you can’t share your salvation with someone else. They have to accept it for themselves.”

“Exactly,” nodded the pastor with a smile.

Sherlock was fascinated by the flow of the sermon and the interactive way it was being done. He
had never known that you could have a dialogue with the pastor during a sermon. This was
definitely an unusual church. He glanced over at John, who was holding Kayla’s hand lightly in
his, and wondered if His friend was experiencing the same surprise he was. Apparently these type
of sermons were no stranger to Kayla who had chimed in with her own “no” a minute earlier.

Pastor Briggs continued to speak and Sherlock brought his attention back to the subject at hand.
“This is the true meaning of that parable. Jesus is, of course, the bridegroom. The wise virgins
represent those who know Him as Saviour and Lord, who are ready for his return. The foolish
virgins represent the rest of the world, those who deny Christ and who will be locked out of the
gates of heaven." He paused, then said clearly,

“You only get one shot at this, folks. You only have one life to live and it’s up to you to make the
choice - follow Christ or deny him. There is no in-between.”

The Pastor’s voice rose in intensity as people around began to say “amen” in response to the
preacher’s words.

Sherlock glanced once more at his friend. John looked vaguely uncomfortable, but he was still
holding Kayla’s hand. He wondered how anyone could fail to be moved by the pastor’s words.
They had such a ring of truth to them, and he was grateful that he had accepted the truth of Jesus as
Saviour two weeks earlier.

As the minister wound up his sermon, the detective wished Molly had been there with him, but he
felt very glad that he had listened to that inner voice and come to church.

When the service was over, Sherlock spent some time talking with John and Kayla. Rosie had
woken and he held her for a few minutes. She was so precious, he thought. How long would it be
before he and Molly had their own baby to love? He wondered too if his baby would pull on his
curls the way Rosie liked to do.

He blew raspberries on Rosie's tummy, trying to distract her from his hair, and she shrieked with
laughter.

"Getting in some practice for fatherhood there, eh?" questioned his friend with a grin.

Sherlock didn't deny it. His paternal instincts were definitely kicking in. He just smiled at his
friend. He was having so much fun he lost track of time.

When he checked his watch he noticed to his chagrin that it was almost a quarter to twelve. "Oops,
I'm running late to meet Molly, sorry," he said, returning Rosie to her father's arms. "I'll see you
later."

At the kerb, the sleuth hailed a taxi and made his way to the hospital. He was going to be a few
minutes late so he shot off a quick text to Molly after he settled in his seat and she responded with
an “Okay.” It was an unusually short response from her, but he assumed she was just busy.

It was only five minutes past the hour when the detective arrived at St. Bart’s. He took the elevator
up to her floor and sought out his fiancée. She wasn’t in the lab so he decided to check the locker
room.

Molly was sitting on a bench with her head in her hands. She lifted her head at his approach. Her
eyes were red and there were tear stains on her cheeks.

The detective gathered her in his arms and held her. “What’s wrong?”
“I’m sure you can deduce it,” sniffled his fiancée.

“A tough post-mortem. Probably a child or an infant.”

“Yes. As soon as I came in this morning I saw I was scheduled to do a post-mortem on a two year old little girl. Her parents brought her in last night after she suffered a seizure. They were under the impression she had epilepsy. I don’t know how though, whether it was a misdiagnosis or just their own opinion. Anyway, the poor little darling had a massive seizure during the night and didn’t survive.” Fresh tears ran down the pathologist’s cheeks.

Sherlock continued to hold her, rubbing her back in a circular motion as she went on. “Anyway, it wasn’t epilepsy, it was a brain tumour. I keep wondering why she had to die. How would God allow it to happen?”

"Sweetheart,” Sherlock said gently, “you have told me before that things happen for a reason. God isn’t to blame for what happened. And she is with God now, isn’t she?”

“I do believe that, and I know you’re right. Sometimes it’s so hard though, acting strong in front of everyone, acting like I am unmoved by death in general.” She looked up at her fiancé. “I’m not, you know, unmoved that is. Yes, I can accept that death comes for us all and usually it isn’t too difficult to deal with it in a practical manner. It’s just...with these little ones...” She was unable to finish.

“Sweetheart, you have such a soft heart. Of course it hurts you. Just try to remember that you are doing something good for those parents anytime you autopsy a little one to find out why they died. You are giving them some sort of closure.”

“I guess so. I...I just had a hard time this morning. I kept looking at that little girl and thinking how horrible it would be if we had a daughter who died so young.”

“Molly, you’re getting a bit ahead of yourself. Heck, we haven’t even made love yet.”

Molly gave him a slightly embarrassed smile. “I know, and I’m being silly. I’ll be okay. We should get going anyway if we want some lunch before the matinee."

The detective peered at her in concern. “Are you sure? I can call Mummy and let her know you aren’t feeling well.”

“No, of course you mustn’t do that. I really will be okay. It definitely helps having you here to comfort me. I never had anyone before to turn to after I had to do a post-mortem on a child.”

Sherlock turned her face to his and kissed her gently. “You never have to be alone again. I will always be here for you, to comfort you when you are sad, to just be there when you need me for anything.”

His fiancée gave a half smile. “Do you remember when I told you in the lab a few years ago that if there was anything you needed, you could have me?”

“I remember every one of those conversations, Molly, because they meant something to me. I also remember what an arse I was to you when I asked what I could need from you. Turns out you were the exact thing I needed.” He kissed her again, deeply this time, savouring the feel of her sweet lips.

A slight cough alerted them to the fact they were not alone. Mike Stamford stood there with an amused look on his face. “Don’t you have somewhere to be, Molly? I didn’t come in to take over
the rest of your shift just so you could snog your fiancé.”

Molly blushed. “Sherlock was just comforting me. I had a pretty tough time this morning. Post-mortem on a two year old girl.”

“Oh, I’m sorry, Molly. In that case I’m glad you have the rest of the day off.”

“We do need to get going,” the detective said. "We have a matinee to get to, and we need some lunch first. Thanks for covering for Molly, Mike.”

“Hey, no problem. Just remember you owe me a favour if I ever need the services of a consulting detective.”

Sherlock chuckled. “Duly noted.” Holding his arm out for Molly, she took it and he escorted his beloved fiancée out of the hospital.

There was a diner nearby and they both ordered sandwiches which could be made quickly.

After the simple meal, the sleuth hailed a taxi to take them to the theatre.

Chapter End Notes

The sermon from this chapter was inspired by my own pastor's sermon on the subject. The sermon contained information gleaned from my pastor's sermon, as well as my own thoughts on the parable. What did you think of it?

What did you think of John attending church as well?

I do believe we have to take responsibility for our own salvation. We can pray for others, that their hearts will be opened and softened to the Holy Spirit, but they must make the decision for themselves. As Christians, our job is to merely plant the seeds and let Jesus water them so they will bear fruit. I hope you see that in my writing.
Chapter Summary

Sherlock and Molly go to the theatre. Sherlock is embarrassed by his parents' inappropriate talk.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

As they rode in the taxi towards the theatre, Molly was very glad to have Sherlock's arm around her. This really was the first time anyone had been there to provide support for her after a difficult day at work. It was a wonderful feeling and she felt her fiancé kiss the top of her head as she leaned against his shoulder.

"So, how was church?" she asked.

"I took your advice and looked for Kayla when I got there. You are not going to believe this."

Molly turned her head to gaze into Sherlock's face. "Believe what?"

"Kayla was not alone."

"You mean.."

"Yes, John and Rosie were with her."

Molly clapped her hands to her mouth in astonished. "Oh my gosh, that's amazing!"

"No more amazing than you convincing me to go to church with you the first time."

"I wonder if she had to make some sort of bargain, the way I did with you," mused Molly.

"That was only the first time, after that I went because I wanted to."

"I know, and I'm so proud of you for going today without me."

"I'm very glad I did, and not just because I got to sit with my best friend, my goddaughter and Kayla. I got to hear an extremely interesting sermon."

"I'm a little envious you got to see Rosie when I didn't."

"Don't be, I didn't even get to hold her until after church was finished. When she started to fuss at the beginning of the church service, Kayla took her from John and rocked her to sleep. She only woke at the end, and when I held her she was as obsessed with my hair as you are. Females!"

He thrust out his lower lip in a pout that made Molly want to immediately kiss him. So she did, lightly, before asking, "what was this interesting sermon about?"

"It was about the ten virgins, you know the ones waiting for the bridegroom. There were five wise ones and five foolish ones."
Molly nodded, "I'm very familiar with that parable. It's all about how five of them were prepared and five weren't."

"That's right. Pastor Briggs explained about how we need to be ready for when Jesus returns, and that we are responsible for our own salvation. Very illuminating."

"I wonder what John thought about it," remarked Molly thoughtfully.

"I thought he looked a little uncomfortable. I don't think he is quite as ready as I was to really embrace Christianity."

"Well, we can at least pray about it. I wonder how things went for John and Kayla last night after dinner?"

"Obviously pretty well if your friend managed to get mine to church," he chuckled. "Looks like we've arrived," he pointed out unnecessarily as the cab slowed to a stop in front of the theatre.

Sherlock paid the driver and the couple got out of the cab, then made their way to the box office to retrieve the tickets Mycroft had purchased for them. As they stood waiting, a contralto voice said, "Sherlock, Molly, I see you made it here before us. Our taxi ran into a bit of traffic on the way."

Molly turned around to see the sparkling eyes of her future mother-in-law looking at her and Sherlock. To Molly's surprise, Sherlock bent to kiss his mother on her cheek before saying, "Hi, Mummy; hi, Daddy." She could see there was a new closeness between the family, as Sherlock had told her the evening before. It was a lovely thing to see.

The lady at the box office handed them an envelope with the tickets and Sherlock opened it. "Looks like Mycroft pulled some strings as usual. These are very good tickets. Row C, centre."

"Should we go in already?" asked Violet Holmes.

Sherlock checked his watch. "We might as well, it's fifteen minutes till curtain."

When they got to their row, William went in first, followed by his wife. Sherlock motioned Molly to go in next while he took the fourth seat.

After they were seated, the Holmes matriarch asked Molly, "How are your wedding plans going, dear?"

"Pretty well. We need to buy some stamps tomorrow and then we will be mailing out the invitations."

"I'm sure Sherlock told you I was a little cross with him for telling the media the wedding date before he told his parents." There was a note of disappointment in her voice.

"I'm so sorry Mrs. Holmes, it was not his intention to keep you in the dark. We've just been so busy with things, and he wasn't thinking about the fact that you didn't know," defended the pathologist.

"I know, dear, and I have forgiven him. Don't forget to call me Violet, I am going to be your mother-in-law soon, and you will also be Mrs. Holmes."

"I'm looking forward to it," said Molly with a smile, looking over at her fiancé who was pretending to study his programme. By the quick glance he darted at her, she knew he had been listening intently.
When the musical started, Molly focussed her attention on the stage. This was very different from opera. For one thing, there was a lot of speaking between the songs, and it was all in English. In her opinion the singing was very good, but definitely not of the calibre of those who sang opera. The focus with a musical was definitely more on the acting. The lead actress made a very believable Maria, and she was certainly the one who had the best voice. The children were actually quite impressive for their ages as well.

During the intermission, the Holmes parents were content to stay in their seats.

"I need to get up and stretch my legs," Sherlock said.

"I'll come with you. I need to use the loo anyway."

As they made their way to the foyer, Molly asked, "So, what do you think?"

"I think the seats need more leg room," said Sherlock, deliberately misinterpreting the question.

She poked him. "Be serious!"

"I am serious," he deadpanned. "That's why I need to stretch my legs." At Molly's look of exasperation, he answered her real question, "It's pretty good, I guess. I think the lady playing Maria has a fine voice. I do like listening to the orchestra more than anything."

"Of course you would, with you being such a proficient violinist yourself." Spying the ladies toilets, Molly said, "I'll be right back."

When she exited, it was to see Sherlock surrounded by a small group of people. A man was saying quite audibly,

"Thank you for finding that horse, Mr. Holmes. I had a large amount of money placed on him to win, so I made some good money, thanks to you."

Other people were trying to talk to the detective as well. When he saw Molly standing back shyly, he excused himself with, "I'm sorry, I see my fiancée, and we must be getting back to our seats now." He walked over to Molly and took her hand.

"Thank goodness you got back when you did. Those people were like vultures descending on me," he confided as they made their way back to their seats.

"Well, that's what happens when you are a celebrity," grinned Molly.

The rest of the musical seemed to fly by. Sherlock had continued to hold her hand for the rest of the show, occasionally stroking his thumb across Molly's palm, which made her tingle.

After the show, the Holmes parents stood in the foyer with the younger couple and discussed where to go for an early dinner.

In the end, they selected a nearby restaurant within easy walking distance. The place was not crowded fortunately, as it was a little early for the evening rush.

As they made their dinner choices, Sherlock said, "I will be paying the bill of course. I made a little money from that racehorse."

"You placed a bet on that Silver Blaze, did you?" asked Mr. Holmes.

"Not at all," assured his son. "The horse's owner promised me some of the dividends if his horse
"That was nice of the man," commented Violet. "Thank you for offering to pay for our meal, but it isn't necessary. You have many wedding expenses."

"Mummy, I think I can afford to pay for a meal for you. Besides, Mycroft bought our tickets. As far as I know, he isn't asking for me to reimburse him."

"I would certainly hope not," sniffed his mother. "Your brother is probably one of the wealthiest men in England with that fancy government job of his."

They all laughed. It was most likely true.

"Thank you, Sherlock, for coming with us to see the show," Violet told her son. "Did you enjoy it?"

"It was more pleasant than I expected. Those seven children were a bit of a handful at the beginning."

"Ha!" exclaimed Molly. "And you thought seven was a good number for children. Maybe now you can see how difficult that would be."

Sherlock looked highly embarrassed as his mother said, "You thought to have seven children? Didn't you say two or three the evening we went to the opera? Heavens, I want to be a grandma, but even I wouldn't presume to encourage your fiancée to have so many."

"It was just a thought," he mumbled.

"Sherlock seems to think I will just keep popping them out until we have at least one of each," confided Molly to her future mother-in-law with a huge grin.

"Molly, must you share all our private conversations?" huffed her fiancé indignantly.

The two women just laughed at his distress.

Mr. Holmes came to his son's rescue with a surprising comment. "Never you mind, son. I said the same to your mother. She would have been content with you and your brother. I was the one who insisted we have a daughter as well. So, like father, like son."

Sherlock looked over to his father with a gratified smile and said, "Well, that is something I never deduced."

"Nor should it have been," said his mother tartly. "Your father can be very persuasive when he wants to be." She gave her husband a broad wink.

Sherlock looked embarrassed again as he said in a shocked voice, "Mummy, don't say things like that. You are my parents, for God's sake! I do not want to hear that..that stuff coming from you. I prefer to think that a stork brought me to you one night."

Everyone at the table except the mortified sleuth burst out laughing.

"You know, dear," said Violet to Molly at one point, "I never did see your engagement ring. Will you show me?"

"Of course." Molly extended her hand proudly. The heart-shaped diamond sparkled on her finger.

"Oh, it's simply lovely," enthused the older woman. Looking over at her son, she asked, "Did you
pick it out all by yourself?"

"Mummy, I am not a child. Of course I did. I actually picked the stone and they then fashioned the ring for it."

"I'm impressed," put in the usually quiet William. "You certainly chose a lovely one."

Molly beamed. "I love that it is a heart. It's a little bit unusual."

"You have my heart, Molly. It was appropriate."

Violet Holmes gazed at her son. By the amazed expression on her face, Molly could tell the woman was still getting used to hearing her son speak in such a gallant fashion. "Your son has changed," she told her future mother-in-law. "He really is the man I always knew he could be, deep down inside."

"You're good for him, Molly" said the older woman, using her first name for once.

"He's good for me too." She gave a loving smile to the man who would soon be her husband.

After their dinner, the Holmes parents prepared to make their goodbyes. They were heading back to Mycroft's for the night, and he would take them to the train station in the morning.

Molly almost laughed out loud at the thought of Mycroft having his parents stay with him. He was probably glad he had managed to pawn them off on Sherlock for most of the day.

"Sherlock, dearest, please keep in touch with us," said Violet. "We will probably head to London every other weekend as your wedding gets closer." To Molly she said, "If there is anything you need help with, let me know." She gave both Molly and her son a hug goodbye, as did William.

"Goodbye, son. Take good care of your fiancée," he said, adding, to Molly's amusement, "she's almost as hot as your mother."

"Indeed," agreed Sherlock gravely, darting a glance at Molly. She grinned at him. Sherlock's father was so sweet. It was no wonder his younger son took after him, now that his own true nature had been restored.

After the Holmes parents had left, Sherlock hailed a taxi and they were soon back home.

Once inside, Sherlock said, as he took off his coat and helped Molly off with hers, "Well, I have to admit, that was probably the most pleasant experience I've had with my parents since I've been an adult."

"I think your parents are perfectly lovely. Your dad is so sweet. He.." a shadow crossed her face for a moment, "he reminds me of my own dad. My dad was totally besotted with my mum, and he was quiet, like your dad. You're very fortunate to still have both of your parents."

Sherlock led her over to the sofa and they sat down. "You told me your dad got sick when you were seventeen, and that he was gone five months after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, right?"

"That's right," she affirmed.

"Your talk about my dad, was that prompted perhaps because the anniversary of your dad's death is coming soon?"
Molly was amazed at Sherlock's perceptiveness, not that she should be. She knew how incredibly clever he was, but this seemed to be beyond his usual observation scope. "As a matter of fact, next week Wednesday will be nineteen years he has been gone."

"And do you...do you mark the occasion somehow each year? Like visit his grave or some such thing?"

Molly shook her head. "There is no grave. He was cremated. He never wanted anyone to spend their life mourning him. He told me shortly before he died that he wanted people to remember him as he was before he got sick, remember the good times. He also said he knew he'd be going to a better place and that he'd be watching over me from heaven." Molly's voice broke on the last word and tears slipped down her cheeks.

Sherlock put a comforting arm around her. "I'm sorry, my darling. I didn't mean to make you cry."

Molly smiled through her tears. "It's okay. Sometimes crying is cathartic. There is always going to be that sense of loss, even though I know in my heart that he is with God. I just wanted you to understand, to appreciate your parents while you still have them. You just never know how long they will be around."

"You're absolutely right. I have taken my parents for granted. I shall make a better attempt at appreciating them, unless they embarrass me again with innuendo."

His words had the desired effect, and Molly laughed out loud. "Who would have thought you were such a prude? You, who are so logical and matter-of-fact about things. I would have thought you to be the last person to be alarmed by sex."

"Sex does not alarm me, it is just the thought of my own parents performing the act," he said a little stiffly. "With you, on the other hand, I look forward to it very much."

With that, he tilted Molly's face towards his and pressed his lips to hers.

She sighed into his mouth and wrapped her arms around him. They hadn't kissed in hours and it was heavenly.

Sherlock deepened the kiss and she responded, surrendering to the sensations that washed over her. How had he learned to kiss so well? She had had a couple short-term boyfriends, and of course there had been Tom, but none of them had made her feel this way. She felt cherished, adored, when Sherlock kissed her.

After a few minutes, she pulled away slightly and asked, "Sherlock, you are exceptionally good at kissing. Did you research how to do it so well?"

Sherlock sounded a little hurt as he replied, "No, Molly. I may have done a little research about flirting, but I did not want another person describing the correct way to kiss someone. I thought I would just follow my instincts."

Molly rubbed her nose against his. "I'm sorry I asked. It's just, you are so clinical about things sometimes with your work, and your kisses are so amazing that it is hard to believe you didn't either research it or practice on someone else."

"I assure you, I have done neither. The only other woman I've ever kissed was Janine, as I told you, and those were nothing like the ones I share with you."

Molly sighed happily. "I feel rather selfish that I am the only one to experience the magic of your
He smiled. "So, you think I measure up to the kisses from your other boyfriends and that Tom fellow?"

"There is no comparison, honey. You are unequivocally head and shoulders above the rest. Not that I've had a slew of boyfriends either, ably a couple. So, may I have another demonstration of your kissing prowess?"

Sherlock was only too happy to comply, lavishing her with sweet kisses that left them both breathing hard and longing for more.

"If you think my kissing is good, just wait till we take it to the next level," murmured her fiancé, as he gazed at her with heavy-lidded eyes. She saw the desire in them that matched her own, dilated with passion.

Forcing out a laugh to break the sexual tension between them, Molly asked, "How do you know you'll be proficient at er, those other things, when you have never been with a woman?"

He gave her a sultry look. "I told you I never researched kissing. I did not say I never researched those 'other' things to which you are referring."

Molly gasped. "You seriously researched sex?"

Sherlock shrugged lazily. "Not recently. It was in my uni days. I was curious about why so many people seemed obsessed with it. Of course that was before all this internet stuff. I checked out books on human anatomy and chemistry between people and the like. It was most illuminating. In more recent times I have stumbled across some more descriptive, uh, websites." He blushed slightly after his confession.

"Research or no research, it doesn't matter. The mere fact that I will be with the man I adore is enough. That will make it special."

"My Molly," he said, putting his forehead against hers, "you told me I always know the right thing to say. It appears you too are rather proficient at it."

She smiled at him, then gave him a light kiss on the lips, before saying, "I'm going to take my shower now and get ready for bed. Then perhaps we can watch some television for awhile before sleep."

"Sounds like a plan. I'll make some tea in the meantime."

Molly showered quickly, then wrapped her hair in a towel while she put on her chemise nightie and one of Sherlock's dressing gowns. She did have her own, but she loved wearing his, because they had his unique smell. She had to roll up the sleeves and the dressing gown almost fell to the floor, but oh, was it nice.

She padded into the sitting room and saw tea already sitting on the coffee table for her. Sherlock was in his chair, drinking his own. "I see you have purloined one of my dressing gowns again," he remarked.

"I can't help it. I like the way it feels on my body. It's long enough to cover my legs and it smells of Sherlock Holmes."

He set his cup down and came towards her. "And what do I smell like?"
"I don't know, you smell like you. A mixture of your deodorant, the occasional splash of aftershave, your own natural scent. It attracts me; pheromones I guess."

He stroked her cheek and kissed her deeply, then said passionately, "You attract me too. I'm like a bee attracted to your nectar. Every time you use that damned body wash, either of those scents, I am sorely tempted to throw caution to the wind and just ravish you."

Molly felt the heat rise in her cheeks, and she felt her body tremble at his words. She found it hard to breathe when he talked that way. It would be so easy to just surrender herself to him.

Fortunately, Sherlock was exhibiting more self-control on this occasion and he moved away from her, saying, "I'm going to take my shower now. Have your tea and then we can cuddle while we watch some telly before bed, okay?"

Molly nodded and he left the sitting room.

Chapter End Notes

I had a bit of fun with this chapter. What do you think about Sherlock's embarrassment with his parents and his awkwardness? That is the way my daughter behaves. She would definitely prefer to think a stork brought her LOL. Did you like the conversation about kissing and research he had with Molly later?

Please don't hesitate to comment because you think you have nothing to contribute. I am happy to see any feedback, even if it is "thanks" or "enjoyed this." Heck, I am even happy to receive constructive criticism. I always respond to comments as well, even guest ones.

Updated for better flow 7/16/18
Sherlock stood in the shower stream berating himself.

Why did he have to say those things to Molly? Why make it harder than it already was to keep to their abstinence agreement? He could tell by her reaction that it wouldn’t take much to take her with him into the abyss of desire and passion, to allow themselves to be swept away and give in to their raw need.

It was harder than any of the dangerous missions he had been on, including dismantling Moriarty’s network. Those things were a challenge to his intellect and physical stamina. This was a challenge to his emotional side, and his spiritual one. It was his human nature warring against the new nature he had been given since he became a believer.

That morning at church, he had been touched by the sermon, feeling almost as if the reference to the virgins was specifically directed towards him. He felt God was telling him to make wise decisions and not to just live for the moment.

In the past, when he encountered a difficult situation, he would just retreat into his mind palace to figure it out. His mind palace was a safe haven from the world, a place where he could be alone to think and make informed decisions. Try as he might though, he could not escape into his mind palace when it came to thoughts about the woman he loved. It was like it had taken a permanent holiday.

_Help me, God_ he prayed silently. _Help me to be strong, and when I am tempted to follow through on my own desires, help me to find a way to keep from falling and taking Molly with me._

A peace settled over him. He felt a strong urge to look up the word “tempt” in Molly’s Bible. He had seen an index with common words from the Bible.

With resolve, Sherlock finished washing his body, then stepped out of the shower. After towelling himself off, he went into the bedroom and put on his boxers and a dressing gown, then grabbed Molly’s Bible which he took with him into the sitting room.

Molly was on the sofa, watching something on the television. Apparently her attention was not fully occupied by whatever she was watching because she turned toward him as he approached, Bible in hand. “Oh, did you want to do some Bible reading now?” she asked. “I can turn off the telly.”

“No, that’s okay,” he responded. “I want to look something up.” He sat beside her and turned to the index, searching the alphabetical listing for the word “tempt.”
The first listing under “temptation” was from the Lord’s Prayer. He’d seen that before. But there was a listing from 1 Corinthians 10:13 which read, “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

Tapping a finger on the page, he said to Molly, “This is it. This is what I’ve been looking for. I need to remember this. It will help me stay strong for you, for us. If I can keep that at the back of my mind when we are kissing, it will help me be strong. I am resolved to make it to our wedding night. I want that night to be beautiful, knowing it is blessed by God.”

“I want that too,” whispered Molly, with tears in her eyes. “I think you are finally understanding how important it has been to me all my life to wait to be with someone until I am married.”

Sherlock held her. “Now I’ve made you cry for the third time in one day. That must be a record,” he quipped. Molly chuckled softly. “Well, the first one at least doesn’t count. You weren't the one who made me cry over that post-mortem.”

“Ohay then, I only made you cry twice, that is a thirty-three percent improvement.”

“Only you would say something like that,” grinned Molly, wiping away her tears. “Anyway, the third time was because you were so sweet, they were tears of happiness.”

“Ah, it seems I have improved myself yet another fifty percent,” said Sherlock and this time they both laughed.

They sat together for a time in front of the television, neither of them really paying attention. They were so closely attuned that Sherlock was rising to his feet at the same time as Molly turned off the TV, saying, “We should get to bed.”

In the warmth of their bed, Sherlock held Molly close, then gave her a sweet kiss goodnight, and they slept.

.../.../...../.../

In the morning, Sherlock was the first to awaken. He kissed Molly lightly. She stirred but did not open her eyes, so he thought he would try and make them some breakfast. He put on his dressing gown over his boxers and headed for the kitchen.

Having eaten bacon and eggs made by his fiancée a couple times, Sherlock thought he’d try his hand at it.

He took bacon from the fridge and put it in the frying pan, then turned on the burner. Next he got a second pan for the eggs. Scrambled or fried? He decided on the latter, because Molly had made scrambled eggs last time.

He put the second frying pan on a burner and turned it on. Now to crack the eggs.

**How did one crack an egg properly?** It was a little embarrassing that a forty year old man could not recall ever having cracked an egg in his life. **Surely it couldn’t be that hard?**

He tapped the side of the egg gently on the counter. It cracked slightly, but not enough, so he tapped a little harder and the crack deepened. There was a indentation for him to press into. He thought a moment. Didn’t people use their thumbs to separate the sides of the shell? He held the
cracked egg over the now steaming pan and awkwardly tried to separate egg from shell. The egg plopped into the pan along with some of the shell and the yolk broke. Apparently he was holding the egg too high from the pan. With a groan if irritation he took the frypan off the burner and scraped the egg into the bin.

Sherlock tried the process again, with another egg, this time mostly successfully. There was a little bit of shell he used a fork on to remove. He didn’t want to be serving crunchy bits. Three more eggs followed, each more successfully than the last.

By this time the bacon was starting to sizzle and pop bits of fat at him. He yelped with pain as one pop sent a hot bit of liquid fat onto his hand as he attempted to turn the bacon with a pair of tongs.

He returned his attention to the eggs, wincing at the little burn on his hand. He figured it was time to turn them over and searched for a turner in a drawer, which he realized he should have done first. Finding a turner at last, Sherlock attempted to turn the eggs, with no luck. They were stuck to the pan.

Running a hand through his curly hair in frustration, he contemplated what to do next. The eggs were maybe salvageable if he scrambled them? The issue remained that they would not come free from the pan.

The bacon was sizzling merrily away, getting more and more crisp.

In the midst of this disaster, Molly entered the kitchen.

“Is something burning?”

She peered into the frying pan with the mess that had been the eggs. “Were you trying to make an omelette?” she asked, trying to keep a straight face.

Sherlock turned off both burners and huffed, “I was attempting to make you some breakfast,” he told his fiancée in tones of despair. “They were supposed to be fried eggs.”

“Honey, did you put some oil in the pan first?” she asked in an amused tone.

“Well, no. I thought pans these days were non-stick.”

“Some are, but unfortunately not these ones. You need to heat the oil a little first before adding the eggs,” she said patiently. “But it’s the thought that counts.” She kissed his cheek.

“I made bacon too, but I think it’s a bit overdone. And I burned my hand from the bacon fat.” He showed Molly the red mark on the back of his right hand.

“You poor darling,” she said sympathetically. “You need to run it under cold water for a few minutes. Come here and I’ll turn on the tap, then keep your hand under it for a few minutes. I’ll take care of the other stuff. The bacon is still edible and we can just have some toast with it.”

Sherlock stood by the sink, letting the cold water soothe away the sting from his burn, as he watched Molly scrape the eggs into the rubbish bin. She placed the bacon on a paper towel to absorb the grease and then put some bread in the toaster.

She was wearing his blue dressing gown again, obviously not yet dressed. He assumed she had been summoned from the bedroom precipitously due to the snell of either the bacon or the eggs.

When the toast and bacon were ready on plates for them, Sherlock turned off the tap and dried his
hand. It already felt a lot better, thanks to the cold water.

“Do you want a sticking plaster on your burn?” asked Molly as he took a seat at the table.

“I’ll be okay,” he said stoically, noting that for some reason Molly still looked highly amused.

“Are you laughing at me?” He huffed, rather indignantly.

“Not at all. I think it was so sweet of you to try and make breakfast for us. Perhaps next time we can do it together and I’ll help you.”

“Okay,” he said grudgingly, taking a piece of bacon from his plate and chewing it. It was definitely a little crispy, but still good. “I was trying to surprise you with my cooking skills.”

“Darling, you can’t be proficient at everything.”

“I can learn to be better at it though,” he said stubbornly. "I still remember how you invited me over to your flat a few times to make me dinner to ‘keep my strength up’ after I was shot. You really were a good friend.”

They ate in silence for a couple minutes until Molly said thoughtfully, “I was worried about you back then. You’d just tested positive for drugs in your system the day before you were shot, if you recall. Besides, after you up and disappeared from the hospital that day and ended up being taken back to the hospital via ambulance, I wanted to make sure you were doing okay.”

Sherlock flushed at the remembrance. Perhaps trying to make a deal with Magnussen and address the Mary situation when he was still recovering had not been particularly clever. "Not my best idea,” he conceded.

“Why did you leave, anyway? You never did tell me.”

“Two reasons. As you know now, Mary was the one who shot me, and I needed to confront her in a way that would let John know what was going on.”

“And that led to a very tense mood for months between them. I noticed the tension when I’d pop around for a visit. I just thought maybe Mary’s hormones were causing her to be irritable towards John. Now I see it was John with the problem, not her.”

Sherlock nodded. Those had been tense months.

“So what was the other reason you skipped out of the hospital when you had died on the table a couple days earlier?” she questioned.

“I was making a deal with the devil. I was trying to retrieve Magnussen’s files on Mary’s past in exchange for giving him Mycroft’s government laptop. The deal was to go down on Christmas Day. Of course, I was gambling on the fact that Mycroft’s laptop GPS would lead him to Appledore, Magnussen’s mansion, and they could search the premises and find all the blackmail files. But of course there wasn’t any, because Magnussen had a mind palace like I do. His ‘files’ were all in his head. He had me up against a wall, Molly. Mycroft’s helicopter was on the way, and I had no evidence. Magnussen was going to expose John and myself in his newspaper as trying to sell State secrets to him.”

Molly put her hands to her mouth. “So that’s why you shot him?”

Sherlock nodded sombrely. “I couldn’t think of any other way to protect John. He was innocent,
and I had dragged him into it.”

“So yet again, you were willing to sacrifice yourself for others. You did something bad with good intentions.”

Sherlock closed his eyes, remembering that moment. “I’m still a murderer.”

“Sweetheart, you’ve been forgiven for that, and everything worked out in the end.” She stood, wrapped her arms around him from behind and hugged him. “Goodness, How did we get onto such a morbid subject?”

“I think I was making a comment about how good you were to me after I was shot, and it morphed from there.”

“Well, let’s return to happier things. I happen to like looking after you now, just as I did then. If I hadn’t fed you a few meals you probably would have starved.”

“I was rather obsessed at the time and not eating properly. I wish I had appreciated you more then, thanked you properly for being such a good friend.” He stood and took Molly in his arms. “I wish I had known then what I know now, and kissed you like this.” He proceeded to demonstrate, pressing his lips to Molly’s and kissing her ardently until they were both rather breathless.

“Thank God you didn’t, Sherlock. I was feeling particularly weak and vulnerable at that time. I had broken off my engagement and I had almost lost you. If you had kissed me back then the way you do now, I probably would have just forgotten all my values and done wicked things with you.”

“Not wicked, perhaps precipitate. But really, you should not be telling me that because it just frustrates me more,” he chided. She was as bad as he was with all that talk, he thought, feeling somewhat better that he wasn’t the only one with impure thoughts. Not that they were impure, but still, ones that flew in the face of their resolve.

“I’m sorry, honey. I should not have told you that. I don’t think you truly comprehend how devastated I was, though, when I saw you in that hospital bed, knowing you had almost died.”

“You visited me every day while I was in the hospital.”

“Yeah, including the second day when I saw those tabloids about you and Janine.”

Sherlock sighed. “That was rather unfortunate. If you recall, I did tell you it wasn’t true. I saw the look of horror on your face when you saw them.”

“What do you expect? I was jealous. I thought if you wanted a woman, you should want me, your best girl friend.”

Sherlock kissed her hair. “I wasn’t ready for a real relationship. It was hard enough trying to come up with excuses to not sleep with Janine. I had to tell her I had not gone out with anybody in a very long time and wanted to take things slow.” He shuddered. Even the idea of being with anyone but Molly repulsed him.

“You didn't tell her then that you had never been with a woman?”

“Of course not. That would have been embarrassing.”

“It’s not embarrassing with me though?”
“You knew me, Molly, knew I was emotionally repressed. Besides, finding out you were a virgin too made things somewhat easier.”

“I adore you, Sherlock. I’m so glad God made us for each other.”

“So am I, my darling.” He kissed her once more then released her.

They sat back down and turned their attention to eating the now cold food.

After they had eaten, Molly cleared the dishes and went to wash them. “Why don’t you get dressed while I do these dishes?” she suggested.

Sherlock meekly complied, feeling a little guilty that Molly had to scrub that frying pan with the burnt eggs on it. He dressed carefully, putting on his Dolce and Gabbana purple shirt, one he knew Molly liked. He had seen the way she looked at him when he wore it. He added his usual suit jacket and trousers and went into the kitchen just as she was finishing with the dishes, at least the washing part of them.

“Your turn,” he informed her, taking over the task of drying the dishes and putting them away while he waited for her to get dressed.

When Molly appeared once again, she was wearing one of her new ensembles, a white silk blouse with a purple jumper and grey trousers. The purple of her jumper complemented the colour of his shirt. Ah, she had noticed his own attire.

“Beautiful, as always, my love,” he told her, putting down the tea towel.

She reached for him then, and he bent his head down so she didn’t have to stand on her tiptoes to kiss him. He savoured the embrace, sighing a little into her mouth. So sweet, always so sweet, his Molly.

When their kiss ended all too soon, in his opinion, she asked brightly, “So, shall we take a walk to the bank then?”

“Yes,” he responded. I can also deposit the cheque from Colonel Ross.” He found the cheque, put on his Belstaff and held out Molly’s jacket for her.

To Sherlock’s dismay, as soon as he opened the door to the street, it was to find a small contingent of reporters waiting there. He groaned inwardly. All he wanted was a nice, private little walk down the street to go to the bank with Molly, and now he had to contend with a gaggle of nosy news-hounds.

Taking Molly’s hand in his, he braced himself for the barrage of questions that was sure to follow. He was surprised to discover that most of the reporters seemed more interested in talking to Molly than himself.

“Dr. Hooper, how does it feel, being engaged to a celebrity like Sherlock Holmes?” asked one pushy reporter, thrusting her microphone at Molly.

Sherlock could tell Molly was flustered by the way she stammered her answer.

“I, um...well it’s rather...interesting.” Her voice took on a more confident tone. “Anyway, I’m marrying the man, not the celebrity.”

“How are the wedding plans going?” asked a male reporter, once again addressing Molly.
“Very well, thank you.” Her eyes pleaded with Sherlock to rescue her.

“Please excuse us,” he told the crowd. “My fiancée and I have a busy day ahead.” Instead of heading down the street, Sherlock decided to go back inside. He grabbed Molly’s hand and pulled her with him, then shut the door on the reporters.

“Obviously we need to wait to go to the bank. We don’t need nosy reporters following us. Let’s go back upstairs until they are gone.”

Molly nodded her head in agreement and they returned to the flat.

Sherlock walked to the window and checked the street. The crowd was mostly dispersing. Hopefully a few minutes more and it would be safe for them to make another attempt at walking to the bank.

Turning back to his fiancée who had seated herself on the sofa to wait, he said, “By the way. I have special plans for us tonight.”

Molly’s eyes lit up. “You do? I love surprises!” She walked over to him and kissed his cheek. “You spoil me way too much.”

“I have seven years of spoiling you to catch up on.” He lowered his voice to its deepest, most sexy pitch. “Of course, I am not opposed to being properly thanked.” He leaned down and kissed her, savouring her sweetness for a few moments before releasing her. Checking the street again, he said, “It’s clear now, let’s go.”

Chapter End Notes

So this rather long chapter has both serious and fluffy stuff in it.

How did you find Sherlock's thoughts about temptation, and the verse he read about in the Bible?

I know that the word tempt can also be test. I think both apply to us. If we rely on God to help us, He is faithful always. (side note to reader Jen - I told you, you were in my head!)

Did you enjoy reading about Sherlock attempting to cook? I just feel he would never have bothered to learn. Of course, if he wanted to, I'm sure he could watch one cooking show and be proficient. I think it is nice to give him some aspects of life in which he is not so proficient.

Some of the talk about after he was shot also appears in my "What if We Met at Uni?" story.

updated for better flow 7/2/18
Sherlock and Molly run some errands, including posting their invitations.

This time, when they reached the street, they made unimpeded progress towards the bank.

Inside the bank, it was quiet, with only a couple of customers and it didn't take long for the couple to deposit their cheques. "The post office is only another two minutes from here, so we might as well get those stamps for the invitations. We'll have to make an extra trip though to post them once the stamps are on," commented Sherlock. As they walked, he held Molly's hand in his.

"It doesn't matter. It's a lovely morning for a walk anyway- and I happen to like holding your hand." Sherlock smiled at her and tightened his grasp. "I like holding your hand too." Then he added possessively, "I also like people knowing you are mine."

They reached the post office at that moment and walked inside.

After purchasing stamps, the engaged pair returned home. The invitation envelopes were neatly stacked on the kitchen table.

"Thank heavens we don't have to lick stamps anymore. Licking envelopes was quite taxing enough for my tongue," remarked Molly as they worked together to put the stamps on the envelopes.

"I licked more of them than you did, so if anyone should be complaining about that nasty gummy stuff on their tongue, it should be me," protested Sherlock.

"Well, honey, you didn't have to write out all the envelopes by hand. When is the last time you wrote anything with a pen, instead of using your laptop?"

"I honestly can't remember," confessed Sherlock. "Probably signing my name on the rent cheque. Who writes anything by hand anymore? Everything is electronic. I use my credit card to buy things and pay my bills online. I barely remember how to write in cursive these days. In fact, the only thing I do manually is put music notes onto manuscript paper."

"You still compose music? I loved the piece you wrote for John and Mary's wedding. I couldn't keep my eyes off you when you played it."

Sherlock didn't answer Molly's question about still composing. He really wanted to keep his piece for her a surprise if possible. Instead he set down the envelopes to which he had been adding stamps and bent over Molly, where she sat. Brushing her hair away from her face he asked huskily, "So were you more interested in the music I was playing that night- or me?" He brushed a kiss by her ear and then another on her exposed neck. He felt her tremble at the touch.
"You know very well, Sherlock Holmes. I don't think I've ever seen you look more handsome than you did that night. I...I even had to sneak a picture of you when you were giving your speech. I wanted to always have a piece of you with me."

"I'm guessing your ex-fiancé would not have been too happy if he had seen you take that picture."

"Actually he did. I told him I was just taking a picture of the bridal party. But I was really just taking a photo of you," she confessed, a little breathlessly.

Sherlock couldn't help himself. He drew Molly up from the chair, put his arms around her and kissed her deeply.

It was several minutes before they parted and Sherlock made his own confession. "If you hadn't been with somebody that night, I would have asked you to dance with me. I would have danced with my friend. Believe it or not, I even know how to waltz."

"Really? I learn new things about you every day. When did you learn to waltz?"

"Oh, it was when I was doing some undercover work for a case once. I attended a formal dance while investigating. It was necessary for me to be able to waltz in order to keep up the act that I was an invited guest. Here, I'll show you."

He led Molly into the sitting room, assumed the correct position and showed her his prowess as he led her in a waltz, humming a waltzing tune as he did so. He finished with a flourish, twirling around in much the same way he had done when he was showing off to Janine at John's wedding.

"That was amazing," marvelled Molly. Will you waltz with me on our wedding day?"

"If you like. We will need to speak with the DJ. He will probably want a list of songs from us that we want played. I seem to recall John and Mary discussing that before their wedding."

"You should find out. Isn't the DJ's name Andrew?"

"That's right. I saved his number on my phone. I had better send him a text now or I'll forget."

Sherlock pulled out his phone from his pocket and turned it on. After finding the DJ's number he sent him a message, asking when they needed to give him a list of any songs they wanted. "And now we wait," he told Molly.

"Why don't we go and post the invitations at the post office and then go to that fish shop you say is so wonderful, the one on Marylebone Road? We could get some chips for lunch."

"That, my love, sounds like a very good idea."

The pair quickly added stamps to the last few invitations, then they put them in a plastic bag and headed back out to the post office.

After turning in the invitations for posting, they went to the fish shop.

As soon as they entered, Joe spotted Sherlock and Molly. "Mr. Holmes, I haven't seen you in a couple of weeks! That is most unlike you."

"I was out of town for a few days last week."

"Ah, yes. I saw that on the telly. You found some racehorse. That was in Dartmoor, wasn't it?"
"That is correct. Last time I was here you wanted to meet my fiancée, so I have brought her with me today."

He turned to Molly. "Molly, meet Joe."

Molly held out her hand to the older man, who shook it warmly. "I can see what Mr. Holmes sees in you. He is undoubtedly a lucky man."

As Molly blushed, Joe asked Sherlock, "The usual?"

"Of course."

The man took care of their order. As they waited, Molly commented, "So here we are, you are finally taking me out for chips two years after you left me that day."

"Better late than never," replied her Sherlock. "Anyway, I was being respectful of your situation."

"If only I had left my gloves on," Molly said a little wistfully.

"Sweetheart, it wouldn't have been right, and you know it. It was better that I didn't interfere. I had manipulated your affections for me enough in the past."

"I know you're right. I guess there's always going to be a little part of me that wonders about what might have been, if things had been different."

"Are you not content with the way things are now?"

Molly squeezed his hand. "I couldn't be happier. Women in general just tend to spend a little time second-guessing things and thinking 'what if?'"

"Just don't second-guess yourself in agreeing to marry me."

"Never in a million years."

Joe returned with their order. "Extra chips for both of you. Now you take care of your lady."

"I shall," Sherlock assured the older man. "Thank you." He paid for the chips and the couple walked back to their home.

They ate their chips in the kitchen. "These chips are even better when they haven't been reheated," commented Molly, licking the salt off her fingers.

"Is it any wonder I never learned how to cook when I could just buy them anytime I wanted?"

"They are delicious, but they still do not compare to a proper home-cooked meal."

"Cooking for one is not really worth the effort," defended Sherlock.

"Well, that isn't the case anymore, is it? Speaking of cooking, I think I'll bake some ginger nuts for you this afternoon." She took their empty containers as she spoke and threw them in the rubbish bin.

"Oh, that sounds good. It will give you something to do when I am assembling the cot-bed." He glanced at his watch. "Speaking of which, it should be arriving soon."

He stood and put his arms around Molly. "Until it comes, I think it would be beneficial for both of
us to do something pleasant while we wait."

"Is that so?" asked Molly, putting her hands around his neck and pressing her body against his.

Instead of answering her with words, he captured her lips with his own, licking the salt from hers and swirling his tongue gently inside her opened mouth to savour the salty tang, in imitation of the way he had experimented with her after they ate the chips almost two weeks earlier.

Molly gave a little sigh of pleasure and moved her hands upwards to thread her fingers through his dark curls.

Sherlock resisted the temptation to stroke her back, conscious of the fact that the cot-bed would be arriving soon. He would not allow himself to get carried away, even with his body's traitorous response to their embrace.

The doorbell rang and Sherlock released his woman, who was looking extremely flushed, with dilated pupils that undoubtedly matched his own. "That will be the delivery men," he said. "We had better go downstairs to let them in."

Chapter End Notes

Yeah, more scenes of everyday life. But hey, they got the invitations mailed! Every time I think about licking envelopes, I am reminded of the Seinfeld episode where George's fiancée died from licking the envelopes of their wedding invitations due to cheap glue. Fortunately, Sherlock and Molly's envelopes did not use that glue LOL.

I researched, and the bank and post office really are on Baker Street, not far from 221B, so it would be an easy walk.

Updated for corrections and better flow 7/7/18
A Busy Afternoon - Molly

Chapter Summary

The cot-bed arrives and Sherlock attempts to assemble it.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Even as the pair descended the stairs to the outer door of 221B Baker Street, their ever vigilant landlady was already opening tit.

Two men were standing there with an enormous cardboard package.

"Would you mind taking it upstairs?" asked Sherlock, after he signed for it.

"No problem," said the older man. He and his fellow delivery man hoisted up the box and followed Sherlock up the stairs. Molly was about to follow when Mrs. Hudson stopped her.

"What on earth is in that package?" asked the curious lady.

"It's a cot-bed," explained Molly.

Mrs. Hudson gasped. "Are you and Sherlock...pregnant?"

Molly rolled her eyes. "Mrs. Hudson, Sherlock has told you before, we are waiting until we get married. Why does everyone think we would have just jumped into bed together the moment we got engaged?"

The landlady shrugged. "I wouldn't have blamed you if you had. He is an exceptionally handsome man."

"I certainly don't dispute that, and I won't lie to you. Waiting isn't the easiest thing in the world, especially when I have loved him for so long, but we are determined."

"And I commend you for it, then. Not too many people these days would care in the least about waiting for marriage in order to be together. So, why did you purchase a cot-bed? Is it in anticipation of having a child of your own?"

"Eventually I hope it will be used for that purpose. For now though, we needed somewhere for Rosie to sleep. We will be babysitting her for a couple days this weekend while John goes to a medical conference."

"Oh, that sounds like fun. It will give you a chance to practice parenthood too."

Molly blushed. "It will certainly be interesting. I'm looking forward to seeing how well Sherlock handles a couple days with a little one."

"If you need any help, just ask," said the elderly woman with a smile.

The delivery men reappeared at that moment, walking down the stairs and back to the street.
"Molly," called Sherlock from the entrance to the flat, "are you coming up?"

"On my way, honey," she answered. She went upstairs and entered the flat. Sherlock closed and locked the door behind her.

"Are you worried we might be interrupted again?" asked Molly a little uneasily.

"Well, one never knows with Mrs. Hudson. I do need to get in the habit of doing it though. I have been far too careless in the past and Mrs. Hudson does have a tendency to just drop in whenever the mood strikes her. Heaven forbid she should take it upon herself to pop in when we are in an indelicate state."

Molly blushed at his words.

"I don't mean now of course, I'm talking about after we are married," he added hastily.

"Yes, of course," she agreed. It was just a shame that her heartbeat refused to calm down. Being in an indelicate state with Sherlock had a very alluring sound to it.

Sherlock noticed her evident distress. He went to her and kissed her gently. "We are going to do this, my love. You know how much I desire you, and I know you feel the same. But we are going to wait because it is right for us. It may not be right or even important to most people, but this is about you and me. I do believe it will be worth it. I already know you will be worth the wait."

"Sherlock, you will definitely be worth the wait...I hope when the time comes I don't disappoint you."

"You could never disappoint me. From the way our bodies respond when we are merely kissing, I know we were made for each other."

He paused, then said, "Enough of this talk. I have a cot-bed to set up."

"And I have ginger nuts to bake. Where is the cot-bed, by the way?"

I gave the delivery men a couple quid to carry the box up to the spare bedroom."

"Good thinking. Off you go then." She patted Sherlock's bum, shooing him away.

He chuckled in amusement. "I need to grab some tools first, like scissors to open the box."

"Won't you be needing a screwdriver too?" questioned Molly reasonably.

"Damn, I never even thought of that. I've never needed one before. I'll have to go see Mrs. Hudson. Hopefully she has one."

He unlocked the door and went down the stairs, while Molly went into the kitchen and started assembling the ingredients to make ginger nuts.

Sherlock reappeared, triumphantly holding a tool kit in his hands. "When I'm finished upstairs, I'll come down and help you with your baking." He headed upstairs towards the second bedroom.

Molly had the distinct feeling he was acting a little overconfident. She did not think assembling the furniture would be an easy task by any means. She busied herself making a double batch of biscuits once again. After putting them in the oven and setting the timer, she decided to go upstairs and check on Sherlock's progress.
When Molly entered the little bedroom, she was astonished. There sat her darling fiancé, with pieces of the cot-bed all around him, looking completely bewildered. The only thing he had apparently done successfully was remove the plastic from the mattress that had come with the disassembled bed.

Spotting Molly, he said, "This damn bed makes no sense. I can't line up the holes right and I don't think they gave me enough screws."

"Did you follow the instructions?"

"They are in Chinese. I haven't learned that language," he huffed.

Spying the instruction booklet on the floor, she picked it up. The instructions were indeed in Chinese or some such language. She looked at the booklet. It seemed very big to just contain the instructions for one cot-bed. She flipped through the pages and saw that the instructions had changed to French, then to German, followed by Italian and finally English. Obviously the furniture was marketed in several countries and there were instructions in each language.

"Honey, with your intellect, couldn't you have deduced this booklet was much too big to contain so many instructions for one piece of furniture in one language?"

"I didn't bother looking any further," he admitted. "I was sure I could manage without instructions."

Molly leaned over her disgruntled fiancé and kissed his cheek. "The last section of the book has instructions in English. Why don't I help you?"

"What about the biscuits?"

"They're in the oven and I set the timer, so I'll hear when it goes off."

Sherlock frowned. "It's a little embarrassing that I can't even do this by myself. I'm a man. Men are supposed to be good at this sort of thing, but I'm just rubbish."

"Stop it, Sherlock," scolded Molly. "How can you be expected to know everything? You've never had occasion to build a piece of furniture before, so you can hardly be expected to master it in one sitting. Let me help you. I'm sure we can figure it out together."

"Oh, very well, if it would make you happy."

"It would. Let's make sure all the pieces are here." She consulted the booklet and read out the list of furniture pieces and the number of screws that were supposed to come with the bed. Sherlock dutifully found the correct pieces and counted the screws. Everything was there, and there were even extra screws.

"Good," said Molly. "Now we follow the diagrams and put the cot-bed together, piece by piece."

The timer went off. "I'll be right back. Here's the booklet. You can look for the first two pieces that need to be screwed together while I take the biscuits out of the oven."

Sherlock obediently took the instruction manual from her hand and Molly headed downstairs. She checked on the biscuits. Satisfied that they were ready, she took them out of the oven and put the timer on for another ten minutes so they could be transferred then to wire racks for proper cooling.

She returned upstairs to find Sherlock had successfully screwed together the first two pieces of the
cot-bed. "Nice work," she said encouragingly.

Sherlock looked embarrassed but pleased. "Having instructions definitely makes a difference."

They worked together for a few minutes until the timer went off again.

Molly put the biscuits on wire racks, but took a few on a plate back upstairs, where Sherlock was studiously examining the next set of instructions.

"I brought you some biscuits. Eat them while they are still warm."

Sherlock took two immediately and ate them while he continued to read. He finished the biscuits, but declined more, saying, "I'll eat more as a reward for getting this thing done."

With Molly's help, the cot-bed was correctly assembled within an hour. Sherlock looked so proud at his and her handiwork that she had to reach up and kiss him.

He put his arms around her and kissed her back, murmuring, "Thanks for helping me, sweetheart."

"You're most welcome," she responded.

"And the finishing touch - the mattress," he said, picking it up from where it lay against the wall. He deposited it inside the cot-bed. "Done."

"You still have biscuits to eat," Molly pointed out. "Don't forget your reward."

"I've decided I'd prefer a different kind of reward," he said, approaching her with a gleam in his eye.

"You would, huh?" She managed, just before he claimed her lips with his own. They stood for several minutes, entwined, hearts beating as one at an accelerated pace.

"You're so beautiful," Sherlock murmured against her lips as his hands moved to massage her shoulders gently, and Molly moaned with pleasure. He pressed his fingers a little harder, massaging away the knots.

"Oh, Sherlock, that feels so good," she told him with a happy sigh.

He continued to knead her shoulders as he kissed her for several minutes, eliciting several more moans of pleasure, as her hold on him tightened.

Finally he stopped and kissed her forehead, saying huskily, "God, Moly, you have no idea what it does to me when you make those sounds. It gives me an incredible urge to just take you to our bedroom and make love to you." His breathing was ragged and his face was flushed with passion.

"I'm sorry. You just have magic fingers. I'm a sucker for a good massage."

"I'll bear that in mind, for future reference, if I want to get you in the mood for...other things."

Molly's eyes sparkled. "I'll be putty in your hands every time."

Sherlock gave her one last longing look, then with a conscious effort, looked at his watch. "It's already after three. Let's go downstairs. We will need to eat an early dinner so we can get to our destination this evening by six-thirty."

Molly picked up the plate with the remaining biscuits and followed him downstairs.
"Are you going to give me a clue as to where we are going?" she asked.

"Nope," he replied, popping the ‘p.’

"Well, do I need to get changed?"

"Nope."

Hmmm, she thought. Nothing too fancy then. Where on earth could they be going?

Obviously not to dinner, as he had said they would need to eat an early one. It was most mysterious. As she pondered, Molly gathered up the now cooled biscuits from the wire rack and put them in a container. The ones on the plate she took back into the sitting room where Sherlock had seated himself in his favourite chair, looking at his phone. "Did you want these now or should I just put them in the container? I'm going to make tea too."

"You can leave them on the coffee table. I'll eat another couple of them with my tea." He looked up at her then and said, "I just got a text back from Andrew. He said to just text or call him with a list of any particular songs we want, and he'll check that he has them. He said just to make sure we let him know in the next couple of weeks, so he can find anything he doesn't currently have."

"Great. We'll have to work on that then."

"Maybe tomorrow. It will be too late by the time we get home this evening."

Another clue. He was taking her to something that would last several hours. Obviously not a musical, after all, they had just seen one. Perhaps the symphony?

If that were the case though, wouldn't he suggest she dress up a little?

A concert then, Molly decided. That had to be it.

"You're taking me to a concert," she stated confidently.

He gave her an appreciative look. "Very perceptive of you. I'll make a detective out of you yet. Don't think it through too much, though. I really want you to have a nice surprise."

"Okay." She returned to the kitchen and made their tea, then put the cups on the coffee table. "Are you going to sit here?" she indicated the sofa.

"I think you could twist my arm," he said with a smile, taking a seat and pulling Molly down next to him. "These biscuits are really good, by the way," he proclaimed, as he took one and took a sip of tea.

I really can't take the credit. I just followed the recipe, like I did last time. But I did make them with love." She grinned at him, deciding to take a ginger nut for herself. "Do you want to watch some telly?"

"whatever you want."

She turned it on and flipped the channels. "Hey, it's 'Say Yes to the Dress!'" she exclaimed. "A repeat, of course, but I still like looking at those gowns."

"Are you going to give me a clue as to what to expect when you walk down the aisle?"

"I'll give you just one. Fairytale princess."
"You don't need a dress to look like a fairytale princess to me, but I'm sure it will look lovely. Are you going to wear glass slippers?" he teased.

"Shoes!" she exclaimed. "I need to buy those before my first fitting."

"Why don't you ask your friends to go with you? I presume they will need shoes for their dresses too?"

"You're right. It will have to wait until next week though, when Kaitlyn is back from America." Molly leaned her head against Sherlock's shoulder as she watched the television show.

"That dress is really pretty," commented Sherlock, who surprisingly was actually watching the show with her. The dress in question was strapless, with a sweetheart neckline and full skirt. It was not unlike Molly's own dress, although her bodice was a little more beaded.

She smiled to herself. Apparently she had made a good choice for herself, and for her future husband too. The thought of walking down that aisle made her stomach flip-flop in anticipation.

They sat on the sofa awhile longer, finishing their tea and watching the television without really paying attention. Molly was deep in thought about her future with Sherlock and it seemed he had withdrawn into his mind palace, perhaps anticipating the evening ahead.

Chapter End Notes

What did you think of Sherlock's bewilderment over the cot-bed? I thought it would be fun to show him a bit out of his depth again. I can't imagine him ever having assembled anything. I can also see him as being over-confident. I hope you agree.

Did you like the conversation with Mrs. Hudson? I feel she would be very pro Sherlolly and wanting her surrogate son to be happy.

Sorry this chapter ends a bit abruptly. The next one is long and I needed to split it.

Updated for better flow and corrections 7/7/18
Molly's Exciting Evening - Molly (Monday)

Chapter Summary

Molly has a wonderful time seeing her favourite band, while Sherlock prefers what happens between them before the band comes onstage.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The sound of the door handle being turned, followed by a knock at the door startled both of them from their reverie.

"Sherlock?" came Mrs. Hudson's voice. "Why is this door locked?"

Sherlock gave Molly a meaningful look, as if to say, "I told you so" about the potential for interruptions with an unlocked door.

He stood and walked to the door, ignoring the question. The landlady stood before him, holding a tray with a shepherd's pie on it.

"I made this for you two," she said. "I thought you'd be busy putting that bed together. Knowing you as I do, I figured you would not have arranged anything for dinner."

Sherlock took the shepherd's pie from her with a, "Thank you very much. It smells delicious."

He would have closed the door, but Mrs. Hudson was obviously in a chatty mood and stepped through the doorway. "Molly tells me you will be babysitting little Rosamund this weekend," she said, following him into the kitchen, where he set the shepherd's pie on the counter.

"That is correct."

"Well, if either of you needs my help for any reason, just let me know."

"We will," he nodded, "although I do not anticipate we will be requiring outside help. I think Molly and I will be quite capable of caring for our goddaughter until her father returns."

"I'd certainly agree that Molly would be capable of taking care of the little one but you...not so much," said the elderly lady with the forthrightness that can only be tolerated in the older generation. "You are not much beyond needing someone to look after you."

Sherlock scowled at her. "I believe I have made great strides to better myself lately," he responded, offended by the blunt words.

Molly came up beside him and put her arms around his waist. "Mrs. Hudson, you are not being kind. Sherlock has been doing a wonderful job lately. He even made me breakfast this morning, plus, he assembled the cot-bed like a professional," she said loyally, deliberately omitting the fact that the breakfast had been a near disaster and that she had required her help for the cot's assembly.

Sherlock looked at her gratefully, then kissed her cheek.
"Well, then," said Mrs. Hudson a little huffily. "I'll leave you two lovebirds to eat your dinner in peace. You can just return the dish to me later."

"Thank you, Mrs. Hudson," said Molly. "And thank you for looking after Sherlock so well. I know he appreciates it," she added.

Mrs. Hudson looked mollified at the words, and returned downstairs to her flat.

"That was very sweet of her to bring us dinner," commented Molly.

"The old biddy just wanted to poke her nose in as usual. See, I told you it was a good idea to practice locking the door." Even as he spoke the words, he moved towards the door and locked it once again.

"That is not a nice thing to say about your landlady, I men our landlady," said Molly reprovingly. "She has been exceptionally good to you over the years. Heaven only knows what you would be like without her."

"You're right. I'm sorry. It is just so frustrating sometimes. Everyone assumes they know me better than I know myself. John thinks I'm going to default on our abstinence agreement. Mycroft thinks I need pointers on taking you to bed, and Mrs. Hudson treats me like a child."

Picking up on the one interesting thing he had said, Molly asjed, "Mycroft thinks you need pointers on sex? When did this happen?"

"When he was here the other night," admitted Sherlock. "We were discussing Lady Smallwood, among other things. It came up in conversation that Irene Adler referred to us as the ice man and the virgin. I made a comment about neither of us fitting that description for much longer and he made the obvious deduction."

"Oh, Sherlock, how embarrassing. He didn't try and make a bet with you as well, did he?"

"Not at all. He seemed more concerned with my lack of proficiency at the act of lovemaking given my, er, lack of practical experience."

Molly gave a shocked gasp. "How dare he?" she said angrily. Her future brother-in-law was a total arse.

Sherlock shrugged. "Can't blame him, really. Most people have several sexual partners before they find their mate, and have the opportunity to hone their skills in the bedroom."

"Don't say that," begged Molly. "I know it is going to be even more special because we haven't been with anybody else. Besides," she added, "if we fumble a bit awkwardly or anything like that, we have many years to hone our skills, with each other."

Sherlock pressed his forehead against hers. "You're right, of course you are," he agreed. "I do worry though, every now and then, that I will not live up to your expectations."

"How can I have expectations about something when I have no prior experience in the matter to compare it to?" argued Molly reasonably. "We've come close enough to losing control for me to be confident that it will be wonderful, perfect even."

"You really think so?" he asked in a deep voice, his lips hovering only an inch from her own.

"I know so," she barely managed to respond, before his lips were on hers, pressing desperately
against her own, betraying the desire he felt, the desire they both felt in their human longing to be together.

They were both breathless when he released her, to say in a hoarse whisper, "We really need to keep the sex talk to a minimum. It just makes things even more difficult. I think I need to go take a shower of the cold variety once again." He gave her a pained smile, then added, "Why don't you put that shepherd's pie in the oven for a bit to reheat. By the time we have eaten, it will be almost time to leave."

He left the kitchen and headed for the bathroom.

Molly turned on the oven, then put the pie in and set the timer for fifteen minutes. She still needed a shower as well, so hopefully Sherlock would be done quickly.

He was fast, exiting the bathroom within ten minutes, freshly shaved, clad only in a towel.

Molly had gotten a change of underclothes ready as she passed him to take her turn in the bathroom. She had an impulse to tug at that towel to see what lay beneath, and shivered at the thought. **Do not go there,** she said silently to herself, then said aloud, "You can take the food out of the oven when the timer goes off. I won't be long."

He looked at her quizzically. "Do not go where?"

Molly realized with chagrin that she had expressed the words out loud. "Never mind," she said hastily. "Just get that pie out of the oven when the timer goes off."

"Yes ma'am," he saluted as Molly went into the bathroom and locked the door behind her. She turned on the shower and leaned against the door for a few moments, waiting for the water to heat. **Why did he have to be so irresistible?**

She undressed and stepped into the tub for her shower, allowing the warm spray to soothe her frayed nerves and impassioned senses. When she exited the bathroom, feeling much more in control of herself, it was to Sherlock setting plates and utensils on the table.

"Drink?" he asked.

"Just water, thanks."

He set a bottle of cold water from the fridge in front of her place at the table as well as his own. Then he spooned out a generous helping of shepherd's pie for her and himself.

"That's too much," protested Molly, looking at the huge helping on her plate.

"Just eat what you can, I'll finish what you don't eat," he stated matter-of-factly.

Molly looked at him in surprise. She had always thought of him as being a fastidious eater, even though they had shared a plate of chips. Offering to finish her own plate of food though, that was something else entirely.

Correctly interpreting her surprise he asked, "What? Do you think I'd be too picky to finish something you started? I assure you, I have no qualms about it. I can hardly have them, when we have shared each other's saliva on many occasions."

Molly grinned in embarrassment. "You're right of course. Would you do so with anyone else? I don't mean share saliva, of course." She coloured again. **That was a rather interesting turn of**
"I mean eat off someone else's plate," she finished lamely.

"What kind of fool do you take me for?" scoffed Sherlock. "Of course I wouldn't, that is absurd. Although," he added contemplatively, "I would probably not be averse to eating the leftovers from a plate that belongs to one of my children."

Molly quivered at his words. *Children, their children.* The thought crossed her mind once again about how incredible it would be to have a child with the man she adored.

Sherlock, attuned to her as ever, said in his deep baritone, "The thought of you bearing my child pleases me too."

Feeling more conversation was unnecessary, the two ate quietly. When Molly had eaten enough, she pushed her plate towards Sherlock, who did indeed finish off her remaining food.

She collected the plates and utensils and turned on the water to wash the dishes.

Sherlock had in the meantime consulted his watch. "We need to leave soon," he commented.

Molly did the dishes while Sherlock put the remainder of the shepherd's pie into a container, which he deposited in the fridge. He gave Molly the empty pie dish to wash. "We can return it to Mrs. Hudson on our way out. I'm going to call us a taxi to be here for six."

He did so, while Molly finished the dishes and put them away, with the exception of the pie plate for their landlady.

Soon afterward, it was time for them to leave. Molly returned the now clean pie plate with another word of thanks to Mrs. Hudson, and the couple went outside where their taxi was already waiting.

The cab ride was not an overly long one, about twenty minutes.

As they neared their destination, Sherlock told Molly to close her eyes.

"You are not allowed to open them until we get there," he informed her mysteriously. "After we get out of the taxi, I'll let you know when to open them."

Molly obediently closed her eyes. She was rather excited. She couldn't possibly figure out where she was being taken.

When the taxi stopped, Sherlock helped her to alight and then said, "You can open your eyes now."

Molly gasped. "Isn't this the Royal Albert Concert Hall?" she asked. "I've never been here before."

"Indeed it is." He took her hand and led her into the building.

Bemused, Molly looked around the opulent interior of the building as Sherlock walked to the box office.

"I have two box seats reserved for tonight's performance, under the name Sherlock Holmes," he informed the attendant, who gaped at him.

"Should I show you some identification?"

"N..no Mr. Holmes, that will not be necessary. I recognize you from the telly," said the youth in a starstruck voice. "I'll just go find the tickets."
He disappeared out of sight. "Looks like you have yet another fan," teased Molly.

Sherlock cringed. "I can't go anywhere without being recognized, maybe I should wear a disguise, fake moustache, pull my hair back and the like."

"Even with a disguise, the way you wear your Belstaff with the collar up is a dead giveaway," pointed out.

"Well, that's a dealbreaker then," he responded in mock despair. "I am not changing my coat for anyone, nor the way I wear it."

"I'm glad, it's part of who you are."

Just then, the box office attendant returned. "Are there other members in your party?" the youth enquired.

"No, just us. Why do you ask?" questioned Sherlock.

Well, it appears the whole box has been sold to you for the evening," said the young man.

"That's Mycroft for you," muttered Sherlock. "Always has to show off how wealthy he is."

_Not such an arse after all_, thought Molly, feeling bad about her earlier thoughts of her future brother-in-law. This was something very nice of him to do.

"Enjoy the concert, Mr. Holmes, Dr. Hooper," said the youth, making the obvious association. Apparently he was an avid fan.

Sherlock took Molly's hand and steered her to the entrance for their seats.

She looked around, trying to ascertain who was giving the concert. There were tables along one wall, but Sherlock did not allow her to linger.

It was only once they were seated in the box with empty seats around them that Molly asked, "Are you ever going to tell me who we are seeing tonight, or am I expected to wait for them to come onstage?"

"Very well, I guess I can tell you now." He took the ticket stubs out of his pocket and showed them to her.

"Paramore! You got us tickets to see Paramore?" She almost shrieked with excitement. "I had no idea they were coming to London!"

"If you had known, would you have wanted to go and see them?"

"Of course, but I doubt I would have gone because I don't know any other Paramore fans. This was incredibly sweet of you." She kissed him on the cheek.

"All that work merits just a chaste kiss on the cheek?" Sherlock pouted.

Molly giggled. "We're in public, Sherlock. We might have this box to ourselves, but it isn't as if the boxes are completely closed off from other people. I can clearly see other people near us, and I'm sure they can see us."

"I do not care one iota about what other people think," he huffed. "I require some proper expression of gratitude."
"Fine." Molly leaned over and pressed her lips to his. Before she could withdraw, he cupped her face and held it so she could not pull away from him. He gave her a long, lingering kiss which left her breathless.

"Sherlock," she gasped, "You're creating a scene."

There were indeed a few people looking their way, some with scandalized faces and others with amused ones. The scandalized patrons for the most part, were of the older generation who were accompanying young teenagers.

Instead of looking embarrassed, Sherlock merely looked around with interest. "If people wish to gawk at us, let them. You are my fiancée, and if I want to kiss you, I shall do so."

"Proper English gentlemen do not indulge in open displays of affection," said Molly in a sing-song voice, as if it was something she had been taught since early childhood.

"Then you will just have to deal with the knowledge that I am not a proper English gentleman. Besides," he leaned closer so he could whisper in her ear, "don't even pretend you didn't enjoy that kiss."

Molly felt hot all over and she gulped. "I...I did enjoy it," she admitted. "But it was still embarrassing."

"Very well, I shall refrain from any further kissing - at least until the lights are dimmed for the concert," he responded with a sultry look that made Molly wish they were somewhere private. Her lips still tingled from his kiss and her heartbeat refused to cooperate by slowing down to a normal rate.

"Don't give me those sexy looks," she admonished. "You're interfering with my senses too much."

Sherlock merely chuckled and gave her a self-satisfied smile.

At that moment, the lights dimmed and the opening act came onstage. The band was lively and a lot of the crowd clapped along to the music, but Molly didn't pay attention to any of it. She was too busy casting glances at Sherlock's profile as he sat, deliberately staring ahead in an obvious display of trying to avoid eye contact with her. She looked at his strong jawline, the set of his impossibly high cheekbones, his full, sensual lips. She longed to put her hands in those gorgeous curls.

Sherlock eventually cast her a sidelong glance. He apparently had been completely aware of her distraction. "Do you like what you see?" he murmured, still keeping his head facing forward.

"you know I do," she replied, fighting back the urge to lean over and kiss him.

"It's quite dark, you know," he said in a conspiratorial whisper. "Your band is not yet playing, and the crowd has their attention on the current performers."

He turned his head towards her then and gave her the most heart-stopping, hooded gaze he had ever blessed her with.

Molly could contain herself no longer, she leaned towards him and he did the sane, their lips locking in a searing kiss. The empty box around them offered enough privacy that nobody noticed their intense embrace.

They only parted, both panting with their passion, when the music reached a crescendo and people started to applaud. The lights came up for an intermission before the main act.
"Remind me to thank my brother for buying out the whole box," Sherlock said in his deep baritone, his eyes lingering on Molly's lips. She wondered if anyone would be able to tell she had been thoroughly kissed.

"I...I'm going to go and freshen up," she said, still a little breathless from their passionate encounter.

"Do you want me to come with you?"

"Not unless you need to use the facilities."

"I think I need another cold shower. On second thought, I think I shall remain here," he offered a wry smile. "Your lips affect me way too much for comfort."

Molly left the box and found the signs for the closest ladies' toilets. She used the facilities and then put on another coat of lipstick. It had been totally absent from her lips. She laughed to herself at the thought that Sherlock was now the recipient of that coral pink colour. She'd have to make sure he wasn't still wearing it when they left the theatre.

Returning to the box, she saw that Sherlock was sitting languidly, with his legs stretched out in front of him so they rested against the front of the box. "Comfy?" she asked teasingly, leaning over to make sure there was no lipstick smudged on his mouth. There wasn't, so apparently the colour had dissolved under the force of their kissing.

"I'd be more comfortable at home, but this shall suffice for now."

The lights soon dimmed. Hayley Williams bounded onto the stage with the rest of her band, and Molly stood, along with most of the crowd. Sherlock, of course, remained seated. He gave her a lazy grin when she looked at him, still comfortably seated in his chair, looking for all the world as if he was enjoying a quiet day at home. Molly didn't mind. She knew he had brought her here because she loved the band. That in itself was an incredibly romantic gesture.

As the concert progressed, Molly remained standing, singing along with the songs she knew and having a thoroughly good time. Every time she looked over at her fiancé, it was to see a half-smile on his face. (At least he wasn't falling asleep, she thought.)

There were a couple songs that were unfamiliar to her which was surprising. She thought she had all of the band's albums.

After the band said goodnight and the crowd insisted on an encore, Sherlock tugged at Molly's hand.

"I know they are still going to do a song or two, but do you want to get out of here to beat the crowd?"

"Sure," she responded. She was ready to go home. It had been a lot of fun, but she knew Sherlock hadn't had as much fun, at least not after the intermission, she grinned to herself.

The couple made their way outside. There were only a few people trickling out, with the same idea, so they were soon in a taxi and heading home.
I have to admit, I had so much fun with this chapter! I just loved the thought of Sherlock wanting to kiss Molly and not care what others though, and not be a "proper English gentleman." I just think he is a man of great passion. It translated itself into his work, but now extends to his relationship with Molly. He has never been one to care unduly about what others think, so why would it be any different when it comes to Molly? What do you think about that. Agree? Disagree? You know I love to hear what my lovely readers think!

The details about the concert hall as as accurate as I can make them after researching it online, looking at the seating plan etc. If I did not mention it earlier - this date in my story coincides with the real date Paramore played there last year. If you have not listened to the band, I encourage you to do so.

Also the thing of Sherlock eating from Molly's plate - my hubby was like that as a child, never touching anything anyone else had touched, but he's fine with me and our girls, eating leftover pizza and the like. Lots of my little tidbits come from real life.

Updated for corrections and better flow 7/5/18
Chapter Summary

For once, Sherlock is the voice of reason when Molly begins to doubt her resolve in their agreement to wait for their wedding night to be intimate.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

After they were comfortably situated in the cab, Sherlock asked Molly, "How did you enjoy seeing your favourite band live on stage?" Her answer surprised him.

"I really enjoyed it, but I do think Hayley Williams sounds better in the studio than she does onstage. I feel like she was oversinging at times."

Sherlock had thought the same, but he was not an expert, so it was rather validating to hear Molly's opinion.

"There were a couple songs I wasn't familiar with as well. Perhaps they've released a new album. I really liked the one song. I think it was probably called 'I told you so.' I like the way their songs mean something, they aren't just a bunch of love songs."

Sherlock nodded. While watching Molly enjoying herself, he had been listening to the lyrics, well, as much as he could decipher. The music was very loud and it occasionally drowned out the clarity of the lead singer's voice.

Thoughtfully, he asked, "So, what did you think of the opening act?"

Molly didn't pretend to misunderstand his true meaning, and she said with a soft, caressing note in her voice which made his heart soar, "It was wonderful, Sherlock. I...I was definitely wanting an encore."

His heart thudded at her words. Kissing her during that opening act had been very exciting. There was something quite erotic about kissing her so passionately in a public setting, even if nobody had been able to see them. A surge of heat shot through him. He was treading on dangerous territory. Why did he torture himself this way? he asked himself for what must have been the hundredth time.

He still had, how many days was it?

Seven weeks minus two days, forty-seven days to deny what his body craved. Even Jesus had only been in the wilderness and tempted by Satan for forty days. He almost groaned out loud.

Apparently Molly noticed his distress, perhaps it was the way he was clenching and unclenching his hands, or perhaps the erratic way he was breathing. Whatever caused her to perceive what he was going through, made her take his hand and squeeze it gently. "Maybe an encore is not the best idea right now."

They rode the rest of the way in silence. After Sherlock paid the driver, he unlocked the front door.
and waited for Molly to precede him. She went up the stairs slowly, her earlier enthusiasm having drained away.

Sherlock unlocked the door to their flat, again waiting for Molly to go inside, then locked it behind them.

He could see that Molly was looking a little sad, but couldn't ascertain the reason. For all his deductive skills, at times his woman was a mystery to him.

"Molly? What's wrong?" he asked, helping her take off her jacket after he removed his Belstaff.

"I don't really know," she answered with a sigh. "It really was a wonderful evening, and I meant it when I said I really liked the 'opening act.' Kissing you, it always leads to me wanting more. I should be content with just enjoying them, and certainly there are many ways of kissing that are incredible with you. Every single one is special. When does kissing become not enough?"

"On our wedding night," said Sherlock firmly, although he was wondering much the same thing. They had already progressed beyond mere kissing, and he desperately wished he could feel Molly's bare skin against his, her sweet breasts. His fingers twitched and he forced himself to focus on the conversation at hand. "We...we just need to be extra careful when we are at home. Tonight, we were in a public place, so I knew there would be no possibility of us losing control. This is where we enter our danger zone."

"So what can we do about it?" Her voice trembled and she sounded quite desperate for him to give her the right answer. She was counting on him to be the strong one tonight, when she was obviously in a place of weakness.

"For one thing, I think we exceeded our kissing quota today, so we need to just not do it, so we can't get carried away."

Molly nodded her agreement.

"Fortunately, it's already getting late, so it is almost time for bed. Let's have a nice cup of tea, and we can work on choosing songs for the DJ in the morning. Does that sound like a plan?"

She nodded again, and he took her hand and led her to the kitchen. "Take a seat, love. I'll make the tea."

He busied himself with his task, noting that Molly's eyes were beginning to droop. He set a cup down in front of her, kissing the top of her head, then took his own cup and sat.

They sat quietly, drinking their tea. When their cups were empty, Sherlock said gently, "Go and get ready for bed, my darling. I'll be in as soon as I've washed these cups."

She got up wearily and disappeared down the hallway to their bedroom.

The cups could have waited till morning to be washed, but Sherlock deliberately took his time washing and drying them, in order to give Molly plenty of time to get ready for bed.

When he came into the bedroom, he was expecting her to already be snuggled under the duvet. She had put on her chemise nightie, but was perched at the end of the bed, and she was shivering.

"Sweetheart, why aren't you under the covers yet?" he asked.

"I...I was waiting for you," she explained, lifting her gaze to his, as a single tear trickled down her
"Don't cry, darling. There's nothing to cry about. Everything is good, we're good." He walked around to her side of the bed and gathered her into his arms, holding her close.

Her muffled voice came from the depths of where her face was pressed into his shirt. "I keep thinking I'm being unfair to you. Every other person I know, well except for maybe Kayla, would have consummated their relationship by now, if they had a history like ours, and if they were already engaged." She looked up at him again and another tear fell. Am I completely selfish?"

"Molly, do you think God thinks you are being selfish? Haven't we researched this and decided together that we want to wait, if we can? Don't you think it will please God if we wait for His blessing on our wedding day?"

She sniffled. "I know it will please God, but right now I am more concerned about you. I...I know it's wrong, but I want to please you too."

Sherlock sighed. He knew this was a battle they would be fighting non-stop for the next few weeks. He thumbed away her tears. "You do please me, Molly Hooper. You please me more than I could ever have imagined was possible. It's certainly more than I deserve. And now, we are going to go to sleep. Things will be better in the morning, okay?"

"Okay," she said in a small voice.

Sherlock helped her get under the covers and then he undressed for bed, slipping beneath the duvet. He reached for her and murmured, "My Molly," into her hair, kissing it, before allowing himself to relax when he felt her also relax into his embrace.

She gave a little sigh of contentment and her even breathing shortly thereafter indicated that she had fallen asleep. It was only then, that he allowed himself to fall into the soft embrace of slumber.

Sherlock woke to the touch of soft lips on his. He opened his eyes to find Molly's liquid chocolate gaze upon him.

"Good morning, Sherlock," she said, stroking his cheek with her fingers. "Thank you for being the voice of reason last night."

He smiled at the woman he adored. "I think God is making sure there's always one of us who is feeling stronger in our resolve, or an interruption when we are both weak. It reassures me that this is the right thing for us."

His arms were still wound about her body and he held her close. "I love you, Molly Hooper."

"I love you more."

"Not possible," he stated firmly.

"Well, I've loved you longer, then."

He grinned at that, kissing her cheek. "Possibly, but definitely not seven years longer, seeing as I have come to realize I was falling in love with you already that first Christmas a few years ago. I was just distracted by what was going on with Irene Adler. If I hadn't gotten a text from her right
after I apologized, who knows what I might have done next?" He felt her body go tense against him at the name of the dominatrix.

"Darling, I will tell you again and again if you need to hear it. The woman meant nothing to me. She was just a challenge to my intellect. She had physical beauty, but she does not compare to your beauty, which radiates from you in so much more than a physical way." He knew he had said the right thing when he felt his fiancée relax against him once more.

He held her for a few minutes longer, before saying, "Much as I would love to stay in bed with you all day, I think we need to get up. Let's work on choosing those songs so we can send off the list to Andrew."

He withdrew his arms from around Molly, regretting the loss of her warmth, then slid out of bed to get dressed. He put on trousers, then selected a black shirt which he put on before his suit jacket.

He turned in surprise when Molly asked from the bed, "Do you ever get tired of always wearing such formal clothes? Not that I don't like them. In fact, I think you look incredibly hot, as in sexy hot. It's just, well, I've never seen you in anything casual."

"I...I guess I never thought about it. I've always wanted to be dressed appropriately in case I'm required at short notice to go to Scotland Yard, or to see Mycroft for some reason."

"I'd love to see you looking casual sometime, maybe in a pair of jeans with a t-shirt."

"A t-shirt? Heaven forbid you should ever convince me to wear one of those. I suppose I could be convinced to try some jeans, but I'd only wear them when I know I won't be called in for a case." he added, "come to think of it, I've never seen you in a pair of jeans either."

"I've worn them, but not since my Uni days. I suppose it's a bit hypocritical of me to suggest you try them if I don't do the same. How about we go shopping and both get a couple pairs? We could wear them on our honeymoon."

"I thought the point of the honeymoon is to require very few changes of clothes...besides bedroom attire." He winked and Molly blushed.

"I doubt anyone could stay sequestered for their whole honeymoon. We have to eat, you know."

"Fine, fine. Do you want to go shopping today? We probably should also buy a few groceries." Thinking about the egg disaster of the previous day, he went on, "we definitely need more eggs, and bacon too."

"Crumpets," said Molly. "They are my favourite breakfast food and we have none left, at least we won't have any after I eat the last two for breakfast. Unless of course you want them?"

"I will not fight you for your crumpets," he said, with a smile. "Toast will suffice for me."

"So shall we do that today then? We can do clothes shopping and food shopping afterwards. It is probably the best time seeing as I will be working again tomorrow."

Sherlock walked over to the bed and kissed Molly tenderly. "We can do that, but you had better get up now or we won't get things done. I'll make the toast and crumpets. What do you want on yours?"

"Butter and honey please. I'll have a coffee too, if you don't mind."

"As you wish." Sherlock bowed to his lady and left the room, leaving her to get dressed in peace.
In the kitchen, Sherlock prepared breakfast. Making crumpets and toast was definitely easier than bacon and eggs.

When Molly entered the kitchen, he pulled out her chair and said gallantly, "Your breakfast awaits, m'lady."

She giggled. "I can only imagine what John, or Mycroft for that matter, would say if they heard you speaking like that."

"Promise you won't tell them. I need to keep up that tough exterior. I will never live it down if they knew you have turned me into a romantic fool."

"Not a fool, never a fool. Just a man in love with a woman who feels the same way." She smiled at him as she finished eating her crumpets. "Just the right amount of butter and honey."

Sherlock rolled his eyes. "You're just trying to make me feel good about my humble accomplishments after the terrible mess I made yesterday."

Molly stood and put her plate in the sink before putting her arms around him from behind where he still sat, a half piece of toast left on his own plate.

"Darling, I am praising your efforts. Just accept them."

Sherlock shoveled the last bit of toast in his mouth, choked and coughed, then had to take a few sips of his coffee before he was able to speak. Clearing his throat and twisting in his chair to face Molly, he said, "I also accept non-verbal forms of gratitude."

Molly laughed at him. "You were in such a hurry for that, that you nearly choked to death on your toast."

"Breakfast is highly over-rated," he stated. "Kissing you is a much more productive use of my time." He stood, looking down at her solemnly until her laughter died away. "Now, will you kiss me already?" he asked, still in the same solemn tone.

Her response was to draw his head down to hers and offer him several minutes worth of passionate kisses.

He rather liked it when Molly initiated the kissing, even though he had basically manipulated her into it. Before he allowed himself to get too carried away, he broke their kiss, albeit with extreme reluctance to say, "Shall we get on with preparing our song list?"

"I'll get my notepad."

She was back within a minute with the notepad and two pencils, one of which she handed to Sherlock.

Sherlock put his plate in the sink and moved his chair so he and Molly could sit together at the kitchen table.

She folded over the sheet with their wedding to-do list and tore off a sheet for him to write on.

"You make a list of the songs you want, and I'll make one too, then we can put them together."

"Good plan." Sherlock thought about what songs he would like. He didn't listen to a lot of popular music, being much more attuned to the classical genre.
His first choice was Strauss's Blue Danube Waltz. He had promised Molly he would waltz with her, and that was probably the most recognizable waltz to have ever been written. He only hoped Andrew would be able to procure a good classical rendering of the piece.

He thought some more. There probably wasn't any point to adding more classical music to the list. Most people liked to dance to modern music. He remembered hearing "Oh, What a Night" at John's reception. That was the song playing when he had been looking around for someone to dance with. Janine had been dancing with someone, and Molly had been dancing with that boring ex-fiancé. No, he chided himself, he was being unfair to the poor chap who had lost the most wonderful woman in the world. Being thrown over for someone else must have been a bitter pill. He wondered briefly how the younger man had dealt with losing Molly.

Turning his attention back to the task at hand he added the song to his list. Try as he might, he could not come up with another song, and he hoped Molly had a better idea of popular songs. From the way her hands were flying across the page of her notepad, he assumed she was having a more successful time.

"I'm done," he pronounced, putting his hands behind his head and leaning back in his chair with legs crossed.

"So soon?" Molly glanced at his pitifully almost blank piece of paper. "You can only think of two songs?"

"Well, technically, "The Blue Danube" is not a song. It is an orchestral composition."

"That's the waltz we are going to dance to, right?"

"No, I thought we'd try doing the tango to it."

Molly looked at him with a confused expression, and he burst into laughter. "Darling, you need to learn when I'm making a joke."

"Sherlock, you NEVER make jokes. Although you have become a master at the double entendre." She gave him a look that almost made his toes curl.

"And you, my love, are quite adept at giving me looks filled with the promise of forbidden pleasures."

That made his sweet fiancée blush profusely.

Stroking her cheek, he said, "I love your blushes. You pretend to be a vixen, but you're so adorably sweet and innocent, and it shows your true nature when you blush." He turned her face towards him and kissed her gently, before asking, "How is your list getting along?"

"I just finished." She showed him the list. There were a few songs he vaguely recognized as popular dance tunes, some Paramore ones he recognized by the titles, after hearing them the previous evening. Some song called "A Thousand Years," by Christina Perry and "Just a Kiss" by Lady Antebellum.

"What's this one?" he asked, pointing at a song called "From this Moment On."

"I...I would like it to be the song we use for our wedding dance. It was released almost twenty years ago, by a country singer called Shania Twain. I'll play it for you. I heard it when I was a teenager and I wanted it to be my wedding song. I wasn't expecting it to be almost twenty years though. Maybe you will think it is too out-of-date."
"Can you find it for me on YouTube?"

"Probably." Molly got her phone and searched for the song. She found the video clip and played it, singing along with the words softly. Sherlock noticed she knew every word.

"Very appropriate," he commented. "It was obviously a favourite of yours. We can use it as our wedding song on one condition."

"What condition?" she asked, a little suspiciously.

"That you sing the words into my ear while we are dancing."

"You do realize I will have to have my arms around your neck, in order to do that? No traditional waltz position."

"We can save the waltz position for the actual waltz. I intend to hold my bride very closely during our wedding song."

"Your bride," Molly whispered. Her eyes were shining and Sherlock wanted to just take her in his arms and kiss her senseless. His bride, his Molly. Instead he lifted her hand to his lips.

"My bride," he repeated in his rich baritone as her hand trembled in his.

Giving himself a mental shake, Sherlock said, "If you are finished, I'll text the DJ our list now."

Molly nodded mutely, staring into his eyes with pupils dilated. He forced himself to tear his gaze away, and to get his phone. He carefully transcribed all the songs on his and Molly's list, and sent the text to Andrew.

He looked at his watch. "It's almost lunchtime. Shall we go downstairs to Speedy's for a sandwich and then head out for our little shopping excursion?"

"That sounds good."

The couple collected their things, including phones, then headed downstairs.

Chapter End Notes

What did you think about Molly needing Sherlock to be the strong one for once and his response? That scene came out of my typing fingers by accident. It is funny how your brain can just do stuff without a script!

I love the song "From this Moment On." I sang it to my husband at our wedding reception over 19 years ago. Actually I sang during our ceremony too, a song I had written for him. Did you enjoy the conversation about their wedding song list? I really don't think Sherlock would know too much popular music.

Updated for better flow 7/4/18
They walked into Speedy's and were greeted effusively by an elderly woman. "Sherlock, where have you been lately? You used to be here every week, sometimes twice a week."

"Good afternoon, Iris."

'It's about time you brought your fiancée in here so I could congratulate you both on your engagement."

"We have been rather busy, Iris," Sherlock replied, glancing at his fiancée. "Molly, this is Iris, the owner of this fine establishment."

Hello," she said shyly.

"Are you eating here today, Sherlock, dearie?"

"We are," he responded.

"Well, take a seat wherever you like, and I'll bring you a menu."

The elderly woman hurried away, returning a couple minutes later with two menus, which the engaged couple perused.

"Are you going to eat my sandwich again?"

"Hmmm," Molly looked at the menu, "I'm in the mood for a bacon butty, I think."

Sherlock grinned. "I'll have one too."

Iris returned and took their order, bringing glasses of water for them as well.

Within a half hour the pair had finished eating and were ready to go shopping.

"Where do you want to go," asked Sherlock, as they exited the café.

"Westfield, I think."
A taxi cane past and was hailed. Sherlock helped Molly into the vehicle, then got in himself, giving instructions that they be taken to Westfield.

"If we didn't have to buy groceries afterwards, you might have persuaded me to take you to the place where you had those cocktails last time," he remarked.

Molly blushed. "Don't remind me of that night. I do not want to embarrass myself in front of you again."

"Don't be embarrassed about getting sick. It got the alcohol out of your system."

"Not that part," whispered Molly in his ear. "I mean the way you told me I behaved after I got home."

Sherlock gave a low, rumbling laugh. "You were completely adorable, despite having had too much to drink."

She gave him a shy smile, then rested her head against his shoulder until they reached the shopping mall.

Entering the huge complex, the pair walked to a sign which showed the locations of all the various boutiques, restaurants and the like.

"How about 'Allsaints'?" suggested Molly. "They have a good selection of jeans for both men and women. Maybe a little expensive, though."

"Well, let's take a look."

They made their way to the ground floor store.

Inside the store, there was a large assortment of different types of clothes including jeans.

"Let's look for jeans for you, first," said Molly, moving over to the piles of jeans.

Sherlock frowned. "Do I really have to do this?"

"Yes, you do," she said emphatically. "You are not wearing suits on our honeymoon."

"I expect to be wearing very little," he said softly in her ear.

"Stop distracting me with your innuendo," Molly replied with a giggle. "What size do you wear in trousers?"

He told her and together they looked at jeans until there was a small pile in front of them.

"Now what?" he asked, a little perplexed. "Do we narrow down the choices and buy a couple?"

Molly rolled her eyes. " Haven't you ever tried on clothes before?"

"My suits are custom made. I choose the style, then they are tailored to fit my body correctly."

Molly looked at him in astonishment. "You've never tried on clothes before?"

"Not that I recall."

"Well, there's a dressing room for men over there." She indicated a sign to their left. "Take the
jeans with you and try them on. I'll wait outside the dressing room and you can show me what each one looks like."

Sherlock made a pained expression. "I hope you know, my love, I would never do this for anyone but you."

"Good. Now go."

Sherlock disappeared into the men's dressing room with the pile of jeans. A few minutes later he walked out in the first pair.

Molly's mouth dropped open and she swallowed hard. Her mouth felt suddenly dry. If Sherlock looked hot in a suit, this was another thing entirely, but just as sexy. The straight leg jeans hugged his narrow hips and emphasized his slender build. He looked totally embarrassed. "Well?"

"They look...nice," she said, resisting the temptation to flutter her hands in front of her face.

He pouted. "Not good, then. Just nice?"

"I...I don't mean nice, I mean really, really nice." Her voice dropped to a whisper, "Hot, even."

"Well, I suppose these are a contender then."

He returned to the dressing room and came out a few more times, displaying the various jeans. His body seemed to have been poured into them, the effect was so dramatic.

Making a decision about which ones to purchase was very difficult, but they finally chose three, in differing shades of blue.

"Satisfied now?" he asked.

"Extremely. But you need some casual button down shirts as well."

"I suppose my usual shirts would look a little odd with jeans," he agreed. "I refuse to try them on though. I know my shirt size."

"We'll have to go elsewhere for those," commented Molly, "they only have casual shirts like t-shirts here."

"Before we buy my jeans, it's your turn to try some on for me."

"Fair enough." They wandered over to the women's section and Molly found five different pairs of jeans in varying styles.

She went into the dressing room and tried on the first pair. Looking in the mirror, she decided they looked quite good. They were skinny jeans that tapered at the ankles and hugged the curves of her bottom rather nicely. She walked out of the dressing room to show Sherlock.

This time, it was his turn to swallow hard, and Molly was extremely satisfied with the way he was looking at her. "They look fantastic, Molly. You have to get them."

"I still have four pairs to try on," she remarked.

"If they all look as good on you as these ones, I am buying them all for you."

"You don't need to buy my jeans."
He shrugged. "Money is of little consequence to me. I am prepared to use all of mine in taking care of you properly. Your income is a bonus that you can use as you see fit for little luxuries. For now, though," he added, "try on those other jeans so we can get out of here."

"Okay, we can talk more about finances later." Molly put on the second pair which had a lower cut. She didn't like it as much as the first pair, the waist was below her belly button and it made her feel a little uncomfortable. She dutifully trotted out to show Sherlock, however.

He gave a frank look of approval. "I like those too."

"I don't like these as much. They show my belly button." She lifted her jumper to show him. Fortunately, there was nobody else in the women's department, due to the fact it was early afternoon.

Sherlock gave her a sultry look. "I rather like the look of that."

"Well I don't," stated Molly flatly, pulling her jumper back down to cover her navel. "On to pair number three."

The next pair of jeans was like the first, but in black, and got the nod of approval.

Pairs four and five were straight leg jeans, in different shades of blue.

Molly put one pair on and took the other out of the dressing room to show Sherlock.

"Do you like this style?"

Sherlock raised an eyebrow. "Of course. I like every style you've tried. Why aren't you going to try on the last pair?"

"It's the same as the one I'm currently wearing, except for the colour. Which do you prefer?"

"Get them both."

"I do not need four pairs of jeans, three is my limit."

"In that case I'd sugest pairs one, three and the lighter blue of this one, because you have a darker one already. I still like the low-cut jeans though. Are you sure you wo't reconsider, for my sake?"

"Not gonna happen."

"Well, I tried," he said, pouting.

"I'm going to get changed now. We have six pairs of jeans between us. I'd say that's a pretty good amount for one day."

After Molly came out of the dressing room, the couple walked to the register and Sherlock pulled out his credit card. "We'll take these six pairs of jeans, please."

"I can pay for mine," insisted Molly, pulling out her own credit card.

Sherlock gave her a long look, then capitulated. "Very well, but we shall be discussing this when we get home."

Molly gulped. For the first time since their engagement, he looked cross with her.
He paid for his jeans, smiling and nodding at the saleslady when she saw the name on his card and exclaimed, "Oh my God! You're that detective. I didn't recognize you without your hat."

(Another reason for him to not wear that awful hat,) thought Molly. At least he wasn't recognized as easily without it.

After they left the store, Molly asked, "Should we look for some new shirts for you?"

"Not today," Sherlock answered shortly. "Let's get the groceries and go home."

Molly looked at her him apprehensively. His jaw was set and his face had a grim look to it she was not familiar with. "What's wrong, Sherlock?" she asked.

"Nothing." he said in a distant tone.

A ripple of fear went through her. (Was he really so upset about her insisting on paying for her own clothes?)

Sherlock hailed a taxi, which dropped them off at a small supermarket close to Baker Street.

Sherlock hadn't said a word during the ride and Molly blinked back tears when she saw him staring ahead in stony silence.

At the supermarket, Molly pulled out her shopping list and they bought the items she had written on the paper. Sherlock answered in monosyllables when she asked him where to find items. He paid for the groceries. She did not dare suggest she pay for them, and they walked home, arms laden with the bags of shopping.

Back at the flat, Sherlock deposited his bags on the kitchen table and stalked back to the sitting room, seating himself in his chair, leaving Molly to put everything away by herself.

With every minute that passed she felt worse. Was Sherlock regretting his decision to marry her? Deep down, she knew she was being ridiculous, but he was breaking her heart. His cold silence reminded her of the way he used to be, before he was her Sherlock.

After everything had been put away, including the bags containing their pairs of jeans, Molly took several steps into the living room.

Sherlock had his eyes closed and his arms were on the sides of his chair, fingers gripping the edge so hard, his knuckles were white.

"Sherlock...do you...do you not want to marry me anymore?" Her voice faltered and she heaved a great sob, unable to stop the tears that had been so close to the surface for the past several minutes.

He looked up then and stood, walking to her. Through the haze of tears she thought she detected that his eyes were also bright with unshed tears. He put his arms around her then, resting his chin atop her head, saying in an anguished tone, "Molly, my heart, don't cry. I'm such an arse. God, Molly, I'm so sorry."

He stroked her hair, whispering, "Je t'aime, je t'adore, I love you. Of course I still want to marry you. You are the one who deserves better than me."

He held her until her tears had subsided, then drew her to his chair, pulling her onto his lap, and she was sitting sideways so her left cheek was on his chest.
"Why were you so cross with me, Sherlock? What did I do?" she asked in a small voice.

His right hand tightened around her waist, while he placed his left hand on her cheek, wiping away the residual tears gently with his thumb.

He was silent for almost a minute, and Molly was beginning to think he was not planning to answer her question, when finally he spoke.

"You didn't do anything wrong, my darling. It was entirely my fault. You...you hurt my pride." He took a deep breath and continued, "You see, I've never been responsible for anyone besides myself until you came along. For the first time in my life, someone really needed me, you needed me. I desperately want to be there for you, to take care of you, to show you how much I love you."

He continued, "Molly, my dearest heart, I know it's absurd, but when you insisted on paying for your own clothes, it hurt my pride terribly. It hit me all at once that you are an independent woman of means, that you don't really need me at all." His voice broke on the last word, and he lapsed into silence.

Molly lifted her head and turned to look at him. She was stunned to see that his eyes were closed, and silent tears were running down his cheeks. This time she was the one to comfort him. She pressed her lips against his, and felt his hold on her tighten further.

"Look at me, Sherlock," she pleaded. He opened his eyes and she could see agony contained within their blue-green depths.

"I do need you, more than you know. You're a part of me. Sure, I have a well paid job, and I have supported myself for years, but it isn't financial support I need from you."

He seemed about to speak, and she put a finger to his lips. "Let me finish. What I need from you, crave from you is your emotional support and your love. From the moment you asked me to marry you, you have given me that. When I felt you withdraw from me earlier, it was the first time since we've been together that I felt you isolating yourself from me. It terrified me. You've grown so much emotionally over the past few weeks and I was afraid I had done something that would cause you to revert to the way you were before the events at Sherrinford."

Sherlock shook his head at that. "That will never happen, Molly. I might sometimes act like a complete arse, but it will never last long. I love you too much for that. Besides, isn't Christianity all about forgiving one another and not holding grudges? At least, that's what I perceive from what I have read so far in the Bible."

"That's very true. I forgive you for the way you behaved, but you must also forgive me. I didn't realize how much it meant to you to pay for my things as well as yours. If you want, I will close my accounts and transfer everything over to our accounts next time I have a day off. In fact, I insist upon it. I'll talk to human resources tomorrow or the next day and arrange to have my paycheck switched to our joint savings account. That way your money can be used for all our expenses and mine to save for long term projects."

"You don't need to do that."

"I know. I want to do it. I always intended to do it once we were married anyway. If I do it now, it's one less thing I need to do later."

"If you're sure..."

"I am," she stated firmly.
"Very well. I still need to inform Mycroft about the account number change for that monthly deposit too. At least I already changed the bank account details for my credit card bill."

"You only have one credit card? Even I have three, in case something happens to one and it doesn't work for some reason."

"I've never had reason to keep more than one. I have a very high credit limit. In any case, if I ever encounter a problem, I can ask my brother for help."

Molly put her arms around his neck, and lightly twisted his curls. "Have I told you lately that I am totally in love with you?"

"Show me."

And she did, placing soft kisses on his cheekbones, feeling the taste of salt from his tears, kissing his jawline, his forehead and finally, his lips. She kissed him desperately, wanting him to know their love was sacred, unbreakable.

The kisses were electrifying and Molly felt tingles all the way to her spine. She shivered with delight when Sherlock's lips left hers to trace their own path across her cheek to her ear, teasing the lobe with his tongue. He then traced a line with his tongue along her jaw until his mouth captured hers once again.

For several minutes they stayed locked in their embrace, lost to the world outside the confines of their little flat, lost in each other.

Finally Sherlock dragged his mouth away from Molly's and said, in his velvety deep voice, "My God, Molly, if that is an example of the way we make up after a disagreement, remind me to have an argument with you every day."

Molly laughed, dropped her hands to slide them around her beloved's waist, and laid her head against his chest, where she could feel the thumping rhythm of his rapid heartbeat, accelerated to a speed that matched her own.

They sat for some time contentedly, luxuriating in the feeling of closeness. Theirs was a connection that far surpassed the realms of physical need, it was a spiritual one, touched by God. This was the bond Molly experienced as they sat holding each other, and she knew by Sherlock's contented sigh, that he felt exactly the same way. There was no need to put it into words.

Chapter End Notes

What did you think of the shopping excursion? Don't you agree Sherlock in jeans would be extremely hot?

So, they have had their first little "domestic." Or "row." How did you find it? I hope the conversation read as believable. I couldn't let it drag on though, because I feel their love is strong enough that forgiveness would be always quick on both sides. I do see Sherlock as being very protective in wanting to take care of Molly too, and I have always thought he does not care about money either. He is no Scrooge.

Updated for corrections and better flow 7/4/18
Sherlock reflects on his faith and later receives a strange letter.

Sherlock sat in his chair with his arms around the woman he loved who was sitting on his lap. He silently thanked God for bringing her into his life, for opening his eyes to the certain knowledge of redemption through faith.

He still felt ashamed for the way he had reacted to Molly’s insistence on paying for her own jeans, but he knew that every couple had disagreements from time to time. Undoubtedly there would be times where they argued over something. Molly had of course been angry a few days ago, justifiably so. This was the first time he had felt a sense of hurt over something she had done. He knew that feeling had come from a sense of hurt pride, however.

The old adage, “Pride comes before a fall” was quite correct, even when it came to hurt pride. He had caused Molly unnecessary heartache. To think that only this morning they had been working on wedding songs. Thank God things were resolved between them now.

He would have continued to just hold her, if there hadn’t been a knock on the door. Neither he nor Molly had thought to lock it, and the landlady walked right in as if she owned the place, which of course she did.

“Sherlock,” she said, “a message was delivered...” She suddenly took note of the fact that Molly was sitting on Sherlock’s lap. “Oh, I’m sorry, did I catch you at a bad time?”

Molly moved to stand, but Sherlock held tightly to her. He would let her rise when he was ready, not as a result of them being interrupted.

Mrs. Hudson peered at them. “Sherlock, did you make Molly cry? As a matter of fact, your eyes look a little red too. What’s going on?”

“Everything’s fine, Mrs. Hudson,” said Sherlock smoothly. “We had a little disagreement, but everything is back to normal now.”

“Well, disagreements lead to making up, and that can be a lot of fun.” She gave the pair a knowing look. “My late husband and I had some huge rows, but oh, when we made up it was soooo good. The make-up sex was...”

Sherlock had no desire to listen to any more of Mrs. Hudson's reminiscing, especially when it came to sex. It was hard enough to think about his parents as sexual beings, let alone his elderly landlady. “Yes, yes, I’m sure it was,” he interrupted. “Now, what’s this about a message?”

“Oh, I almost forgot. A message was delivered for you this afternoon. The man who delivered it said it was very important you read it at once.” She handed him an envelope addressed to himself in a feminine hand.
“Intriguing,” he murmured. Seeing that Mrs. Hudson was not leaving, seemingly interested in the contents of the envelope, he added, “Thank you for bringing this to me. If there’s nothing else?”

Mrs. Hudson obviously knew she was being dismissed. With a little huff, she left the flat and returned to her own.

Before Sherlock could stop her, Molly hopped off his lap. “You need your hands to open that envelope. Do you have a letter opener?”

“There’s one in the miscellaneous drawer,” said Sherlock absently. He was inspecting the envelope. It seemed ordinary enough, no identifying markings. The handwriting was unfamiliar to him.

Molly brought the letter opener to him and went to sit on the sofa, curling her legs beneath her.

He slit open the envelope and pulled out a single sheet of paper.

The missive had been done on a computer, then printed out. It was fairly brief and to the point.

“Dear Mr. Holmes,
I require an urgent consultation with you. It is of the utmost importance that I see you as soon as possible. I will be at 221B Baker Street at four o’clock tomorrow.
Yours sincerely, Delia Erren.”

Sherlock walked over to the sofa and sat beside Molly. “This is extremely odd. What do you think?”

He showed the letter, well, really it was more of a note, to Molly.

“Wow,” she remarked, “that’s a bit rude. What kind of person makes their own appointment with you?”

“It is most unusual for me to receive a consultation request by mail also. Most people send me an email via the link on John’s blog.”

“Can you deduce anything about it?”

“Not much. The handwriting on the envelope is definitely a woman’s, which fits with the letter being signed with a woman’s name. She did not sign the letter by hand, though, and the printer paper is nothing special. The fact that she demands a consultation with me and gives me no opportunity to decline, speaks to a rather agitated state of mind. There is also no return address. Then there is the fact that it was personally delivered by someone, rather than posted, which indicates this is an urgent matter.”

“It’s too bad I have to work tomorrow until four, although perhaps she will still be here when I get home. You do intend to meet with her, don’t you?”

“Certainly. It isn’t as if my time is currently booked. In fact, I should look for some more cases to work on while you are at work, otherwise I shall find myself very restless without you around. Perhaps I’ll start taking clients again at home.”

“That sounds like a good idea. I feel terrible that you have done very little of your own work since we became engaged.”

“It was past time for me to have a break anyway,” he shrugged dismissively. “Once we return from
our honeymoon I am sure I will get back into the swing of things. It isn’t like John has as much
time for it anymore, with his medical practice and a child to raise.”

He gave Molly a meaningful glance. “I will also have to reduce my workload permanently once we
have our own child. I used to live for my experiments, and my crime-solving. It seems my priorities
have changed. Even Lestrade hasn’t contacted me much since we’ve been engaged. I presume he is
respectful of the fact that we have a big event to plan which must take precedence.”

“You don’t miss the high of deducing things nobody else can figure out?”

“I will always enjoy using my intellect to help with cases. However, I have burned the candle at
both ends for so many years now, it actually feels good to take a break from it so I can concentrate
on you.”

He threw the note on the coffee table before putting his arms around Molly. He kissed her slowly,
deliberately, conveying to her the fact that she was his priority now and always would be. Keeping
himself in check, Sherlock released her and said, “I suppose we should have dinner.”

“I’ll heat up the shepherd’s pie from last night,” said Molly, and she went into the kitchen to do
just that.

Sherlock decided now was as good a time as any for him to check his emails. By the time he had
sorted through them, assigning each potential case a number on his one to ten scale, dinner was
ready.

He went to the kitchen table and accepted a plate of food from Molly, along with a cup of tea. As
he ate, he thought about the emails. None of them could be considered more than a five, though.
His eight and above cases almost always came from either Lestrade or Mycroft. Even his brother of
late had backed off from asking for his assistance.

The small cases though, they had always been his bread and butter. Those were the ones from
which he earned a living. The cases from Scotland Yard he usually did just to help Greg, and he
received no compensation for them, except in the rare instances where a reward was offered. The
dangerous cases Mycroft offered usually paid very well, but they were few and far between, and
Mycroft had already indicated he was no longer to be consulted on matters with extreme elements
of danger.

There was a time when Sherlock would have been utterly bored without the thrill of a crime to
solve. His mind palace had always been cluttered with information about pending cases and his
experiments. Now it was filled with Molly and thoughts of their future together, and wedding
planning of course.

“You’re miles away,” observed Molly. She had evidently noticed his untouched plate of food,
which was growing cold. Her food was already gone, so he had been lost in thought for some time,
apparently.

“Just thinking about work."

“You mean the mysterious woman who is coming here tomorrow?”

“Actually I was still thinking how my priorities have changed. I also think Greg has backed off
lately from asking for my help.”

“Why don’t you text him and see if he has anything that needs your help?”
“I may do so, but not until I’ve met with this woman tomorrow, in the event that she has an important case for me. She had better not request that I leave town, though. She will be very disappointed when I refuse.”

Sherlock began to eat his food. It had gotten cold, but he didn’t mind. Mrs. Hudson’s food always tasted good, hot or cold.

“Do you want me to heat up your food again?” questioned Molly.

“Nope, it’s fine. After I eat, I need to respond to some of my emails and set up some appointments. What are you going to do?”

“I think I’ll throw some clothes into the washing machine and then catch up on my devotions. It seems I keep getting behind lately.”

“I should really continue reading the Bible as well. I think I’ll do that after my shower tonight.”

Molly kissed his cheek. “You do that, honey.” She put her plate and cup in the sink, then went off to collect some dirty clothes.

Sherlock liked it when she called him honey. It made him think of bees. For years he had harboured a secret desire to raise bees when he retired. His grandfather had been a beekeeper, and he would occasionally visit the bee farm the man had owned. Bees were fascinating creatures. Sherlock also happened to really like the taste of honey.

His grandparents always had fresh honey on the table when he would visit during his university holidays, and he would always be supplied with pots of it to take back to school afterwards. Their farm was in Sussex. Although his grandparents had been gone for some time, William Holmes still owned the property and leased it to tenants. One day, eventually, Sherlock hoped to take over the running of things. But that was still at least twenty years away. He wondered what Molly would think about that.

Having finished his dinner, Sherlock put his things in the sink and returned to his laptop. He reviewed the emails from earlier, replying to some with requests for more information and inviting others to come in for a consultation. He decided he could spend the days when Molly was at the hospital doing his own work. If a person needed him to investigate the site of a crime, he would deal with it as it came.

He had noticed Molly puttering about while he was busy. She had done the dishes, thrown some clothes in the washing machine and finally, sat on the sofa with her “our Daily Bread” devotional and Bible.

His phone pinged with a text alert, and Sherlock pulled it out of his pocket. It was from Andrew, who confirmed that he had received their song choices. He had most of them, and was sure he could obtain the couple he didn’t own, including the “Blue Danube” waltz. Sherlock sent back a thumbs up response to indicate he had seen the text.

He walked over to the sofa and sat next to Molly, putting his laptop on the coffee table after closing it.

Molly looked up from her reading. “Did you get some work done?”

“Yes, I sent off a few emails and need to wait for a response. I also just got a text from the DJ. He has most of the songs we requested and says he can get the rest.”
Molly beamed. “That’s great! I still need to choose a piece for when I’m walking down the aisle to you. I was thinking, and I know it’s probably a cliché, I’d like the organist to play Pachelbel’s Canon in D.”

“Why not have a string quartet play it?”

“I have no clue how I would be able to find anyone to do that, although it would certainly be lovely.”

“Leave it to me. I think I can arrange it with a little help from Mycroft.”

“Alright then,” Molly said, kissing his cheek before returning to reading.

Well, no time like the present, thought Sherlock, pulling out his phone once again and texting Mycroft.

“Need another favour.”

It wasn’t long before an answering ping sounded from his phone.

“What now? By the way, how did you enjoy your concert last night?”

“Molly loved it. Thank you for buying the whole box for us, it was very nice to have her all to myself.”

“Why do I get the feeling you spent less time watching the concert and more time ogling your fiancée?”

“I do not ogle, I appreciate.”

“Whatever, same thing, brother mine. What’s this favour?”

“Can you find me a string quartet to play for the wedding? Molly would really like to walk down the aisle to Pachelbel’s Canon in D.”

“I thought you said I wouldn’t have much to do as an usher. God, I hate texting.”

“Bit late for you to come over tonight. Anyway, this is not an usher duty, it’s a request from your little brother.”

“Very well, I’ll see what I can do and let you know.”

“Thanks, Mycroft.”

“Don’t thank me yet. I have to find these people first.”

“Thanks anyway.”

“Yes, yes. Must go, have late plans for the evening. Good night.”

“Good night.”

Probably a late night assignation with Lady Smallwood, thought Sherlock as he turned off his phone.

Molly was looking at him, apparently finished with her reading. “That was a rather long text
conversation,” she commented.

“I was texting Mycroft. He asked about the concert. He had the nerve to say I had probably spent more time ogling you than watching it, and I assured him I did not ogle you, I appreciated you.”

“Well, I certainly appreciated your appreciation,” she grinned.

“Did you now? I think a little more appreciation is in order, wouldn’t you agree?” he said, tracing her lips with his finger.

She surprised him by capturing his fingertip in her mouth, thereby stilling its movement. Then she released his finger and said by way of explanation, “You were making my lips tingle.”

“You didn’t answer my question, sweetheart. Can I show you some more appreciation?”

She sighed happily and leaned towards him, “Yes, most definitely.”

Their lips met as Sherlock ably demonstrated his appreciation of his sweet pathologist, their kiss deepening in intensity until they were both breathless, and Sherlock had to draw back so he would not lose himself too deeply in the embrace.

“I’m going to take a shower,” he said huskily. “It’s getting late and you have an early start tomorrow.”

“I know,” sighed Molly. It has been nice to have a couple days off but it always goes too fast. I think I’ll send Kayla a text while you’re in the shower. I’m very curious to see what has been going on with her and John. Have you spoken to him at all?”

“Not since Sunday, so I’m as much in the dark as you are.” He gave Molly another quick kiss, and then exited the sitting room to take his shower.

Freshly cleaned and shaven, he entered the bedroom where Molly was gathering her things for her own shower. She had placed her Bible on her bedside table.

“May I?” he asked, indicating the tome.

“Of course.” She handed it to him and left the bedroom, carrying her nightwear.

As he waited for her to come to bed, Sherlock opened the Bible. He had almost finished the book of Acts. Upon completing the last chapter, he returned the Bible to its place on Molly’s nightstand. The shower had been turned off a couple minutes earlier so he knew she would return to the bedroom soon.

He lay with hands behind his head. When Molly came in he waited for her to get under the duvet. He held out his arms for her and she came to him, offering her lips for a sweet goodnight kiss. All was right with the world, and they slept, content in each other’s arms.

Chapter End Notes

Yes, I too have jumped on the ACD canon about Sherlock wishing to raise bees when he retires! I even added a little backstory to give it a bit of context, rather than have it a random desire.
Mostly domestic fluff, although I did want to show how Sherlock's faith is growing.
Hope you liked the little brotherly texting chat and Mrs. Hudson conversation too!
Updated for better flow 7/2/18
The alarm sounded at six. Sherlock’s eyes opened and he saw Moly reaching to turn it off.

"Snooze," he ordered softly.

Molly’s hand stilled its progress towards the off button and hit the snooze one instead. When it seemed she actually planned to sleep for the extra minutes he growled, "I didn't tell you that so you could actually go back to sleep."

She looked at Sherlock questioningly, and he lost no time in pulling her close to kiss her tenderly.

'Oh," she murmured in understanding as he continued to move his lips over hers, ensuring that they were both fully awake and ready to face the day.

When the alarm sounded again, Molly turned it off and quipped, "We should rename the snooze button the smooch button. I'll take kissing you over sleep anytime."

Sherlock laughed and said, "Seeing as I have now allowed you less time in which to get ready, I will get your breakfast while you get yourself ready for work. Do you want your crumpets with butter and honey, and a coffee?"

"You know me so well," Molly said with a loving smile.

Sherlock slipped out of bed, quickly put on a dressing gown and went to the kitchen so Molly could get dressed.

By the time she entered the kitchen, ready for work with hair in a ponytail and her usual minimal makeup, he had breakfast ready for both of them.

As they ate, Molly asked, "Did John tell you what time he is bringing Rosie by on Friday?"

"I'll text him later and find out," he promised.

"I was also thinking, we need a chair for Rosie to sit in, now that she is on solid food as well. Do you think you could find something online we can buy?"

"No problem," said Sherlock. "I have all morning to do whatever needs to be done. Can you think of anything else we need to be prepared for our babysitting weekend?"

"I assume John will bring everything else she needs as far as her food and nappies. Maybe we should look for a play mat as well. Oh, and make sure John brings the video monitor so we can keep an eye on her when she is upstairs in the cot."
"Will do. I'm sure I can get what we need from Amazon, and with Prime, it will get here in time for Friday evening."

"Perfect," said Molly, depositing her plate in the sink. She kissed Sherlock's cheek and said, "Thanks for breakfast, honey. I had better go or I'll miss the train."

Sherlock got up and held her jacket for her so she could put her arms into it. She collected her phone and handbag and was about to exit the flat when he stopped her and gave her a swift goodbye kiss.

"Have a good day at work. I'll text you later, once I've done the things you asked."

"Sounds good." She waved goodbye and headed downstairs to go to work.

After Molly was gone, Sherlock took care of the breakfast dishes and got dressed. He remembered that she had put clothes in the washing machine the previous night. He went upstairs to get the plastic washing basket and put the assortment of her pants, bras and his boxers into it. There were also a few pairs of socks which were not quite dry.

He returned upstairs to put the socks over the radiator airer, then returned to their bedroom and put away the rest of the clothes and undergarments. He was rather intrigued to discover that Molly had two sets of matching bras and knickers. He recognized the one bra as the one Molly had been wearing on Friday when they had come so close to almost consummating their love. Apparently she had been wearing a matched set. His mind drew mental images of her wearing that set, and he had to force himself not to dwell on it. He had too much else to do.

After putting everything away, Sherlock returned to the sitting room and booted up his laptop. He really needed to buy another desk. Maybe he should add that to the Amazon shopping list.

First, though, he checked his emails. There were two emails asking for consultations for the following day, one at ten-thirty and the other at two, so he put the information on his phone calendar as a reminder. He deleted the spam and the inevitable fan letters, one of which even contained a risqué photo. It was amazing what some people would do to get noticed. He felt sorry for them.

Having finished with the emails, he decided to text John.

"Hey, John. What time should we expect you on Friday? Is there anything we need to purchase for Rosie to make her stay more comfortable? The cot-bed is already set up and I am going to buy a feeding chair and play mat today as well. Molly said to remind you to bring the video monitor too."

While he waited for John's response, Sherlock went to the Amazon website. He found a suitable play mat and feeding chair that had good reviews and added them to his shopping cart. Next, he perused the computer desks offered through Amazon. There was a suitable black one with three drawers for his case files. It was a shame all his previous files from cases had been destroyed, along with the desk during the explosion. At least a lot of them lived on, in a way, through John's blog. He added the desk to the shopping cart, realizing with a groan it would also require assembly as the cot had.

A text alert sounded. It was not Molly's alert, so he was certain it was John. He was correct, and read the text quickly.

"I'll drop Rosie off at eight on Friday if that's okay. You sound like you have everything organized
pretty well. I'll bring baby formula milk, baby cereal and nappies. I'll pack bibs and the monitor too."

Sherlock texted back, "Sounds good. We are looking forward to it."

"You might not be quite so thrilled by the end of the weekend," was the response, which made Sherlock smile in amusement.

He returned to his laptop. There was one thing he still needed to check. He thought for a moment and remembered. Molly had said after the concert that there were a couple songs she didn't recognize, and he wanted to check if a new album had been released. Sure enough, a new album, "After Laughter" had just been released the previous month. To double check, he looked at the song list. Yes, the song Molly had mentioned, "I told you so," was one of them.

Sherlock added the MP3 download to his shopping cart. He’d have to figure out a way to get the songs onto Molly's phone. He thought he could add her to his Amazon account so she could download the album onto her phone.

Sherlock went to his shopping cart and purchased the items. The download was immediately available and the other items would come on Friday.

Thus satisfied, Sherloc decided to enter his mind palace for some solitude and reflection. He closed his eyes and started to think about the letter from Delia Erren. For some reason the name felt vaguely familiar, although he couldn't figure out why. What was this urgent matter she needed help with? It was rather intriguing. Well, he would find out at four o'clock.

Sherlock remained in his mind palace, turning over various things in his mind, the other upcoming consultations, the weekend ahead of babysitting and, of course, his wedding. He finally broke out of his reverie when his stomach growled, indicating it was lunch time.

He decided it would be a good time to see Mrs. Hudson. Perhaps he could time it well enough that she would give him some lunch. With that in mind, he went downstairs and knocked on his landlady's door.

"Hello, Sherlock," said Mrs. Hudson after opening the door, "I was just making myself a sandwich for lunch. Would you like one? I've just made tea as well."

Sherlock smiled in satisfaction. Perfect timing, he thought complacently.

"Yes, thank you, Mrs Hudson." He waited until she had put a sandwich and tea in front of him.

"I have a favour to ask. I have a lady coming at four, for a consultation. Can you please send her up when she arrives?"

"Of course," she responded. "Does Molly know about it?"

"Of course she does," he huffed, a little indignantly. What on earth was his landlady inferring? "In fact, she will probably arrive home at some point during the consultation, depending on how long it takes."

"I was just teasing, dear. A new client then?"

"I don't really know. The letter you brought up last night was from this woman, and she demanded a consultation. She provided no contact information, so I could hardly refuse her request for a meeting."
"Very mysterious," commented Mrs. Hudson.

"Indeed. I also need you to keep an eye out for me on Friday. I'm having several items delivered. If you could open the door for the delivery people, I will make sure I go downstairs at once."

"I can do that. You have certainly been busy lately with purchases."

"It was time for me to buy a replacement desk. I am also getting a couple things for Rosie to aid us in caring for her this weekend."

"Lovely. I hope you will let me visit while you are watching her."

"Of course. She is your goddaughter too. Just remember though, I'm her favourite." He grinned.

"My goodness, you do seem happy these days."

"Why wouldn't I be? I'm marrying the most wonderful woman in the world."

"That you are, dear." Mrs. Hudson smiled back at him.

Soon afterwards, Sherlock left Mrs. Hudson's flat. He was about to head upstairs when he suddenly recalled that today was the anniversary of Molly's father's death. He decided to take a short walk to the supermarket and buy some flowers for her, just in case she needed cheering up when she came home.

Having purchased a lovely bunch of wildflowers, he took them home and put them on the kitchen counter, intending to present them to his fiancée when she got home. Hopefully his meeting with the mystery woman would not take long. He decided he should also text Molly, as he had promised.

Sherlock sat in his chair and texted, "How are you doing, love? I'm sorry I didn't remember until you had gone about this sad anniversary."

The text came back a few minutes later. "Just finished a post-mortem. I'm doing okay, except for the fact I was working on the body of a man who was around the same age as my dad when he died..."

"Today of all days? I'm sorry."

"I'll be okay. How has your day been?"

"Good. I ordered the stuff for Rosie and a new desk. John is bringing Rosie at eight on Friday."

"You'll have her to yourself for a bit, then. I'm on from eleven to eight, tomorrow and Friday. Gotta get back to work. See you when I get home."

"Okay, love you."

"Love you too XX"

By the time he finished his texting conversation with Molly, it was two-thirty, and Sherlock decided he had time to finish composing the wedding piece for Molly. He took up his violin and played, going over the tune he had already notated and making some minor changes. He finished composing and was quite pleased with the result. Hopefully Molly would like it. He put the completed piece of music into a folder, which he then slipped between some books on the bookshelf.
His timing was perfect. He was just putting his violin away when he heard the sound of the doorbell.

A minute later Sherlock heard the unmistakable light tread of a woman's footsteps ascending the stairs. He could hear the clicking sound that indicated she was wearing high heals.

There was a knock at his door and Sherlock opened it.

The words of polite greeting died on his lips and his mouth dropped open in mute astonishment, as he beheld the last person in the world he had expected to see again.

It was Irene Adler.

Chapter End Notes

Dun, dun, dun! How's that for a cliffhanger? Did you really think "The Woman" would take it lying down when Sherlock rebuffed her once and for all? I have been waiting for months to post this chapter.

I know some of you like a bit of angst sprinkled in with the romance, so here comes some more of it for you, ha ha. Are you shocked, surprised? Or did you have a feeling she might be coming into the story at some point? I'd love to hear your thoughts!

What are your predictions on what she is going to do?

As for the rest of the chapter, Sherlock is a big Amazon fan isn't he? I myself find it convenient too LOL. Hope you thought it was sweet of him to buy that album for Molly.

Updated for better flow, 7/2/18
Wishing You Were Still Here - Molly

Chapter Summary

Molly thinks about her dad and the differences between Sherlock and Tom.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

It wasn't until Molly was on her way to work that she remembered today was the nineteenth anniversary of her father's death. That meant he had now been gone from her life for more than half of it.

Sherlock had distracted her quite effectively that morning and it was a good feeling to know he would be able to share this sad anniversary with her.

Her dad would have liked Sherlock, she reflected. Not the old version of the detective of course, but her Sherlock, the new and improved version. Her dad had always told her she needed to find a man who was clever, a man who could match her own intellect. He had also told her he prayed for her to find a Christian man, one who would love her and God.

Molly had not been very successful in either of those things, before Sherlock. She had had two casual boyfriends, neither of whom really dealt very well with her profession. She had been asked out by several men, and usually when they found out she did post-mortems for a living, they were out of her life as quickly as they entered it.

Tom had stuck around when most men didn't. He had told her he was fine with her job profession. He wasn't really an intellectual, though. He preferred to go to the pub on weekends and have a few beers with his mates. During the week, he worked with his dad in the family business. They owned a small jewellery store. In fact, her engagement ring had come from there. With Tom's limited income, he was able to purchase a ring that was a little nicer than it would have been otherwise.

Molly looked at her engagement ring from Sherlock. It sparkled on her finger. Every time she looked at it, her heart swelled with emotion. The ring from Tom had not evoked a response like that. It had been just, well, there on her hand.

Molly knew that if she had married Tom, she would have been the primary breadwinner. Even when he took her to dinner, they took it in turns paying for the meal. The two men were as different as night and day, especially in light of the way Sherlock had wanted to pay for everything for her, which had led to that disagreement.

She remembered Tom's last conversation with her, when she had given him back the ring.

"It's obvious you're in love with that detective. I can see it in your eyes. It will be a cold day in hell before he notices you, though. He's much too concerned with showing off his superiority to everyone."

"I'm...I'm sorry, Tom. I thought I was over him. I don't expect anything from him, but It wouldn't be fair for me to marry you under these circumstances."
She had taken off her engagement ring and put it into the young man's hand. "I hope you find someone who will love you for yourself, instead of reminding them of someone else."

His last comment was the only one that seemed out-of-character. "Yeah, maybe she won't deny me sex before the wedding."

Tom had turned on his heel and left her flat, slamming the door behind him.

Molly had felt so awful about breaking Tom's heart, she had barely registered those last words. It was the first concrete indication she had been given that he hadn't really been okay with her refusal to sleep with him.

The train stopped at the station near the hospital and Molly got out, still lost in thought and allowing her feet to travels of their own accord the familiar route to St. Bart's.

Yes, there was nothing beyond a slight physical resemblance between the two men. Sherlock was intellectually superior to Tom, and herself, of course, but they could discuss anything about her work. They worked well together, truth be told.

The main thing Molly's dad would have been happy about was that Sherlock had come to faith. Despite his earlier way of thinking, Sherlock had not ridiculed her for her beliefs, even before he understood and believed it for himself. Because he loved her, he had been willing to learn about Christianity, he had opened his heart to the truth of God's great love for him.

When Tom and Molly had been engaged, he had made little comments now and then about her going to her "little church." He had never been willing to attend himself, and always acted as if she were a little weird for believing in "that Jesus guy." Every time she even broached the topic of Christianity, he had brushed it aside with a, "That's your thing, not mine."

Molly reached the hospital and went upstairs to the lab. With her being off the two previous days, it seemed nobody had bothered to actually complete any of the work she had started. As usual, the tasks just piled up, waiting for her return.

With a little sigh, Molly got to work. She spent the whole morning doing paperwork and finalizing reports.

At lunchtime, Molly went to the canteen for lunch and decided to text her mother to see how she was doing.

"Hi Mum, how are you feeling today? I've been thinking about Dad. I can't believe it has been nineteen years he has been gone."

The response came back quickly.

"Molly, darling, I'm doing okay. How are you? I haven't heard from you in awhile. Can we meet to talk about your dad? It would be nice to remember him together. I'd also like to know about your wedding plans. How's your ankle doing?"

Molly felt guilty. She had barely given her mother a thought since they had talked after her kidnapping ordeal. She hadn't even told her about her recovery from the fall the previous week. Molly had been so used to not having the older woman in her life, it would be an adjustment to remember she needed to rebuild the relationship.

"I'd love to meet with you. I have a late start tomorrow, which means I will take a late lunch at around three. Do you want to meet somewhere to eat and talk? Or do you want to come to the
hospital again and eat in the canteen?"

"I can come to the hospital. That way we can have more time together to talk."

"That sounds good. I'll meet you downstairs near the front entrance like last time, at three o'clock tomorrow. Oh, my ankle is completely healed too, thanks for asking."

"I'm glad it is better. I'll see you tomorrow then, darling."

"I love you, Mum."

"Love you too, baby girl."

Molly smiled at her mother's last words to her. Both her mother and father had often called her that, even when she had gotten older. She had loved being called that as a child, hated it as a teenager, and now it made her smile. It gave her a warm feeling that she was still her mother's baby girl, even after their many years of separation.

After eating lunch, Molly headed back upstairs, she had one post-mortem scheduled, that of a fifty-seven year old man.

When she started her examination, Molly was reminded of her father. This man had similar facial features and a beard that was not unlike the one worn by her dad. Performing the autopsy was more difficult than usual, because she kept thinking about her dad and imagining performing the post-mortem on him. She put on some Paramore music to distract her wayward thoughts and was just finishing up when her music paused for a moment and she heard Sherlock's text alert.

The body was wheeled away and Molly stripped off her gloves and washed her hands thoroughly. Then she picked up her phone and read the text from the man she loved.

She was quite surprised that he had remembered this was the anniversary of her dad's passing without her mentioning it. She had intended to tell Sherlock when she got home, just so she could curl up and be comforted by him.

Molly was pleased that he had remembered to order the things for Rosie. When he told her that John would be dropping their goddaughter off at eight on Friday, she thought with some amusement that it would be interesting to see how well Sherlock coped for that short period of time without her. Perhaps John would hang around until she got home.

Once they ended their conversation, Molly decided to send Kayla a text. Her friend had not texted her since the one where she had asked Molly's advice. Of course, they had seen each other on Saturday, but the pathologist was curious to know how her friend had convinced John to attend church with her on Sunday.

After she sent the text, Molly resumed working. She filled out her autopsy report and finished some other paperwork. The time flew by and she was quite surprised to glance at the clock and see it was almost time to leave.

Molly tidied up the lab and went to the locker room to hang up her coat. She wondered if Sherlock's client had arrived and what urgent mystery he would be confronted with.

On the Tube ride home, Molly thought again about her father, and wished he could have met her fiancé. There was no doubt in her mind that her dad would have been delighted to meet Sherlock. She could just imagine him peppering the detective with questions about his cases. Mr. Hooper had been an Agatha Christie mystery enthusiast. Molly's own small collection of the author's stories was extensive and she had a good collection of first editions. She had even managed to find a rare edition of one of Christie's novels at a flea market in Oxford. The book had been autographed by the author herself, which added to its value. Molly had been thrilled when she found it and had been careful to keep it in excellent condition.

As the Tube pulled into her station, Molly thought about how she had been so lucky to have her father in her life. She had been a resident of London for several years now and had made many friends, but none could replace her father. She was grateful for the memories she had and hoped to make more in the future.
novels had been a legacy from her father. Yes, she decided, smiling to herself, Sherlock would have met and exceeded all of her father's criteria for the perfect man.

A text alert took her out of her reverie. It was a response finally from Kayla. She wanted to meet up for lunch to "talk about things."

"I have a Teacher Training day on Friday so will be done at three. Could we meet after that sometime?"

Molly texted back. "I'm on the 11-8 shift so could take a late lunch at three-thirty if you want to come to the hospital. You don't have to eat of course."

"Late lunch sounds great. I should be able to get there by then. At least I'm not too far from the hospital."

"Great. I'll meet you in the lobby and we can enjoy some disgusting canteen food," she texted back to her friend, who sent a thumbs up in response.

That last text ended just before the train reached Molly's stop.

She exited the Baker Street Underground station and walked the short distance too 221B Baker Street in record time. She was anxious to get home, and also, if she was honest with herself, she was curious about the Delia Erren woman.

Reaching the outer door, Molly unlocked it and headed inside. As soon as she entered the building she could smell the strong, exotic scent of a woman's perfume. The door to the flat was not completely closed, she noted with some surprise, ascending the stairs.

At the top of the stairs, she could hear Sherlock's deep voice raised in anger, and the sound of a woman's dulcet tones trying to placate him.

The sight that met Molly's eyes when she pushed the door open made her see red. Literally.

Chapter End Notes

Obviously, this chapter meant you have to wait to see what is going to happen with Irene. It was a pretty big chapter though.

Thanks Ashblood for giving me a way for Kayla to propose a visit with Molly when school was in session (after earlier having assumed it would be school holidays).

How did you find the backstory about Molly's father and about Tom? Incidentally, the Tom backstory is what I inserted into Molly's Uni dream. If you are reading or planning to read that, you'll see the parallels.

I hope you enjoyed the further exploration into Molly's past and that it seemed plausible, especially her thoughts on the differences between Tom and Sherlock and faith perceptions. Thoughts?

In addition, I am way ahead on my chapters. I wrote this in November. It had been less than a year since my own dad passed, so I truly understand the heartache of losing a parent. I don't know how the loss will affect me so many years after the fact, but I do
know that I am glad my dad is now in heaven.

Updated for better flow 6/28/18
"Hello, Sherlock," purred The Woman. "Did you miss me?"

Sherlock was not one to be shocked. He was not one to lose his cool in the face of danger either. Yes, he had almost had a meltdown only a month ago, after that desperate phone call to Molly, but that was because he had realized he loved her, and hated himself for hurting her.

This, however, was entirely different.

"what the hell are you doing here?" He hissed to the dominatrix, who put a hand against his chest, forcing him to step back so she could gain entry and swing the door almost closed.

His eyes took in everything about the woman he had not seen in several years. Her hair was perfectly coiffed, makeup carefully applied to enhance her beauty. She was wearing a long, dark coat and red high heels.

What had been a mystery to Sherlock the first time they met was no longer one. Despite his words, he knew exactly what she was doing here. The overpowering smell of her perfume sickened him. She was here with a sole intent - to seduce him.

Her next words and actions confirmed his deduction.

"Why did you stop texting me, darling? Why did you push me away? I want dinner with you, and I want it now!" She unbuttoned her coat as he stood impassively, unmoving. Dropping the coat to the floor, The Woman revealed herself to be wearing nothing but a bright red corset with matching G-string.

"I thought I made it quite clear in my last text to you, Irene. I am engaged."

There was a definite note of pique in her voice as she responded. "Why did you turn me down for sex after you rescued me from those terrorists? I could have taught you so much." Her voice dropped to a whisper. "I know you were attracted to me when we first met."

"I will concede that I felt intrigued by you. I had never seen a naked woman before. Any man would find it hard not to be affected by that. But I had no feelings of a sexual nature for you. My interest was of an intellectual one - you puzzled me, nothing more."
"If you did not want to eventually sleep with me, why would you occasionally text me back, then?" she demanded.

"If you recall, my only texts were to inform you I was busy. Your incessant propositions disgusted me."

Irene laid a hand on his arm. "I have been very patient with you, Sherlock. I stayed away from London for years. Then I had to change my name in order to return here."

"Yes, I get it now. Your new name is an anagram of Irene Adler. That's why it seemed familiar to me. I should have deduced that immediately." He gently removed her hand from his arm.

"I quite like my new identity, it is more respectable than my previous one."

Sherlock raised an eyebrow. "You have changed your profession to go along with it?"

"Not exactly," she said with an exaggerated wink. "I am just more...discreet. No more public advertising. Strictly word-of-mouth. I could be very discreet with you too. Nobody would ever have to know. But you still need to explain to me why you refused my offer after you saved me."

"I saved you out of a sense of obligation. I was, after all, the reason you had to leave the country. Once I rescued you from those terrorists, my debt was paid."

Irene made another attempt to touch him, raising a hand to caress his cheek. It was so funny, he thought. Her touch had no effect on him. From a purely clinical standpoint, he could understand why men, and women for that matter, fell under her seductive spell. However, Irene's touch was repellent to him.

"I do not understand why you are here, Irene. You are aware of my situation."

"You can't possibly really want that mousy pathologist, can you? How did she convince you to marry her? Is she blackmailing you?"

"How ironic, the queen of blackmail accusing someone else of it," he said dryly. He did not need to give this clearly unhinged woman any explanation about why he was marrying Molly.

"But I want you, darling. Nobody says no to me." Before Sherlock could do anything to prevent it, Irene had pressed herself up against him and put her arms around his neck.

"For God's sake, will you just leave me the hell alone?" he growled. "Get it through your head, I will never sleep with you no matter how quaintly you try to phrase it with your 'have dinner' innuendo."

Irene pressed herself closer to him and insisted in a velvety voice filled with desire, "I can make you change your mind."

Before he could extricate himself from the woman's grasp, he felt Irene being forcibly pulled away from him. His own avenging angel stood there and she was furious.

"Keep your hands off of my fiancé, you bitch," snarled Molly, standing eye to eye with the dominatrix. Then she let fly with a huge slap to the intruder's face. Sherlock winced a little, having been the recipient of several slaps from Molly in the past.

Irene put a hand to her cheek and looked at Sherlock. "You threw me over for this...this nondescript little thing?" she asked in genuine amazement.
"I could hardly throw you over for someone else when I was never with you in the first place. You are clearly delusional, Irene," he said fiercely.

He saw comprehension dawn on Molly's face. "Delia Erren is Irene Adler. Now I understand." She looked at the woman. "You were just trying to find a way to see Sherlock." She was visibly trembling now, the colour draining from her face as she realized that this was the actual woman whose body she had called on Sherlock to identify five years earlier, the woman he had later saved from certain death.

Sherlock walked over to Molly and put his arm around her. "It's alright, darling," he said, making sure Irene could hear him. "Irene is leaving and she will not be coming back."

He looked with disdain at The Woman. "Please go," he ordered. "If you ever darken my door again, or attempt to contact either my fiancée or myself, I will make sure you are imprisoned for your past crimes. Believe me, my brother still has all the evidence connecting you to Moriarty. You will not be given another chance to get away."

To her credit, the dominatrix knew when she was beaten. She silently picked up her coat and fastened it back around herself. She shot a dark, hateful glare at Molly, then said to Sherlock, "Just remember what you could so easily have had."

"I already have exactly what I want, and it is the woman I love, Molly Hooper." He turned Molly's face to his and gave her a long lingering kiss, to indicate once and for all that he was under no coercion from Molly to marry her.

Irene stared at him incredulously for a moment, then turned on her heel and stalked downstairs and out to the street. Sherlock stood silently until he heard the slam of the outer door, then he closed the door to the flat and locked it.

Molly was still standing there. The colour had returned to her face and was now heightened. "How dare she?" she said in a low voice. "How dare she try to seduce you in our own home! When I saw her standing there dressed in that red lingerie I...I was so mad. I wanted to punch her."

Sherlock took her in his arms. "You were amazing, Molly. My avenging angel, come to save me." His lips descended on hers and he kissed her deeply. He had never seen Molly act that way before, like a tigress, and it fueled his love and desire for her. His kiss became more demanding and she gasped as he pressed his body closer. He could feel himself losing control, slipping into a haze of desire that cried out for fulfillment. God, how he wanted her. That confrontation with Irene had made him understand anew how different the two women were.

Where Irene was hard and calculating, Molly was soft and yielding. Everything about her touched his soul. He desperately wanted to run his hands along her soft skin. Control, control, he told himself, in much the same way he had fought to keep from going into shock after he had been shot. He needed control for a different reason this time, and his hands clenched.

Molly's hands were threading through his curls, and she was swaying her body against his without conscious thought, breathing hard. It would have been so easy to just take her up into his arms and carry her to the bedroom, but instead he dragged his lips away from hers, using every bit of willpower he possessed to whisper hoarsely, "We need to stop, now."

Molly, to her credit, immediately took her hands from his hair and stepped back a pace. Her eyes were still slightly unfocussed, eyelids heavy with a desire that echoed his own.

To break the palpable sexual tension between them, Sherlock went into the kitchen and picked up
the wildflowers he had bought for her.

"I got these for you today, darling," he told her, presenting the flowers to her.

She looked down at the flowers, then up at him and smiled. "They're lovely, but why did you get them for me?"

He led her by the hand to the sofa and they both sat. "I know it is a sad day for you, and I wanted to get something to make you feel better."

"Thank you," she said softly. "Do you have a vase I can put them in?"

"There's one under the sink, but never mind doing that now. I need to talk to you about Irene, to explain."

"Honey, you don't need to explain. I know what she was trying to do. A woman doesn't turn up at someone's flat practically naked in order to talk about a case."

Sherlock ran his hands through his hair. "I feel like such a fool for not immediately recognizing that name was an anagram. If I'd known, I would have been prepared."

"Well, she was determined to see you, so I guess it's just as well it happened now rather than later."

Sherlock shuddered. "Oh God, Molly, if she tries to ruin our wedding day..."

"She won't. She wouldn't dare. Not after what you told her. She wouldn't dare show her face anywhere near Mycroft either, after what you said."

"I suppose so, but frankly, I wouldn't trust that woman as far as I can throw her."

Sherlock decided it was time to change the subject. "Anyway, I don't want you to cook anything tonight, so where would you like to go for dinner? There's Angelo's, the Chinese place down the street, anywhere you want."

"I could go for some Italian."

"Angelo's it is then. I'll make us reservations for seven." He called the restaurant and made the reservations, watching Molly as she picked up her flowers, found the vase he had mentioned under the sink, filled it with water and added the bouquet. She then put the vase onto the kitchen table and returned to sit next to him.

"So," asked Molly, with a mischievous smile, "what shall we do with the hour until we need to leave for dinner?"

"I am not going to kiss you right now," said Sherlock firmly. "I'm starting to know my limits when it comes to you, and I've reached them for now. It took every bit of control I had to not take you to the bedroom."

"I understand." She squeezed his hand. "Seeing as kissing is off the table, maybe we can just talk for awhile about our day."

"You know pretty much what I've been up to in regards to buying things today. I've also set up a couple of consultations too for tomorrow."

"Sherlock, are you going to submit your furniture purchase to the insurance company for reimbursement? There's also the expense you incurred from hiring those cleaners for your flat."
"Actually," said Sherlock, looking rather embarrassed, "I did not have insurance. It appears I am considered too high-risk to insure, with my past history of solving dangerous cases and making enemies. So, in actual fact, it really did save me a lot of money to re-furnish the flat mostly with your possessions."

"Oh, now I get it. You really only wanted to marry me to get a lot of free furniture," teased Molly.

"Oh no, my nefarious plan has been discovered," Sherlock teased her back.

Molly pouted, and Sherlock decided he could allow himself one kiss. He leaned into her and kissed her softly. "My sweet angel," he murmured, after the kiss ended.

"I like it when you call me that, but I'm certainly no angel," Molly remarked, snuggling into him, putting her arms around his waist.

"You always will be, to me." Switching to another subject, he asked, "Did you talk with your mother today? About your dad, I mean. I assume it will be easier in future to share the day with her, now that you are reconciled."

"I did. We are meeting for lunch tomorrow, actually. We thought we'd talk about Dad, remember some of the good times we had."

"That sounds like a very good thing for you to do. I'm glad you will be able to talk together."

"Me too. For the first time, I not only have emotional support from one, but two people. I am truly blessed."

He kissed the top of her head. "We both are."

"Oh, I'm also meeting Kayla for lunch on Friday. She wants to talk about John, I think. I'm very curious to find out how things are going there."

"I might have to pose a couple questions to John myself, when he drops Rosie off."

"It will be interesting to compare notes."

The couple sat silently for some time, just enjoying their closeness, until it was time for them to depart for Angelo's.

Chapter End Notes

What did you think of Molly, the avenging angel? I thought the circumstances merited a slap and a little bit of swearing. I don't typically write Molly that way, but under duress I believe Molly could have been provoked to say that.

What did you think about Irene's conversation with Sherlock about when he saved her? Her snarky comments about Molly?

Once again, the situation fueled their passion afterwards. Aren't I the cruel one?

Love you all, my dear readers. I so appreciate your lovely comments about the story, and I hope it is still keeping you interested. Thanks for sticking with it!
A Perfect Evening - Molly (Wednesday)

Chapter Summary

After the excitement of the day, Sherlock and Molly spend some time with the Bible.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Sherlock and Molly arrived at Angelo's, this time the proprietor was not there to greet them. They were shown to a small table by the front window through which they could see the street. They were given menus and left alone to decide, after both ordering Cokes.

"This is the same table John and I sat at, just after we met. Angelo thought he was my date."

"That must have been rather uncomfortable for you." Molly grinned.

"It was more-so for John. We both thought for a minute the other one was gay. It was quite comedic really. I did sort of think of myself as asexual, because I was never interested in anyone, despite getting propositions from both men and women over the years. Because nobody saw me with a date at any time, people just didn't know what my sexual preference was."

"Do you think your lack of interest in romantic pursuits stemmed from what happened to you as a child?"

"I'm sure it did. I have no regrets about the past though, well, except for my treatment of you. Everything was predetermined to lead me to you."

"I'm so glad you recognize that." Molly gave him a loving smile, then said, "I suppose we should decide on what to eat. I'd kind of like some garlic bread, but I don't want to chase you away from me when my breath reeks of it."

"Easily solved," said Sherlock, with a grin. "I'll have the garlic bread as well. That way we can reek together."

Molly giggled. He was so thoughtful. "I'll think I'll have the fettuccine Alfredo for my meal. I'll have to see how it compares to my own."

"Then I shall do the same, so I too can compare it to yours, if and when the occasion arises for you to make it for us."

"Be warned, I might enlist your assistance."

"In matters of cooking, I shall be your willing pupil."

The waitress returned and took their orders. As they waited for their food, Sherlock said, "When we get home, I want to add you to my Amazon account."

"You do? Why? I already have my own."
"For two reasons. You don't currently have Amazon Prime, and," he added mysteriously, "I also got something for you today which requires that you have access to my account."

Molly was intrigued. She had no clue what he meant. "Okay then," she said simply. She'd find out soon enough.

The food arrived and the two munched on delicious garlic bread, followed by a very good meal of fettuccine Alfredo.

Afterwards, Sherlock asked, "Do you want dessert?"

"Definitely not," responded Molly. "Anyway, we have a container of ginger nuts at home."

Sherlock smacked his head. "I can't believe I forgot about that. I could have been enjoying those while I was online earlier today."

"Well, now you have something to look forward to."

"I have so much to look forward to," he replied with a meaningful look and Molly's heart thumped in her chest. She knew he was not talking about ginger nuts.

On the taxi ride home, Molly asked, "would you mind if I invited my mum over for dinner one evening next week?"

"Of course not," he replied immediately. "I'd like to get to know her better. After all, you've already spent time with my parents twice. Maybe she will embarrass you the way my parents embarrassed me."

Molly chuckled. "You never know."

Back at Baker Street once more, Sherlock went straight to his laptop and turned it on. He logged into his Amazon account and followed the instructions to add Molly to the account.

"May I have your phone, please," he asked. Molly handed it to him. Whatever he needed it for, she would soon find out, she reflected.

Sherlock fiddled with her phone for a few minutes, then handed it back. "I just added the Amazon music app. If you check the 'my music' section, I bought something for you."

Molly checked out the new app and went to the "my music" section. "After Laughter?" she questioned, then noticed underneath it were the words "Album - Paramore."

"Sherlock! I can't believe you did this for me," she exclaimed delightedly, kissing him on the cheek.

He pulled her into his arms and murmured, "When will you learn that a kiss on the cheek is just not good enough?"

She threw her arms about him enthusiastically and gave him a much more satisfying kiss that lasted several minutes. Well, several kisses really.

"Much better," he smiled at the end of it.

"Sherlock, I have something for you too. I've been waiting for the right time to give it to you. I think this is it. I need to show you my appreciation for how generous you are."
"I require nothing from you but your love," he said, although Molly could tell he was intrigued at the thought of receiving a gift. Apparently this was not something he was used to.

She went to their bedroom and pulled out the wrapped package she had hidden under the bed on Friday. Returning to the sitting room, she handed it to her fiancée.

He looked at the package thoughtfully for a few seconds, examining it.

"Don't you dare try deducing what it is," she ordered. "I want you to be surprised." She was really excited to see what his reaction would be. Giving really was just as rewarding as receiving, if not more so.

Sherlock opened the package and looked at it in amazement. He said nothing for a few seconds and Molly wondered anxiously if perhaps it was too personal a gift for him. Perhaps he would have rather chosen his own Bible when he was ready?

Then he spoke, and her fears were immediately alleviated.

"You bought me my very own Bible? It's...it's beautiful, Molly, a gift I shall treasure." He opened the front cover with reverence, turning the first few pages carefully.

"I wanted to get you a Bible with the red lettering for Jesus' words and the NIV version, same as mine. I thought, well hoped you might like this one because it has a lot of extra things with the cultural background. If I didn't already have my own Bible, I would have bought this for myself."

"It's just wonderful. I'll cherish it, my darling. Nobody has ever given me anything like this before. Actually I don't recall the last time I received any gift in fact."

He stopped, then said, "Actually that is not true. The last gift I remember receiving was from you, that Christmas..."

"I guess you didn't exchange gifts for Christmas because you were so committed to your notion that God wasn't real, and therefore Christmas didn't mean anything to you."

"You are quite correct. Foolish notion, as I am now aware. This year will be much different."

Molly smiled. "I'm quite excited about Christmas too. Last year I never dreamed I would be a married woman for the next one."

Sherlock gently set the precious Bible onto the coffee table and put his arms around her. "You're going to be my wife, Molly," then he repeated, "my wife," almost as if he had just realized what a momentous thing that was.

Molly slid her hands around his waist and laid her head against his chest.

After a couple minutes of just enjoying their closeness, Molly returned to the previous subject about Sherlock not receiving gifts.

"I suppose you never received birthday gifts because nobody knew when it was until this year. At least we celebrated with cake."

"Thanks to your insistence. As I recall, you used that as a distraction when I was going through withdrawal."

She shuddered. "I don't even like to think about that."
"That is one thing you never need worry about again, my love. No more smoking or nicotine patches either."

"You really haven't felt the urge to light up at all? I know nicotine addiction can be just as hard to kick as drug addiction."

"I swear I haven't thought about it once. It's as if God took the addiction from me."

"Well, God is a God of miracles, after all," said Molly, looking up at the man she loved. Her heart was almost bursting with the love she felt for him.

"He is, indeed, and you are my miracle, my darling." He leaned down to press his lips to hers as reverently as in the way he had looked at his Bible. Molly felt so cherished, could anyone in the world be as happy as she was at this moment?

As if he was thinking the same thing, Sherlock raised his head and looked deeply into her eyes with his turquoise ones. "Do you have any idea how much I love you? How much I adore you?" He raised her hand to his lips and kissed her palm. "You are my soulmate, the woman I was born to love."

Molly quivered at his words and his touch. Was this the same man who had scoffed at the idea of sentiment and love? This man who spouted the most romantic things to her, who gazed at her with such devotion, who lavished her with his affection and expressed his love in so many ways? This, she realized, was his true nature, the one he had hidden behind so many layers of pure, cold logic and aloofness. Those ugly layers had been stripped away to reveal the true Sherlock Holmes, a man of strong emotions and passion, a man who was devoted to everything that was right and honourable.

"I feel," began Moly, as tears gathered in her eyes, "I feel as though my heart is singing with joy. That you love me the way I love you, it can only have come from God. This connection between us. If I died right here in this moment, I feel as if I would die happy."

Then he was kissing her again, deeply and with such intensity it left her breathless. When they finally parted to fill their lungs with air, they both sighed contentedly, then laughed.

"How about those ginger nuts?" suggested Sherlock.

'I'll get them. Tea?"

"Yes, please."

As Molly went to the kitchen, she saw Sherlock pick up the Bible from the coffee table. When she returned a few minutes later with the tea and biscuits, it was to find him engrossed in reading.

"This is amazing," he said. "There's even a chronology of all the events in the Bible."

The thought flashed through Molly's mind that her dad would have been so happy for her. He would have probably told her that if anyone could have changed the views of a confirmed atheist it was her. She knew however that she had merely planted the seeds. It was Sherlock himself who had responded and opened his heart to God's love as well as her own.

She set the tea and biscuits down in front of them. "My dad would have really liked you," she said softly. "He would have admired the man you were before, but he would have both liked and admired the man you are now. I know he's watching from heaven and smiling down on us."
"This evening was supposed to be about me comforting you, being there for you, and you've made it an evening I will always remember."

"What better way to deal with a sad memory, than to overlay it with a happy one." She gazed at the man she loved. What she had thought would be a sweet gesture that Sherlock would appreciate had obviously meant so much more to him.

He returned the tome to the table and took both of her hands in his. "What did I do to deserve you? I'm an ex-junkie, a murderer who should be in prison and a former high-functioning sociopath."

"That's all in your past. You've been forgiven. It is what you make of your future that will show people how you've changed. As Christians, we are called to reflect Christ's love, in order to draw others to Him."

Sherlock lifted both of her hands and kissed them. "I shall endeavour to to be like you."

Molly blushed. "Don't try to be like me. I'm a flawed human being. Try to be just like Jesus. He is the example we need to follow."

"I know I have a long way to go, to mature in my faith. I'm very glad I have you to help me, to encourage me."

"I'll always be here for you, Sherlock," Molly smiled, "and now we should really drink our tea before it gets cold, and of course, have some biscuits."

Sherlock grinned. "Your wish is my command."

They enjoyed their tea and biscuits. Afterwards, Sherlock took up his Bible once again. "Well, I finished reading Acts. What next?"

"Why don't you read the two books of Samuel?" Suggested Molly. "I actually started reading it again myself, to familiarize myself with it once more, in case you have any questions for me."

"Have you read through the whole Bible, then?" he asked curiously.

"Twice. Once on my own. I just tried to read at least five chapters a night. It took about seven months or so. Then I also did the 'Read through the Bible in a year' readings that are provided in my 'Our Daily Bread' devotional."

Sherlock seemed impressed that she had been through the entire Bible. "Do you think maybe we could do that devotional thing together next year?"

"I'd really like that. You don't have to wait though, we can start it now."

He considered that for a moment, then said slowly, "I think for now it would be better for me to just read as I've been doing. With all the wedding planning I suspect I will find it difficult to be consistent."

"Fair enough," said Molly. She watched with a smile as he found the first book of Samuel and began to read.

She got up from the sofa and fetched her own Bible and devotional to catch up, yet again. Then she too found where she had left off her reading in the first book of Samuel. She cuddled up next to Sherlock, thinking how incredible a feeling it was to be reading the Bible side-by-side for the first time.
Suddenly, Sherlock tugged on Molly's hand. "Are you at chapter 17 yet?"

"Not yet, I tend to be a fairly slow reader."

"It's the story of David and Goliath, the one we were talking about awhile ago. It's remarkable, reading it here and not just hearing it like it's a fairy story." He seemed genuinely excited about it, and Molly's heart filled with emotion. Witnessing his enthusiasm gave her a new appreciation for what it must be like to be reading things from the Bible for the first time.

Sherlock showed Molly what he had been reading. "Look at this!" he exclaimed. "There is this extra page dedicated to other information to give better insight."

"Wow, I think I should have bought two Bibles after all," remarked Molly, looking at her well worn Bible. "Mind you, I'm rather attached to this one. It was the last birthday gift I received from both of my parents."

"Then that is something you should treasure," commented Sherlock. "However, I shall be glad to let you look at this one whenever you want."

"Thank you," said Molly simply.

They both read quietly for some time until Molly felt she'd had done enough reading for one night and got up to take her shower.

When she exited the bathroom, Sherlock was putting his Bible on his night stand. "Enough for one night?"

"I think so," he replied. "I finished the first book of Samuel, so thought that was a good place to finish for now."

"Well, the bathroom is all yours."

While Sherlock was in the shower, Molly washed the few dishes and then got into bed. It was funny, she thought. Even though she and Sherlock had spent most of their evening reading the Bible, rather than kissing each other as they usually did, the night had been truly special. She felt a special closeness with him when they were communicating on a purely spiritual level, talking about things from the Bible.

Molly closed her eyes and prayed. She thanked God again for all the blessings she had received, that she was loved by a wonderful man. She prayed that Sherlock would continue to grow in his faith. She prayed for her friends too, for Kayla and Kaitlyn. She prayed for John and Rosie. Then she said a prayer for her mother. Her eyes were still closed when she felt Sherlock get into the bed.

"Molly? Are you still awake?" he whispered.

She opened her eyes and smiled. "Yes. I was just praying."

"You look like an angel right now. So content."

She reached over and took his hand. "Thank you for a perfect evening."

"Who else but you would consider reading the Bible and eating ginger nuts a perfect evening?" he chuckled. "But I know what you mean. I feel it too. Shall we end our perfect evening with a kiss?"

"I'd like that," responded Molly as he pulled her close to him.
Their kiss was full of sweetness and promise, to their commitment to God and each other. As peace settled over her, wrapped in Sherlock's strong embrace, Molly let sleep overtake her.

Chapter End Notes

I felt this would be a nice way to end the drama of the day, to show their closeness and Sherlock's growth in his faith.

If you have never read through the Bible, I encourage you to do so, by setting goals for it. Molly's reading experience is actually my own.

I wanted to show Sherlock's enthusiasm as a new Christian too.

Oh yes, the Paramore album has some great songs. I recommend you give their music a try! I hope you enjoyed this chapter and the dominance of faith content!

Updated for better flow 6/28/18
Sherlock opened his eyes and turned his head to look at his alarm clock. It was after seven-thirty. He had slept so peacefully. Molly was still sleeping, with her head against his chest.

He realized he didn’t know what time Molly’s shift was today. Had they overslept?

“Molly,” he said urgently, “what time do you start work today?”

His fiancée stirred and opened her eyes. “Not till eleven, today and tomorrow. Why? What time is it?”

“It’s only seven-thirty. I’m sorry I woke you. You can sleep a little longer if you like.”

“I don’t think so. I slept really well. Could we just cuddle for awhile?”

“There’s no snooze button set,” he warned. “We might lose track of time.”

“'I figure I only have to be out of bed by nine, so I don’t think we are going to be here that long,” said Molly practically. “Unless your first consultation is that early?”

“Not till ten-thirty.”

“Well then, I guess we have time to cuddle for a bit, unless of course you wish to get up now?”

“What do you think?” questioned her fiancé, gazing into her warm brown eyes.

“I think, Sherlock Holmes, that I love you very much and wish I could just stay in your arms forever.”

Molly made a little sound of protest when Sherlock suddenly released her and slid over her body, reaching for the end of the bed.

“Hold on,” he said, fiddling with the digital alarm clock. ‘I’m just setting the alarm for eight.”

Alarm successfully set, he turned back to his fiancée and slid his arms around her once more, from the other side.

Then he began to lavish her with little kisses on her nose, her cheeks and forehead, finally settling his lips on hers for a lingering kiss.

Molly sighed into his mouth and slid her hands up to massage the muscles of his back. For one so petite, she had a lot of strength in those fingers and he enjoyed this new sensation of her easing away the tension that he had not known existed in those muscles.
Then she stopped, tracing the ridges of what he knew to be the scars along his upper back. She pulled her mouth away from his tender caress to ask, “Does it hurt at all when I touch those scars?”

“Not anymore. It took a few months for them to heal properly. I had to be careful not to have the water too hot in the shower or they stung like crazy. But that was years ago. I don’t even notice them. It’s not like I can see them.”

“So many battle scars,” Molly murmured. “Your back, your bullet wound scar, and your arm where you shot poison into yourself.” Her thumb traced along the slight scars along his arm and inner elbow where he had administered the drugs that had almost killed him.

“Don’t, Molly,” he begged. “You know I was in a bad place. I hate that I will always have a physical reminder of how foolish I was.”

Molly stroked his cheek gently. “Honey, I’m not condemning you for what happened in the past. Just pointing out to you how you beat all the odds, how you cheated death on several occasions. If you had still been turning your back on God, I would have been trying to convince you that you survived those experiences for a reason. I don’t have to do that now, because you understand it yourself.”

You know what, Molly Hooper?”

“What?”

“Sometimes you talk too much.” He pressed his lips to hers again, demanding her surrender, and she capitulated.

He spent the next twenty minutes thoroughly exploring every part of his fiancée’s face with his lips, kissing her only once at the base of her throat before capturing her lips again with his own. Although he still desired her immensely, Sherlock was not plagued by the sense of losing control, at least not to the extent he sometimes felt it. He could not be sure what might happen in the future. For now though, he was content to enjoy the way she responded to his attention on her sweet, angelic countenance.

The alarm went off and Sherlock reached over and smacked the snooze button. “I promise we can get up next time it goes off.”

He lay there, stroking Molly’s hair and thought dreamily of the ways he wished to take care of her, to spoil her, to love her.

In what seemed like the blink of an eye, the beep of the alarm interrupted his thoughts and Sherlock reluctantly turned it off. He got out of his bed and dressed in a suit with a dark blue shirt. His modest fiancée dressed as well, keeping her back to him as usual. At least she was comfortable enough by now to dress in the same room. His fingers itched to run his hands along her back and feel her soft skin. Okay, he couldn’t lie to himself. It was impossible for him to not think about seeing her beautiful, womanly curves again. Christian or not, any red-blooded man would find it hard to resist the allure of the woman he loved in a state of undress.

He sighed a little and looked away, concentrating very hard on buttoning up his suit jacket. So much for having his feelings of desire for his fiancée totally under control. At least they were no longer in bed.

“Sherlock?”
He looked up and over to Molly, who was now thankfully, fully dressed.

“Hmm?” he responded.

“Are you okay? I heard that sigh.”

“It’s nothing.”

“People don’t just sigh for nothing.” She approached him. “Tell me.”

“Sweetheart, it’s not you, it’s me.”

“I really hate that phrase, that means it’s definitely me.”

He sighed again, reaching his hand out to take hers. “Well, yes, it is you, but it isn’t your fault. Sometimes it is harder than others being around you. Much as I enjoyed kissing you for a half hour, I didn’t do myself any favours. Last night I felt so strong, like faith will carry me through anything. Now I feel weak again.”

“It was wrong of me to ask you to cuddle with me. It was selfish and I put my own needs ahead of yours.” She squeezed his hand. “I need to be more respectful of your limits.”

“You aren’t to blame. I just need to learn balance. Maybe all Christians struggle with their values, or maybe I’m having a harder time because expressing and dealing with emotions is still so new to me.”

“Honey, one thing I’m sure of. You are not unique, we are not unique in struggling with our desire to be together while upholding Biblical standards. Remember when we were researching the abstinence before marriage thing? Some of those articles stated that most Christians struggle with it, despite their beliefs. Many fail. Every day that passes that we stick to our resolve is a victory in my eyes.”

She added, with an impish grin, “Anyway, we have seventy quid on the line.”

“There is that,” agreed Sherlock, with a smile. “I’ll have to remember that.”

He released her hand, feeling a bit better, and went to the kitchen to put on the kettle. Molly followed him and he was surprised when she reached to put her arms around him from behind. That was usually what he did, not her.

“I’m glad you are honest with me about how you feel. If there is anything that will make things easier for you, I’ll do it, remember that. If it ever gets too hard for us to sleep in the same bed, I’ll use the spare room.”

Sherlock linked his fingers through hers, where they lay around his waist. “I really don’t want you to have to do that. I think I’m handling things okay, it’s just a daily struggle, but it is one that has an ending in sight.”

They stood silently for a moment, then released their hold on each other and worked together to get breakfast ready.

After breakfast, Molly went into the bathroom to plait her hair and apply a little makeup while Sherlock took care of the dishes.

His phone pinged with a text alert and he picked it up. It was from Mycroft. As usual, his text was
short and to the point.

“Urgent business to discuss. I’ll be there at seven this evening.”

Sherlock huffed a little. Mycroft was lucky he did not have plans at that time, and Molly would still be at work. His mind flew back to Mycroft’s last visit, when he had interrupted the engaged couple at a most inconvenient time. He supposed he should have been grateful for that interruption, but a tiny part of Sherlock still wondered what would have happened if his brother had stayed away. He suspected he and Molly would be less likely to be having these conversations about abstinence, and talking instead about how guilty they felt. So it really was for the best, he decided.

He responded to the text with a succinct one of his own, “Fine.”

When Molly came out of the bathroom, Sherlock told her, “Mycroft is coming over at seven. He has business to discuss.”

“Oh, maybe it’s a case?”

“It might just be to let me know about the string quartet, although that would be rather unusual. He could just text me about that. I guess I wouldn’t mind if he has something for me to occupy my time next week, as long as it doesn’t take me out of town.”

“Well, I just hope if it is a case, that it doesn’t disrupt our weekend with Rosie.”

“Don’t worry. I’ll make certain he knows I am unavailable for anything this weekend.”

Molly put her arms around Sherlock and gave him a quick kiss, saying, “I need to head in early to work, so I can speak to HR about changing my paycheck to our savings account.”

“You’re still certain you wish to do that?”

“Of course. It just slipped my mind yesterday.”

“Understandably so,” he said, recalling that she had probably been distracted by memories of her late father.

Molly picked up her phone and bag and was heading to grab her jacket from the coat rack by the door, when Sherlock stepped in front of her.

“If I am to be without you until later this evening, I require better than a quick kiss of farewell.” He bent his head and gave her a proper goodbye kiss, then helped Molly put on her jacket.

After she had gone, Sherlock glanced at his watch. He still had a half hour until his appointment, enough time to do some more Bible reading using his own. He really was amazed at the way Molly had bought him a Bible with such thought behind it. He just wasn’t used to receiving gifts, and the fact that it had been totally unexpected made it even more special.

Sherlock collected his Bible and opened it to the second book of Samuel. The first one had finished with an account of how King Saul had taken his own life after his three sons had been killed. The second book immediately began to talk about David, and the events that happened after Saul’s death. He was still engrossed in his reading when the doorbell sounded.

Sherlock put down the tome. Mrs. Hudson would let the client in, and he waited. It was time to be a detective again.
Ah, early morning kissing and cuddling. A nice way to start the day. I hope you liked the conversation the couple had about their struggles. I do see Molly as being a little stronger in that regard, with her long-standing Christian background.
Meeting with Mum - Molly (Thursday)

Chapter Summary

Molly thinks about the differences between her former fiancé and Sherlock. Molly and her mother spend some time together.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Once Molly was on her way to work, she pulled her phone and a set of earbuds out of her handbag. She was anxious to listen to the new Paramore album Sherlock had bought for her. It was extraordinary how thoughtful he was. Her mind flashed back briefly to her ex-fiancé. No, Tom had not been the type to anticipate her every need. She remembered telling Sherlock that Tom was a “sweet guy,” but in actual fact, he had been rather possessive at times when they were at the pub on a weekend, especially when he had had too much to drink.

By all outward appearances, Tom seemed sweet, and his family was actually very nice. The young man, however, had his dark side that manifested when he had drunk a little too much. Fortunately he had not tried to force himself on Molly, but at those times he had indicated he really wasn’t happy that she wouldn’t sleep with him.

Molly could now clearly see the flaws in that relationship, when she compared it with her relationship with Sherlock. Why was she even thinking about Tom? It must be that she still felt somewhat guilty over the way things had ended. She made a firm resolution to stop making comparisons between the two men. There wasn’t really any point.

Molly put her earbuds into her ears and found the Paramore album on the Amazon app which Sherlock had downloaded for her. She continued listening to the music after she exited the station and made the five minute walk to the hospital.

The pathologist immediately went to Human Resources and let them know of the new bank savings account number into which she wished to have her paycheck deposited. She was informed it could take up to two cycles for the change to go through, and to not close the old account until she had seen the paycheck go into the new one. With that done, she went into Mike’s office to check her schedule for the following week. Monday and Tuesday were seven o’clock starts, Wednesday was a late eleven o’clock start, while Thursday and Friday she would be starting at nine.

She decided Tuesday would be the best day to have her mother over for dinner, as she would be home early enough to cook. She would make fettuccine alfredo because it didn’t require a long cooking time. Maybe she could convince Sherlock to help with some of the food preparation.

Molly still had a few minutes before her shift was due to start, so she texted Sherlock to let him know she was going to invite her mother over on Tuesday. He texted back quickly saying that was fine and he would make sure he didn’t schedule any consultations that afternoon.

Upstairs in the lab, Molly found out she had a post-mortem to do. She decided to hold off on performing the autopsy until after her break. Depending on how thorough she needed to be in
determining a cause of death, a post-mortem could take up to four hours, and she couldn’t just duck out in the middle of it. Instead, she logged some other pathology results and did paperwork until it was time to meet her mother downstairs for a late lunch.

Just before three, Molly headed downstairs. Mrs. Hooper was already waiting and gave her daughter a hug as soon as she saw her.

“How are things going with you, Mum?” asked Molly, leading the way to the canteen.

“Yesterday was rough, but today I’m feeling a lot better,” admitted her mother.

The two women got their meals and sat down in the almost empty canteen.

“I’m glad you called yesterday,” said Mrs. Hooper once they were seated. “I was tempted to take a drink. I called my sponsor, but she wasn’t home. I was seriously tempted to go to the local pub, when you called. After we spoke, I realized I couldn’t go down that path again.”

“Oh, Mum. If you ever need me, or are feeling low, please call me. We’ve missed so many years together, and we need to make up for lost time. You’re not alone anymore. You have me, and your future son-in-law as well.”

Mrs. Hooper smiled gratefully at her daughter. “When you told me Sherlock had become a Christian, I was so happy for you. Your dad and I always prayed you would find someone with whom you could share your faith.”

Molly used the mention of her father to talk about him. The two women spent some time in pleasant reminiscences of happy times together as a family. They each recounted funny stories.

As they cleared their plates and got ready to leave, Mrs. Hooper said, “Thank you for inviting me to have lunch with you today. It has been so good to talk with you.”

“Mum, Sherlock and I would like to have you over for dinner next Tuesday at six.”

“Oh, that would be lovely. I’d really like to get to know my future son-in-law better.”

“Just don’t tell him any embarrassing stories about me,” requested Molly.

“I can’t make any promises about that,” laughed her mother before taking her leave.

Back upstairs, the pathologist settled into her main duty for the day. Molly turned on her phone and set it to play her new Paramore album on a continuous loop. The post-mortem took a little longer than most, but she was finished before seven-thirty. As she washed her hands, the pathologist wondered how Sherlock’s meeting with Mycroft had gone, and if it was over already.

The last half hour of her shift was spent preparing the pathology report.

Once Molly was on the Tube to go home, she sent off a text to Sherlock.

“My mum said yes to coming over for dinner on Tuesday night. On my way home now. I hope your meeting with Mycroft went well. See you soon xx”

Her fiancé did not respond to her text, and she wondered if he was still busy with his brother. Therefore, when she opened the door to 221B, she was not surprised to discover the brothers were sitting together on the sofa.

Mycroft was on the phone, but Sherlock stood and walked towards her with a serious expression on
his face.

This did not bode well.

Chapter End Notes

So Molly finally got to spend some time with her mother. I hope you enjoyed hearing a little more backstory on Tom and Molly's comparisons between the two men.

I researched and saw it can indeed take up to four hours to do an autopsy.

Uh oh, more angst is coming. Any thoughts on what is going to happen?
Chapter Summary

Mycroft brings serious news that could adversely affect Sherlock and Molly's future.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sherlock was feeling a little bored. The two consultations he had scheduled were disappointingly simple to solve in a matter of minutes. He felt decidedly guilty about taking money from his clients, but they had been happy to have their issues resolved and were content to pay his £100 consultation fee. If the detective had been required to do some active sleuthing, the fee would have been higher.

Well, he had another £200 to put in the bank.

In between the two consultations, Sherlock had received the text from Molly, where she had asked if Tuesday would be a good day for them to host her mother, and he had replied in the affirmative. He had then eaten a sandwich for lunch and checked his emails. There were a couple of cases that interested him, but which were not urgent. He decided to address them again at the end of the weekend. With Rosie coming, the detective did not want to leave Molly alone to watch over the baby. Besides, he wanted to view the child’s habits, so that he would be better prepared when the time came for him to have a child of his own.

The more Sherlock thought about the weekend ahead, the more nervous he became. This would be the first time he had been with Rosie without the supervision of her father. At least Molly, who was an experienced babysitter, would be there to help him.

At the conclusion of the second appointment, Sherlock spent some time on YouTube. He searched for the songs Molly had chosen for their wedding. It took him a moment to access his mind palace to recall the correct version of "Love Divine, all Love Excelling.” Hytrydol, that was the version he needed to look at. Sherlock listened to the tune a few times. He didn’t have the words in front of him, so he tried to hum the tune. Not bad, he thought afterwards with satisfaction. He thought he could hold the tune rather well.

Sherlock also found “O Perfect Love” and listened to it, then hummed the tune as well. It had a more straightforward melody and he had no trouble learning it. Next time, he would have to search for the lyrics on his laptop and play the music on his phone.

Sherlock spent some time reading more of the second book of Samuel. By the time the doorbell rang to announce Mycroft’s arrival, he had finished it and was contemplating whether he should move on to the New Testament book of Romans.

The door attendant, otherwise known as Mrs. Hudson, opened it, and Mycroft’s heavy tread ascended the stairs. Sherlock opened the door before his brother could knock.

“Good evening, Mycroft,” he said pleasantly. “To what do I owe the honour of your presence this time?”
“I trust I provided enough notice for you, to prevent a repeat of the poor timing of my last visit,” remarked Mycroft with an insincere smile.

“Molly’s still at work, if it is that to which you are referring.”

“Do pass on my good wishes to her.”

“Mycroft, you obviously did not take the trouble to come here for small talk. What is going on?”

“I have two reasons for my visit. First, is to present you with good news. I have procured the services of a professional string quartet for your wedding.”

Sherlock smiled. “Thank you. Molly will be thrilled. I can give you a cheque to cover their fee, just let me know what I owe you.”

“That is not necessary. I have already paid them. Consider it a wedding gift.”

Sherlock looked at his older brother in surprise. “You have already paid for our honeymoon as a wedding gift.”

“Consider it an engagement gift, then.”

“What about the concert tickets you paid for?” Sherlock was beginning to suspect his brother might actually harbour some affection for him, or perhaps for his future sister-in-law.

Mycroft seemed a little flustered when Sherlock pointed out yet another token of his generosity. “Um, that was...a gift for my future sister-in-law.”

“Very well, big brother. Molly and I thank you for your kindness.”

A slight flush stained Mycroft’s cheeks. “You’re welcome.” Then he continued. "My other reason for being here is somewhat more serious.”

“Please tell me you have an interesting case for me. I need something stimulating to take my mind off of Molly, something to keep me occupied.”

Mycroft raised an eyebrow. “You require distraction from thoughts of your fiancée? How...sentimental of you.”

“You love mocking me for my erroneous turns of phrase from the past. I know they were the words of a fool. All those things I said were attempts to avoid emotional attachments to anyone. I would prefer you to refrain from those sort of remarks in the future.”

Apologies, brother mine. Old habits die hard, I’m afraid.”

Sherlock nodded. “I forgive you, Mycroft. Now, what is the other reason for your visit?”

“It’s a rather delicate matter. My government department has been receiving threats about its ‘corruption.’ A compromising photo of my immediate superior was sent to my office a few days ago. There was a message attached, warning of his exposure if this person’s demands are not met.”

“Is there any truth to the accusations by the blackmailer?”

“Not in the matter of corruption. My supervisor, who is supposedly happily married, was caught in an indelicate situation, which could call into question his effectiveness to lead our department.”
“So basically you are saying he was caught with his pants down, and if it becomes public, there will be hell to pay.”

“Essentially, yes. You know the way the world works. When someone throws mud, some of it always sticks. If word of my superior’s infidelity were to come out, it would have a far-reaching effect on the whole department. There would be investigations into everything we have done. I fear...I fear that somehow your role in Magnussen’s death could be exposed.”

“You wish for my assistance in apprehending and silencing the blackmailer?” Sherlock inquired calmly.

As soon as the words had left his mouth, Sherlock felt his insides churning. If his past came back to haunt him now, he could lose everything. He could lose his freedom. If he went to jail, he couldn’t expect Molly to wait for him. Worst case scenario, it could be many years before he was released, and there was a very real possibility that Mycroft could also be imprisoned as an accomplice. Suddenly he felt his world was crashing around him. His vision began to dim as fear overwhelmed him.

“Sherlock!” came Mycroft’s anxious voice. He felt his brother leading him by the arm to the sofa, where he sat, then put his face in his hands. “Sherlock, we just need to find the blackmailer. As you said, if we can apprehend him, everyone shall be safe.”

“Do you happen to have the note?” asked Sherlock finally, raising his head. He was trying to think clearly, to use his logic.

“Yes,” said Mycroft. “It’s in my pocket.” he handed the younger Holmes sibling the note.

“Was it dusted for fingerprints?” he asked, before taking the proffered note.

“Of course. It was completely clean of prints.”

“No amateur blackmailer then,” said the detective slowly. He looked at the note. It read:

“Someone’s been a naughty boy. If you do not wish your department to be investigated for corruption, I highly recommend you accept my demands. Terms shall be forthcoming.”

“You have not yet received another note with said terms?” questioned Sherlock.

“Not yet. I am expecting something very soon.”

“How was the note delivered? Is there an envelope with a postmark?”

“No envelope, and the note was just folded as you see the creases. It was delivered by hand with instructions to pass it along to me.”

A sinking feeling settled into the pit of Sherlock’s stomach. He had a very bad feeling about this. Could it be the person whom he suspected? He picked up his Bible from the coffee table. Underneath lay the note he had received two days before from Delia Erren. Without a word, he glanced at it briefly and then handed it to Mycroft.

Mycroft took the note and looked at it. This note - it uses the same font, sane margin size, and it has the same fold creasing. When did you get this? And who the hell is Delia Erren?”
Sherlock sighed. “I know who your blackmailer is.”

“Delia Erren? What possible motive could she have to try and discredit our department?”

“Greed, revenge. Pick one.”

“Greed I can understand, but revenge? I’ve never heard of this woman. Who is she?”

Sherlock took a deep breath. “It’s Irene Adler. Look at the name, Mycroft. It’s an anagram. She was here yesterday, trying to seduce me.”

“But how can that be?” expostulated Mycroft. “Irene’s dead, er, I mean, went into a witness protection scheme in America years ago.”

“Well, dear brother, it seems for once I was able to fool you. I was in Karachi when she was captured.”

“What? But there was footage of her, I saw it myself. There was a man waiting to behead her. I wanted to spare your feelings, so I lied to you.”

“I contacted local law enforcement about Irene’s capture. They apprehended her would-be assassin and I took his place. The local police did the rest, as soon as I swung the sword. Then I paid the person taking the video a vast sum of money to send you the footage, after a delay of two months.”

“Well brother mine, I told John at the time it would take Sherlock Holmes himself to fool me, so I suppose I got something right.”

Sherlock gave a grim smile. “Apparently you did not bother to check my movements and see I had left the country at the same time as Irene’s supposed death.”

“I had no reason to. As you said, I only received the footage two months after the incident.”

“Well, it seems that my intervention came at your expense, and now, perhaps mine,” said Sherlock wearily.

“Why did you save her, then? Did you have feelings for her?”

“It’s not what you’re thinking, Mycroft. Any interest I had in regards to her cleverness became nothing but loathing when I realized she was working for Moriarty. However, I felt a sense of obligation to that woman, because it was I who prevented her from having everything she ever wanted.”

“Including yourself,” observed Mycroft, wryly.

“Indeed,” affirmed Sherlock. “She propositioned me after I saved her, and I refused. For years afterward she would still text me once in awhile. Always asking to ‘have dinner.’ Perhaps she thought I’d change my mind. I only texted her twice, both times to rebuff her advances, but she was persistent. When Molly and I got engaged, I sent her a text and then deleted and blocked her number. I was hoping that would be an end to it, once and for all.”

“Apparently she didn’t feel the same way if she came to see you.”

“And that was her big mistake. Now we know she is the blackmailer, we just need to find her.”

“Did she give you any clues when she was here?” questioned Mycroft.
“She told me she was still in the same line of work, but that it was a strictly word-of-mouth venture. We need to make plans immediately to find her and apprehend her.”

“What do you propose, brother mine? Should we perhaps go to my office for this?”

Sherlock shook his head. “Not yet. I need to let Molly know what’s happening.” He glanced at his watch. “She should be home soon. In the meantime, you need to talk to your boss and find out where he was when the photo was taken. Obviously he had to go to her, in light of the fact that he was cheating on his wife.”

“Very well, I shall call him and arrange for him to meet us at my office. Should we say nine o’clock?”

“Yes, we need to move on this right away. In the meantime I will contact Billy Wiggins to coordinate my homeless network. Perhaps they may have heard of Delia Erren and know where she has her base of operations.”

Sherlock took his phone out of his pocket to text Billy and realized that Molly had sent him a text a little while earlier, when he had been too engrossed in his conversation with Mycroft to notice. He figured there was no point in texting back because she would undoubtedly be home any minute.

Mycroft was on the phone to his boss and Sherlock had just finished texting Billy when Molly opened the door to the flat.

He rose and walked towards her.

Chapter End Notes

Well, what do you think? Angsty enough for you?

How frightening would it be to have demons from the past threatening your future?

Oh, and isn't Mycroft generous? I think he looks for ways to take care of his brother. He loves Sherlock deeply, despite that gruff exterior.

Updated with slight corrections 6/28/18
Frightened for the Future

Chapter Summary

Sherlock tells Molly he has to leave for a case and Molly leans on her faith to get her through her fears.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Molly looked at the expression on Sherlock’s face and fear washed over her. In the background she heard Mycroft’s voice.

“My brother and I will meet you in my office at nine. We will see you shortly.”

“Sherlock, what’s wrong? You need to leave here tonight?”

“Come over to the sofa and I’ll explain what is going on.”

As Sherlock led her to the sofa, Mycroft stood. He was making another phone call. “I am ready to be picked up., thank you.”

As Molly sat down, Mycroft said, “I’ll give you some privacy to say your goodbyes, Sherlock. I’ll be waiting out front for you. Molly, I apologize for taking your fiancé away from you. I hope we can address our urgent situation and have him back to you tomorrow.” He left the flat and headed downstairs.

Molly nodded in acknowledgment, then looked at her fiancé for an explanation.

“I don’t have long to talk, love. Once this is all sorted out I will tell you everything. All I can say for now is that it concerns Irene Adler and could have a negative bearing on our future together if this isn’t addressed immediately.”

Molly put her hands over her mouth. Why was this woman still plaguing them? Tears formed in her eyes.

Sherlock’s voice was low and urgent as he told her, “It will be okay, darling. I’m going to make this right. I might be out all night and perhaps tomorrow, but I will fix this, I promise.”

Molly took her hands away from her mouth and asked. “Will you be home before John comes tomorrow?”

“I’ll ask him to bring Rosie a little later, so you will be here, in case I am not back in time.”

“What does that woman want from you?”

“It’s not exactly me she is targeting, but the resulting collateral damage could be disastrous. Mycroft’s boss was caught in a compromising position with Irene and she is blackmailing the department, which could be investigated if her demands are not met and the blackmail photos are made public. Investigation could lead to them potentially finding the footage that was tampered
with a few months ago in regards to Magnussen. Mycroft arranged to have it changed so it didn’t show I shot him. If that were to come out…” His voice trailed off and he looked distressed.

“Oh, dear God, no!” gasped Molly in horror at the thought of what could happen to the man she loved.

“I’m so sorry, darling. I wish we could talk more, but I need to leave. I had to see you first though, and to kiss you goodbye.”

He put his arms around her as he spoke. Then he was kissing her urgently, desperately, as if he wasn’t sure when he would see her again.

Molly clung to him as tears slid down her cheeks.

Finally Sherlock released her and gently wiped her tears with his thumbs. “It’s going to be okay, my love. Pray for me, for us.”

“I will,” she whispered.

Sherlock collected his phone and his laptop. He stood for a moment, then picked up his Bible. He kissed his fiancée again briefly, and was about to leave, when she stopped him.

“Wait just a minute,” she begged, hurrying into the kitchen. She retrieved the container of ginger nuts and thrust them at Sherlock. “Take these. I’m sure you didn’t eat anything this evening.”

“You’re right. Thank you, darling,” he said, kissing her once more. Then he was gone.

After Sherlock had left, Molly buried her face in her arms and wept. It seemed that every time things were going well something had to happen to threaten it. First it had been her kidnapping, then she had found out about Mary, and just yesterday it had been Irene. Now the woman was once again threatening her happiness with Sherlock.

Molly began to pray. *Oh God, please help Sherlock do what needs to be done. Please help him solve whatever crime he is working on. Please Lord, get us through this time of tribulation.*

After her heartfelt prayer, Molly’s heart lightened a little. God had brought them to this point. She was sure He wouldn’t abandon them now. They had come too far.

With Sherlock’s absence, Molly realized she needed to take care of some things. There were things being delivered the next day and neither of them would be around to get them, unless by some miracle her fiancé was able to resolve whatever problem had arisen in a short time.

Making a decision, Molly headed downstairs and knocked on the door to Mrs. Hudson’s flat.

That sweet lady immediately noticed Molly’s tear-ravaged face. “Come in, dear, what’s got you upset?” Then she added suspiciously, “Did that fiancé of yours do something he shouldn’t have?”

“No, of course not,” Molly defended. “He had to leave suddenly with Mycroft. There was an urgent case and… and Sherlock said it could affect our future.” She felt her eyes beginning to blur again with tears.

Mrs. Hudson gave her a quick hug and ushered the distraught woman to a chair. “Have you had anything to eat, dear?”

“No, I just got home from work a little while ago.”
“I made some scones today and I was just about to make some tea. You just sit there and tell me what’s going on while I get things ready.”

As Mrs. Hudson busied herself with preparing a plate of scones and putting butter and jam on the table, Molly said, “I don’t really know what’s going on. All I know is that it has something to do with the woman from yesterday, Irene Adler.”

“I thought the woman who came yesterday was a Delia something or other. At least, that’s what she told me.”

“She used the name to disguise her real identity. She has caused problems in the past for Sherlock and is now doing it again.”

“So she wasn’t a client then? She came for another purpose?”

“She came to try and seduce my fiancé,” said Molly in a hard voice.

“Well now, she would have been disappointed. Sherlock clearly has eyes only for you. In fact, he has always looked at you in a different way than anyone else.”

Molly twisted her engagement ring absently. “Do you really think so?”

“‘Oh yes, there has always been a certain softness in his expression when he looks at you, and I saw it many times before you were together. I also think he was pretty unhappy about that Tom fellow. Very dismissive he was, at the wedding.”

“Well, that ridiculous ‘meat dagger’ notion Tom had. I was embarrassed to hear it coming out of his mouth.”

“I noticed. You know,” confided the landlady, “I do notice a lot of things. Sherlock looked your way a number of times at the wedding reception. You did look very pretty that day.”

Molly blushed. “That’s very kind of you to say, but I don’t think Sherlock looked at me any more than he looked at Janine.”

“That trollop? She was the one throwing herself at him. And then those nasty stories she spread about the poor boy...”

Molly had to stifle a giggle. Sherlock was hardly a boy, but she supposed Mrs. Hudson was entitled to think of him that way; she treated him as if he was her son on many occasions, despite the “I’m your landlady, not your housekeeper” comments. It was rather fun, hearing from a third party that Sherlock had cared for her even before he admitted it to himself.

Mrs. Hudson set down the tea and scones. Molly realized she was quite hungry, despite the late lunch with her mother. It was nice to have some companionship with Sherlock absent.

After eating, Molly spoke again. “Mrs. Hudson, there are several items coming tomorrow from Amazon. I was wondering if you could keep an eye out for them.”

Oh, Sherlock already asked me to watch for him. He said he would come downstairs for them.”

“Now that he may not be around, would you mind keeping them in your flat until I come home? I’m sure I’ll be able to pick up the things for Rosie, but the desk will probably be too heavy for me to carry. I’ll need to wait for Sherlock to help me with it.”
“I’ll just have the delivery men leave that one against the wall. I’ll put the other things in my flat for you, and you can get them when you are home.”

“Thank you,” Molly said gratefully. She impulsively stood and gave the elderly woman a hug. “I don’t know what we’d do without you.”

“You’d be fine; Sherlock maybe not so much. Then again, now he has you, I think I’ve become rather redundant.”

“You’ll never be redundant, Mrs. Hudson,” responded Molly sincerely. “Besides, when we have a baby, we’ll be expecting you to be an extra grandparent.”

By the delighted look on Mrs. Hudson's face, Molly knew she had made the elderly woman very happy. “Well, I guess I should head back upstairs,” she said. “Thank you for the scones and tea.”

“Keep your chin up, dear. Your fiancé will have everything set to rights soon. Nothing will stop him from making sure you walk down the aisle to him. Besides,” she added mischievously, “you have a wedding night to look forward to.”

Molly blushed furiously, but that was Mrs. Hudson all over. Definitely not afraid to speak her mind. Waving goodbye, she beat a hasty retreat back to the solitude of 221B.

Once there, Molly decided to read her devotional. She found comfort in the reading, which was Romans 8:28.

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.*

Although Molly knew Sherlock would probably be too busy to text her back, she felt he should hear the verse. Perhaps it would offer him some comfort as well.

She retrieved her phone from her bag and texted, “Honey, if you get the chance, read Romans 8:28. It was the reading for today in my devotional and it made me feel a lot better about things. Make sure you eat those biscuits. I love you. Take as long as you need, I believe in you, my darling. xx”

Then she quickly sent another one.

“Don’t feel obligated to respond. I know you are busy. Just give me an update later, when you have time.”

To her surprise, Sherlock responded almost immediately.

“I always have time for you, sweetheart. It’s going to be a long night. Just spoke with Mycroft’s boss, and we have some leads to check out. I need to put out some feelers via my homeless network as well. I’ll take a look at that verse you sent. Good thing I brought my Bible. Biscuits are a lifesaver, like you. XOX”

Molly read the text and smiled. Sherlock seemed fairly upbeat, and he said he had some leads, so that was a good thing. While she had her phone out, Molly checked her emails. Not surprisingly, there was nothing of interest, just the usual spam and advertising ones.

She was just about to exit her email when one title caught her eyes, because the subject line just read “Molly Hooper.” Perhaps it was spam, but usually spam subject lines just used her email name in the title.
She clicked on the email and read the words from somebody unknown. It was a hotmail account she did not recognize and there was only one sentence.

“The detective and you are a very bad match.”

Molly frowned. Why would somebody be sending her this type of email? And how had they obtained her email address? She had had a blog years earlier, which included her email, but she had long ceased to update it. Perhaps somebody had stumbled upon it accidentally?

Oh well, she supposed it could be a fan of Sherlock’s who was just jealous that she had missed her chance with him. Molly resolved to let Sherlock know about it, but not until he had successfully resolved the current crisis.

The flat was so quiet without her fiancé’s presence. shrugging off her feeling of loneliness, the Molly went to take her shower. The shower served to relax her somewhat. She put on her warm, seldom used pyjamas and climbed into bed, acutely aware of the empty spot next to her.

It took some time, but finally she was able to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

I thought it would be interesting to weave a story around that doctored footage.

I also want to highlight their faith, and the way Molly’s devotional gave her comfort. So often we can be comforted in that manner when we need it, as God speaks to us through His Word.
Sherlock and Mycroft arrived at the latter’s office just before nine o’clock. It was a few minutes afterwards when Sir Edwin, Mycroft’s boss, appeared in the doorway of his office.

“What’s this all about?” the older man demanded of Mycroft. “You tell me you have urgent business to discuss and make me leave my house when I’ve just gotten comfortable in front of the telly with my wife. She wasn’t too happy with me.”

“Really? And how do you explain away the other nights you leave your wife?” interposed Sherlock dryly.

“I beg your pardon?” expostulated the man, glancing over at Sherlock, then looking back at the older Holmes sibling. “Mycroft, why is your brother here anyway? Has he done something again we need to clean up to keep him out of jail?”

“I’m afraid the problem this time is you, Sir Edwin.”

“Me? I haven’t done anything wrong,” insisted his superior.

“Perhaps not in the eyes of the law, but I doubt your wife would agree,” remarked Sherlock, eliciting a venomous glance in his direction.

“I’m afraid my brother is correct,” said Mycroft. He unlocked his desk drawer and produced a photo. “This was delivered a few days ago along with a note.” He took the note out of his pocket and presented both to Sir Edwin.

The man took the items, glanced at them and visibly paled.

“I, uh, I can explain,” he stammered.

Sherlock cocked an eyebrow and looked at his brother. “This should be interesting,” he murmured.
“Save your ‘explanations’ for your wife. We have no time for games here,” Mycroft said sternly. “Sherlock has determined who the blackmailer is and she’s a very dangerous woman. If your infidelity is exposed, the whole department will be subjected to scrutiny. To be quite clear, sir, I don’t give a damn about protecting you from the consequences of your actions, but I will protect my brother. While he did something wrong in the eyes of the law, he rid the world of a blackmailer who was ten times more dangerous than this woman.”

Defeated, the older man asked wearily, “What do you need from me? You have my complete cooperation. Obviously I have no desire for my, uh, nocturnal activities to be exposed.”

It was Sherlock’s turn to take charge, and he did so. “What name did the woman give you?”

“I only know her as Delia.”

“How did you hear about her?”

Sir Edwin put his head in his hands. “God, this is so embarrassing. I occasionally frequent an S&M club in Soho. One of my acquaintances there told me about this woman, said she was beautiful and very experienced in, uh, discipline.” Sir Edwin coloured.

Sherlock was secretly disgusted by what he heard. Here was a man who, to all intents and purposes, was happily married with children, even a couple of grandchildren, and he was leading a double life. Setting aside his feelings of distaste, he merely asked coldly, “Where did you go, when you saw her for this ‘discipline?’”

“I don’t actually know. My friend arranged for me to meet her at the club. She took me somewhere via taxi. I had to wear a blindfold.”

"Dammit,” Sherlock cursed, slamming his hand on Mycroft’s desk.

“Keep it together, brother mine,” said Mycroft calmly. “Ask the right questions.”

Sherlock ran a hand through his curly hair and took a deep breath. “Sir Edwin, can you estimate how long the journey by taxi was? Was traffic moving slowly or steadily?”

Sir Edwin thought for a moment. “It was only about ten minutes. I think the cab was moving quite slowly because it stopped and started a lot.”

“Well, thank God you have a modicum of observation skills, even if your morals are completely lacking,” sherlock said, unable to keep a derogatory note out of his voice.

“Calmly, Sherlock,” was his brother’s comment. Sherlock flashed back to when those sane words had come out of his sister’s mouth, during that revealing phone call to Molly. He had to keep his cool, his and Molly’s future depended on him being able to find Irene.

“Sorry, Mycroft.” He deliberately did not apologize to the unfaithful scoundrel of a man cowering in front of him. “Think carefully. When you were being, uh, disciplined by Ire... I mean Delia, was there any traffic noise in the background?”

Sir Edwin thought a moment. "I did hear some traffic noises. I also heard Big Ben at one point.”

“Was the chime loud or distant?”

“It wasn’t too loud, nor too soft.” The detective rolled his eyes at that. But it was at least something.
“Were you in a private residence or a hotel room.” He stopped and answered his own question. “Obviously a private residence. No way to get you into a hotel with a blindfold and not have people asking questions.”

Sir Edwin nodded.

Sherlock continued to ask rapid-fire questions, cataloguing each answer into his mind palace to contemplate later. When he was satisfied he had gotten as much information out of the man as was possible, he gave him a curt nod. “I think we have enough to be going on with. You may leave unless,” he turned to his brother, “you can think of some questions I missed, Mycroft?”

“You did a very thorough job, brother mine. I agree we have enough information to work with, at least for now.” Looking at Sir Edwin disdainfully, the older Holmes said, “Make sure you are available in case we need to talk to you again. Your future, as well as ours, depends on a quick resolution to this problem.”

After Sir Edwin had left, Sherlock paced about the little office.

“Have some ginger nuts,” suggested Mycroft. “Then you can start making your deductions.”

“Yes, I think I’ll do that.” Sherlock walked over to the desk, where he had set down the biscuits, along with his laptop and Bible when he had arrived.

“I’m going to go down the hall and get us some coffee. It’s going to be a long night,” Mycroft informed him, before leaving the room.

Sherlock sat in a chair and began to eat the ginger nuts, chewing thoughtfully as he mulled over what Sir Edwin had said. There were some valuable clues in there. He would have to go into his mind palace to properly process things, after he had his coffee.

His phone pinged with a text alert from his fiancée. Perfect timing. He hadn’t yet entered his mind palace, and he had a few minutes to converse via text while Mycroft was out of the room. He pulled his phone out of his pocket and read it. He smiled when her second text came through, telling him he didn’t need to respond. But he wanted to, so he did.

Once he had sent her the text, he reached over to the desk to pick up his Bible, and he found the verse. It was interesting that it came from the next book he planned to read. Romans 8:28. Just as the verse had made Molly feel better, it also gave the detective a sense of peace. He knew God was with him and would guide him to the solution.

Sherlock still had the Bible open to the page in his lap when Mycroft returned with two steaming cups of black coffee.

“Still a Christian then?” Mycroft asked with a half-smile.

“Christianity is not a fad, Mycroft. It is a change of one’s heart, a permanent one.”

“I have to say, it seems to agree with you, now that you have discovered you have a heart after all.”

Sherlock merely rolled his eyes. Would Mycroft ever come to terms with the fact that he had really changed for the better? He supposed it would take some time due to the many years his brother had been his keeper.

“You should be glad to have so much extra time on your hands, now you don’t have to worry about keeping an eye on me,” he remarked, adding with a twinkle in his eye, “more time for you to
pursue your liaison with Lady Smallwood.”

To his surprise, Mycroft did not deny it, but looked embarrassed. The detective smiled as he took a sip of his coffee. It was his turn to tease his brother. “Your wedding invitation should be arriving in the mail any day. We did add that you can bring a guest. Might I assume you plan to ask the aforementioned lady to be your guest?”

Sherlock almost laughed out loud at Mycroft’s continued embarrassment. “Perhaps,” was the short reply.

“Perhaps you too have a heart, big brother. Mummy would be so happy to see you settled as well.” He gave his brother a wink.

Mycroft merely snorted. “Finish your coffee, brother. We have a blackmailer to find.”

After they had finished their coffee, Sherlock sent another text to Billy, who had responded to his first one with a, “Ready when you are for instructions, Shezza.”

He smiled at the name Billy used. It was the way Sherlock had referred to himself when he had been undercover, trying to draw the attention of Charles Magnussen. Billy seemed to think of himself as the detective’s protégé, because Sherlock had elicited his aid to administer a careful dose of drugged tea to a pregnant Mary, as well as drugged punch for the rest of his family on Christmas Day; the day of the arranged secret meeting with Magnussen, the day he had killed the man to prevent him from divulging any more secrets that would ruin people’s lives.

There would always be a tremendous burden of guilt for what he had done that day, but at the time there seemed no other way out. Now of course, that decision could come back to haunt him, unless Irene could be found and stopped.

He sent another text to Billy. “I will have some information soon on where I need you to instruct my homeless network to look for Delia Erren’s residence. In the meantime, I need one or two people to go to the S&M club in Soho and make inquiries about her. See if anyone knows anything about her and get back to me.”

The text came back almost immediately, “Anything for you, Shezza.” Sherlock knew the sentiment was sincere. He had set the young man up in a flat, helped him find a sponsor to keep him away from drugs, and helped him find a job to support himself.

Once the text was sent, Sherlock looked over at his brother who was furiously tapping away at his laptop, making his own investigations. “Time for me to blow the cobwebs out of my mind palace,” he remarked, then settled himself more comfortably in the chair, closing his eyes and steepling his fingers.

Sherlock remained in his mind palace for a long time, sorting through every piece of information he had about Irene’s current activities. He sorted the clues by relevance, discarding those which provided no help as to her whereabouts. He mentally calculated the search radius for the residence Irene/Delia had used, bearing in mind the possible proximity to Big Ben. He mentally mapped the most logical areas for a residence that matched Sir Edwin’s description.

Sherlock vaguely heard his text alert while he was deep in his mind palace. It was not Molly, so he ignored it and continued his contemplation until he was satisfied that he had every piece of evidence catalogued correctly. Taking a deep breath, Sherlock came back to reality.

Mycroft was leaning back in his desk chair, eyes closed and snoring softly. Sherlock looked at his
watch. It was three in the morning. He had been lost in contemplation for hours. Then Sherlock looked at his phone. The text was from Billy Wiggins.

“Good news. One of the workers, with a little monetary convincing - you owe me fifty quid - told me he had overheard her give an address somewhere in Mayfair one night. Seems the lady in question comes to the club two or three times a week for clients. They have to agree to be blindfolded before she’ll take them home with her.”

Sherlock stared at the text. All that time he’d spent in his mind palace to narrow the radius, and here was a huge clue. He should have waited for Billy to get back to him, he thought ruefully. It made sense that Irene would be residing in one of the most affluent areas in London. She was a woman of expensive tastes. Her former clients had also been wealthy when she was using her own name.

He sent another text to the young man. “Find out when Delia was last at the club. Was she there a few hours ago?”

While he waited for a response, Sherlock got up from his chair and went to make a fresh cup of coffee. He thought for a minute, then decided to make one for Mycroft as well. They would need to be alert and ready to go once they had a better idea of Irene’s whereabouts.

He took the coffees back into the office and selected another two ginger nuts from the plastic container Molly had given him. He was always compelled to eat his biscuits in pairs, it was rather a conundrum and one he had never established a satisfying answer for. Just as well there were still plenty left.

Surprisingly, despite the late hour, Sherlock was not tired. He was just anxious to get things moving, to resolve things. As he continued to wait for Billy, he suddenly realized he had not texted John about bringing Rosie over a little later. Now was as good a time as any to do that. He sent off the text, explaining what was going on and requesting that John bring his daughter at nine if at all possible. If he needed to come earlier, the detective suggested John see if Mrs. Hudson could watch the baby for a short while until he and Molly got home.

Sherlock had already decided that he would go to the hospital to pick Molly up after her shift, if things went well and they found Irene. By that time he would not have seen her in almost twenty-four hours.

Finally, the text from Billy came through at almost five in the morning. “Sorry it took so long. It seems things get quite busy here in the middle of the night. Quite interesting really. Anyway, the lady was here a few hours ago, and she took someone home with her. You’ll never believe it, it was another lady. Took another ten quid for that bit of info. You owe me sixty now.”

Sherlock curled his lip in disgust. Same old Irene. She didn’t discriminate between men and women when it came to her little dominatrix games. He still didn’t know why she had targeted him as a potential conquest. Perhaps it had been the challenge.

Once again he sent a text. “Thanks Billy. Keep digging. See if you can find out the client’s name. I’ll reimburse you and compensate you for your time when you can come to Baker Street.”

“You got it, Shezza.”

Sherlock drummed his fingers on the desk, taking yet another pair of biscuits just for something to do. He supposed he should call Greg Lestrade in on this. He would need police support to arrest
Irene. Charges could still be brought up on her with regards to her blackmail from the past. In fact, a warrant had been placed for the arrest of Irene Adler yers earlier which he assumed was still in effect. Although she had changed her name, both Sherlock and Mycroft would be able to identify her positively as the dominatrix.

The next text made Sherlock open his mouth in surprise.

“Turns out the young lady from tonight is not a client. Name is Julia Fairhaven. Word is, that Delia woman is mentoring her. She’s a pretty young thing apparently, just turned 18 recently. Told one of the workers her parents don’t know what she’s up to. I have an address for the parents if you need it. Tally is up to eighty quid now.”

Sherlock groaned. Talk about leeches, those people. But it would be worth it if it led to Irene. He asked for the address from Billy and received it soon afterwards.

It was time to call Greg, despite the early hour. He sent a text to the detective inspector, asking for his help as soon as possible.

By the time Greg responded, it was after six in the morning.

“What’s up, Sherlock? Rather early to be asking for my help,” was the response.

“Sorry to do this to you so early, but I need back-up. An old foe of mine, Irene Adler is back in town and using an assumed name, Delia Erren. She is up to her old tricks again and needs to be stopped. I’m sure you remember what I told you about her in confidence. There should still be an outstanding warrant for her arrest. I have some leads as to her whereabouts, but need to speak first with the parents of a girl it seems she is mentoring. We may get the address from them, which would save a lot of time.”

Sherlock added the address to his text and Greg responded with, “I’ll meet you there. Give me an hour to dig up the warrant and get to the address. We shouldn’t arrive too early anyway. Shall we say seven-thirty?”

“That would be fine. Mycroft will be with me too.”

“Okay, see you then.”

Sherlock went to make himself a third cup of coffee. He was finally starting to feel the effects of being awake all night. He fixed a cup for Mycroft as well, the other having long since gone cold as he had not bothered to wake him earlier. This time he roused him, shaking his shoulder gently.

Sherlock updated his brother with all the information he had gleaned.

“I checked my sources earlier,” reported Mycroft. “That warrant for Irene is still active, so Lestrade should have no trouble in finding it.”

The brothers discussed what they would do once they reached Julia’s house. Sherlock was certain they would be able to get the information he needed. With that in mind, he texted Molly, knowing she was not likely to be awake yet.

“Sweetheart, I just wanted to give you a quick update. Mycroft and I will be following up a strong lead shortly. We are meeting up with Greg Lestrade. I plan on having this all finished today so I can be at the hospital to pick you up at eight. If I am going to be more than a few minutes late, I’ll let you know. Otherwise, don’t leave without me. When I hear from John about the change in time for bringing Rosie over, I’ll let you know. I suggested nine o’clock. Love you XOX”
A short time later, the two men made their way to the residence of Julia Fairhaven and her parents. It was time to get some answers.

Chapter End Notes

The plot thickens. Writing crime and investigations stories is definitely not my forté. I hope I can make this investigation at least somewhat believable. Are you interested to see what comes next? How did you find Sherlock's attitude towards Sir Edwin?

I hope you like the addition of Billy Wiggins to the story. For some reason, I have a soft spot for the young man.

Updated for better flow 6/30/18
Putting on a Brave Face - Molly (Friday)

Chapter Summary

Molly has an interesting discussion with Kayla. Later, she thinks about Mary and makes an important decision.

Chapter Notes

If you would like prayer for something, please state in your comment and I will post the request in the next chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Molly woke, she turned to ask Sherlock if he wanted some breakfast, but he wasn’t there. It took a moment for her brain to catch up with her action. Sherlock was gone, trying to fix a situation that could cause a threat to their future.

Molly wondered how things had gone while she had been asleep. She took her phone off the charger on the bedside table and noticed that a text had come through from her fiancé at around six. From the tone of the text it seemed as if things were progressing quite well, especially with Sherlock saying he had called in Lestrade, and that he planned to pick her up from work.

As she prepared breakfast and made coffee, Molly tried not to worry but, human nature being what it was, there was a knot in her stomach that would not go away. After two bites of toast, she was unable to eat any more, and tossed the rest of it into the rubbish.

As she didn’t need to be at work for hours yet, Molly decided to send Sherlock a text so he would know she was thinking of him.

“When I woke this morning, I was going to ask you if you wanted any breakfast, but of course you were not in bed next to me. I hope you have had something to eat. I’ll be praying that everything is resolved today. Looking forward to seeing you tonight. Love you xx”

She sent the text, then went into the sitting room and turned on the television. Honestly, there was nothing worth watching during the day, she thought, turning it back off. Perhaps a little Bible reading would calm her down.

Molly went into the bedroom and read her devotional for the day, then read some more of the 2nd book of Samuel. Even reading about King David couldn’t soothe her restlessness. She had never felt so agitated. There had been nothing else from Sherlock, and fear for his safety kept flooding her mind.

What if they were unsuccessful with finding Irene and bringing her to justice? What if somehow her fiancé managed to get himself hurt? What if he didn’t come home to her? What if, what if, WHAT IF?
She felt alone and abandoned as fear washed over her. Then the words of a praise song popped into her head -

**Fear not, for I am with you;**  
**Fear not, for I am with you;**  
**Fear not, for I am with you says the Lord.**

It was amazing how often that kind of thing would happen at times when she felt low. It was the way God spoke to her, either through song lyrics, or Bible verses or through devotional readings.

She closed her eyes. *I DO trust you Lord. Help me to cling to you always and to know you work all things together for good.*

Peace settled over her. She still felt a shadow of fear for Sherlock, it was human nature to worry about things, but at the same time, Molly knew whatever happened, God was in control.

It was with a much lighter heart that she left for work at ten-thirty.

Although there were no post-mortems scheduled for the day, there was plenty of work to keep Molly occupied. There were several tests on tissue samples she needed to do, blood work to analyze and test results to log.

Before she knew it, it was time to head downstairs and meet Kayla for a late lunch.

When Molly arrived in the lobby, she looked around for her friend. She spotted her browsing in the hospital gift shop. Obviously Kayla had been running early.

“Hey Kayla,” she greeted her friend, waving from the entrance to the little shop.

“Molly!” Kayla came out immediately and gave her friend a hug. “I was just looking at the stuffed animals. I thought I’d buy a little gift for Rosie.”

“Go ahead, I can wait,” smiled Molly.

Kayla re-entered the shop and purchased a little plush hippo. “Do you think she’ll like it?” she asked anxiously as Molly led her friend to the canteen.

“It’s adorable. I’m sure she’ll love it, even if it’s just something for her to suck on.”

The women got their meals and sat down in a quiet corner of the canteen.

“Did you know, Rosie is cutting her first tooth?” asked Kayla.

“Really? Well I guess she’s about the age for it. When did you find that out?”

“It was after church on Sunday. John invited me back to his place for lunch. Rosie was being a little fussy, so I put my finger in her mouth and I felt it.”

“That’s so cool,” enthused Molly. “I suppose you know Sherlock and I are babysitting her this weekend?”

“John told me about that. I told him if you were not available, I could stay at his place and babysit, but perhaps that was moving things a bit fast. I...I’ve never felt this way before, Molly. That’s why I really wanted to talk with you.”
“You can talk with me anytime, Kayla. Why don’t you tell me what’s been happening since we went out to dinner together last Saturday,” Molly suggested.

“Okay. As you know, I went back to John’s and visited for a bit with him, his sister Harry, and of course Rosie. Oh, Molly, I’m sure you know what a sweetheart she is. Working with young children I’ve always longed to have one of my own.”

Molly smiled at her friend. “I think you’ll be a great mum, Kayla. So what happened next? How did you get John to come with you to church?”

“Oh it was kind of an accident, really. John took me home and said he’d had a really nice time. He was leaning in to kiss me, and I just kind of blurted out that I had church in the morning and would he be interested in coming along?” Kayla blushed.

“There’s nothing wrong with that. He could have said no.”

“Well, I kind of wondered if he just said yes so I would let him kiss me.”

Molly laughed at her friend’s absurd notion. “I’m sure that wasn’t the case. Anyway,” she confided, “I kind of had to bribe Sherlock to get him to come to church with me the first time.”

“You did? How?”

This time it was Molly’s turn to blush. “I kind of agreed to sleep in the same bed with him.” Seeing the look of shock on Kayla’s face, she added hastily, "We’re sleeping together in the same bed, but we are not, you know -sleeping together.”

Kayla’s eyes were wide. “How do you find that, then? Aren’t you tempted to give in to your feelings for each other? I haven’t been seeing John for long, and for the first time in my life I’ve been wondering what it would be like, to be with a man that way. And I never felt like that with any other guy I’ve been out with.”

Molly was surprised at her friend’s frankness. She had always thought if anyone would be absolutely determined to stay pure for marriage it would be Kayla.

“I have to admit, it isn’t the easiest thing in the world. To be honest, Sherlock and I have had several discussions on the subject, both before and since he became a Christian. Being in his arms at night is wonderful, but we kind of made this 'abstinence agreement' we’re trying to follow, to help us avoid temptation.”

“Do tell,” begged her friend.

“Well, we read something online with suggestions. One was to keep the passion out of the bedroom. So, we mainly do our kissing in the sitting room. It works okay so far. We’ve gotten a bit too close a couple times, and each time it was because we were in the bedroom at the time. So I think that was a good suggestion.”

“And yet, you’re sleeping in the same bed?” Kayla giggled.

“I know,” groaned Molly. “We probably should have resisted that temptation, but it’s kind of like putting the cart before the horse now. We’ve gotten used to being in the same bed, and we are careful to not let things get too heated.”

“You know, with the way you two look at each other, I did kind of wonder how things were going in that, um, department. There’s an awful lot of chemistry between you.”
“Is it that obvious?” It always gave Molly a special thrill when others said they could tell she and Sherlock were in love.

“Definitely,” assured her friend. “Well, I guess even as Christians it isn’t easy to wait till the wedding night to be intimate. I can see that more clearly now that I’ve started having these feelings for John.”

“Speaking of John, we kind of got off the subject a bit. What did you want to talk to me about?”

“Well,” Kayla blushed, “It was kind of along the lines we’ve already been talking about. You know, having these feelings, desires. John and I have only kissed twice, but it was really, really nice. I mean, like the best kiss I’ve ever had. He’s so sweet and gentle and...oh, now I’m just rambling. Is it possible to fall for someone so quickly?”

“I’m no expert, but I had a crush on Sherlock from the moment we met. I felt a strong connection, even if he didn’t. If you and John both are feeling the same thing so fast, you should talk about it, decide on how you want to proceed.”

“I don’t know how to do that. He only lost his wife a few months ago. I don’t want anyone to think I’m moving too fast.”

“Kayla, if he initiated those kisses, then he must be ready to move on. Like I advised you last time, let him set the pace. If it gets to the point where he wants to be intimate, you need to talk about what you believe and see how he reacts. Sherlock was very respectful of my views, even before he was a believer. I think he understands them better now as a Christian too, but it’s still a struggle. You should probably also reassure John at some point that you are not trying to replace Mary, especially in regards to Rosie.”

"Thank you for the advice," Kayla said gratefully. "That really helps."

Molly looked at her watch. “I really need to get back to work, but I’m here any time you need to talk. If you want to text me or arrange another time to meet, that’s fine. Oh, by the way, once Kaitlyn is back from America next week, I’d like to go shopping for shoes for the wedding. Do you think you’d be free to do that? Maybe on Monday? I finish at four that day.”

“I’m usually done at around four or soon after too at the nursery school. You can check if it’s okay with Kaitlyn, and we can make plans. Thanks for talking to me. I feel a lot better. Oh, and have fun with Rosie this weekend!”

“If John is okay with it, we’ll bring her to church on Sunday, and you’ll see her then.”

"That would be lovely. Thanks again, Molly. I’ll talk to you soon.”

The friends said their goodbyes and Molly headed back upstairs. She had deliberately not said anything about what was happening with Sherlock's current case, because she wanted to know what was going on in Kayla's life. After all, it was her friend who had asked to meet with her in the first place.

Back in the lab, Molly wondered how things were going with Sherlock. She didn’t want to text him and distract him, so she kept herself busy. When her thoughts did wander, it was to think again about her conversation with Kayla. It was interesting to learn that her good friend was also having her own struggle with feelings. She really hoped that things would work out for the couple. John needed someone to help him raise Rosie and she had the feeling Mary would not have wanted him to spend the rest of his life alone.
Mary - Molly had deliberately chosen to not assess her feelings towards her former friend since the events of the previous week. Was she ready to forgive and forget the dead woman’s actions? There was still disappointment, but her anger towards the woman had died away. Weighing things together, Mary had not tried to not kill Sherlock with that bullet, even though his heart had in fact stopped for a few seconds. Her ultimate sacrifice in taking the bullet meant for Sherlock though. That had to count towards her redemption. The request for Sherlock to “go to hell” was obviously motivated by Mary’s love for John.

Molly made a decision, even as she worked on her lab reports and other duties. *I forgive you, Mary*, she said silently, and it was as if a wound that she had not realized had still been festering was lifted from her heart.

It was ten minutes before eight when Molly heard her text alert sound. It was Sherlock. She anxiously read the text.

“I’ll be there soon. Might be a few minutes late. Will talk to you on the way home XOX”

Molly wished her fiancé could have elaborated a little more on the events of his day, but at least it seemed a good thing if he was coming to get her.

It had been a long day without Sherlock, and she couldn’t wait to see him, to be with him and to feel his lips on hers again.

Eight o’clock came and she turned off the lights in the lab. She waited, daydreaming as she waited for the man she loved to arrive, recalling the time years ago when he had been in the darkened lab, waiting for her.

Chapter End Notes

What did you think of the conversation between Molly and Kayla. I know people might think I am moving things too fast with John and Kayla, but statistics show that widowers tend to re-marry much faster than widow or people who are divorced. Besides, I really want him to find happiness again. He deserves it.

So, Molly has forgiven Mary. I think she has a naturally forgiving nature. It only took a week. How quickly do you forgive others who have wronged you?

My one-shot, "Their First kiss," takes place at this point. It has not been posted on this site, but if you are interested in reading it, please leave a comment that you'd like to read it, and I will post it.

Also, I would like to give reader Kratula credit for Molly’s suggestion to Kayla that she tell John she is not trying to replace Mary in any way. Thanks for the idea. It is important for John to realize that too. Kayla is her own person, not a substitute Mary. A successful relationship needs him to know she isn't trying to have him forget his late wife.
Chapter Summary

Sherlock catches his man (or woman, as the case may be).

Chapter Notes

I will continue updating this story 3-4 times a week. If you are a reader of my other stories, I have decided I should back off for awhile on the punishing pace I've set for myself. Chronic arm and hand pain from typing, combined with a lack of reader response from my other works have made me reconsider whether my other contributions to this fandom are worthwhile. I'm discouraged, and I don't like feeling that way because it isn't my usual nature. I believe in this story at its value though, so it will continue, even if the others don't. Do people even read author's notes, I wonder?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Holmes brothers arrived at the Fairhaven residence just before seven-thirty. Detective Inspector Greg Lestrade had already arrived, and he was sitting in his police vehicle a block away. Sherlock walked to the car and Lestrade alighted.

‘I have the warrant,” announced Greg immediately. “What’s going on? How did this all come about? I don’t really know much about the woman, aside from the fact she has a history of blackmailing people, and that she was never arrested because she left the country.”

“It’s a very long, convoluted story,” the detective told him. “A few years ago she threatened to expose a nameless member of the Royal Family, and she was also in league with Moriarty.”

“Sounds like a dangerous woman.”

“She is. She is very manipulative and extremely good at getting what she wants.”

“Except for you, brother mine,” put in Mycroft.

“What’s that now?” questioned Lestrade.

“Really, Mycroft. Was it necessary to bring that up?” Sherlock scowled. “Irene Adler and I have a bit of a history. She paid me a visit a couple nights ago, with the intention of seducing me.”

“Oh my God. What kind of history are you talking about? Did you and she...?”

“Of course not. There was never anything of that nature between us, although she wanted it. Foolish woman, because it is her visit which led me to realize she was the one blackmailing someone very high up in Mycroft’s department.”
“Higher up than your brother? I thought he WAS the British government,” said Greg with a smirk.

“Not quite,” remarked Mycroft dryly. “Even I am answerable to others.”

“Anyway,” continued Sherlock, “this woman is threatening to cause a scandal if her demands are not met. I’m sure you understand there are things that Mycroft’s department has to deal with, which would be best kept under wraps. Sometimes it is necessary to work above the law for the greater good. An investigation into things would have far-reaching consequences that will affect many people.”

“I understand. So we need to stop this woman from causing any trouble which could de-stabilize the British government?”

“Exactly,” affirmed Sherlock. “We need to move on this immediately, before she has a chance to realize we are onto her and disappears.”

“Well, let’s go then,” said Greg, and the three men walked to the front door of the Fairhaven mansion.

A man in his late fifties or so opened the door and stared at them. “Who are you? It isn’t even eight in the morning.” Seeing Lestrade, he added fearfully, “Did something happen to Julia?”

“Hello Mr. Fairhaven. My name is Sherlock Holmes. This is my brother Mycroft, and this is Detective Inspector Greg Lestrade.” He indicated his two companions in turn. “Your daughter is fine, but we have some very important questions to ask you, which are rather urgent in nature.”

“Please come in,” invited the man. “I’ve heard of you, Mr. Holmes, but I am at a loss as to what you are doing here.”

Mr. Fairhaven led them to a formal drawing room at the front of the house and bade the men sit. Then he asked, “What’s all this about then? Is it something about Julia?”

“I’m afraid it does concern your daughter. Do you happen to know where she is? Is she at home right now?” Sherlock was hoping the man would answer in the affirmative. It would be much easier if he could question the girl herself.

“Well, no. She said last night she was staying at a friend’s house. They were planning to have a film night.”

“I don’t suppose you happen to know the name of her friend?”

“Julia has several friends she keeps in contact with from her school days. I assume it was one of those.”

“I presume you do not know the address of her friend either,” remarked the detective. He felt disappointed. He had been hoping for more clues as to where the girl might have gone.

“I’m afraid not.”

Sherlock had noticed several framed photographs in the room of Mr. Fairhaven, an attractive woman who was undoubtedly his wife, and a teenage girl who resembled the woman closely. He wondered if the mother might have any information. “Is your wife at home? Could we ask her some questions?” Seeing the man’s hesitation, he added, “It’s very important. Your daughter may be caught up in some dangerous activities.”
“I’ll get her.”

A few minutes later the woman from the photographs entered the room, looking very distressed.

“What is going on?” she demanded. “Is Julia in trouble?”

“Sorry to disturb you, Mrs. Fairhaven,” said Sherlock smoothly. “It seems your daughter has become mixed up with a woman of unsavoury reputation who is wanted by the police.”

“Oh, my God!” The woman put her hands to her mouth.

“We believe Julia may have gone to her place last night. Has your daughter talked to you about anyone she has met lately?”

“My daughter never talks to me anymore. She has been acting so strangely lately.” Tears welled up in the woman's eyes. “A few days ago I did overhear her on the phone in the kitchen. She was saying, “Got it,” to someone on the other end and hung up when I came into the room. She ripped off a sheet from the notepad by the phone and stuffed it in her pocket. When I asked who she was speaking to, she said it was an old school friend. It was very odd though. Something didn’t seem right.”

Sherlock’s mind immediately picked up on the sentence about the notepad. It was such an obvious kind of thing, but maybe, just maybe it would be the clue they needed. “May I see the notepad from the kitchen?” he asked. “Have you used it since you saw your daughter take the page from it?”

“I don’t believe so. I’ll go get it. Can I make you gentlemen a coffee while I am there?”

The three visitors shook their heads.

While Mrs. Fairhaven was out of the room, the man of the house asked, “Who is this woman you are talking about, and why would she have anything to do with an eighteen year old girl?”

“I’m afraid the woman has a reputation for providing certain 'disciplinary' services. We believe she has taken it upon herself to mentor your daughter in what can be quite a profitable venture.”

Mr. Fairhaven looked horrified. “How could Julia get involved with something like that?”

“Young women can be very impressionable, and the lure if easy money could have turned her head,” interposed Mycroft.

Mrs. Fairhaven returned to the drawing room and handed the notepad to Sherlock. He had noticed a fireplace in the living room. It was not currently in use, but there was some ash inside.

“Very good,” he murmured to himself. He stooped down and pinched some of the ash between his thumb and forefinger, then carefully dropped it onto the notepad. Gently he rubbed the ash along the page. Fortunately, it appeared Julia Fairhaven was one who wrote with a bold, strong hand. The faint impression of an address appeared on the paper.

Sherlock knelt by the fireplace and blew the extra ash back into it, then inspected the impression carefully. It was an address in North Audley Street.

“Aha!” he exclaimed triumphantly. “We have an address to investigate. The game is on!”

Mycroft and Lestrade stood immediately. “Thank you for your tine, Mr. and Mrs. Fairhaven,” said
Lestrade. “We will be in touch shortly. Hopefully we can clear this matter up and bring your daughter home to you.”

As they left the house, Sherlock shot off a text to Billy, instructing him to have the homeless network keep the North Audley Street address under surveillance, and to let him know if anyone went into it or came out of it.

Greg led the Holmes brothers to the police car and they got in, discussing their next move.

“I think we need to wait for the girl to come out of there. Mycroft, if she leaves, would you escort her home and talk with her parents? I would rather we spare them any anguish. We should keep Julia out of it,” said Sherlock.

“I agree,” replied his brother.

“Um, Sherlock, do you think there might be someone else at the flat, someone who is receiving the 'discipline' you spoke of to Fairhaven?” asked Lestrade.

“Quite possibly,” nodded Sherlock. “I asked Billy Wiggins to rally my homeless network to watch the place, but I think it would serve us best if we proceeded to the address ourselves now. You are the only one who can lawfully arrest Irene.”

“Alright then. What’s the address?”

Sherlock gave the address to Lestrade who soon parked the police car some distance from the targeted establishment, to make sure nobody would be tipped off.

Fortunately it was a tree-lined street, offering several places in which they could stay out of view from the flat. There seemed to be an inordinate number of people milling about for that time of morning. Sherlock recognized several of his contacts and nodded to them slightly. Spotting Billy, he pulled out a wad of £10 notes from his pocket. “Anything suspicious so far?”

“Nothin', Shezza. Is that money for me?”

“Distribute it to the others you called on to help. They may go for now. If you come to the flat tomorrow, I’ll give you your share, as well as the reimbursement I promised.”

“You got it, mate.”

The amount of people milling around gradually dwindled until the only ones left were people who actually lived in the area, Mycroft, Lestrade, and Sherlock himself.

Sherlock yawned and looked at his watch. They had been keeping vigil for quite some time. In fact it was almost eleven-thirty. Surely something would have to happen soon?

Suddenly, he noticed a taxi pull up in front of the establishment. A couple minutes later a man came out, accompanied by a young woman. Sherlock saw immediately it was Julia.

Julia helped the man into the cab and gave instructions to the driver, and the cab pulled away from the kerb.

As the girl moved to go back into the building, Sherlock nodded at the other two men and they rushed to the startled young woman.

The girl gave a little shriek and tried to run, but Greg and Mycroft restrained her.
“We’re not here to hurt you, Julia,” said Sherlock calmly. "We’ve come for Delia. Where is she?"

“She...she’s upstairs taking a bath,” said the frightened girl. I...I didn’t do anything, I swear. I just watched. Miss Erren was showing me things.” The girl blushed and hung her head. “She promised me I could make a lot of money.”

Sherlock spoke in a gentle tone. “I can see you are a young, impressionable woman. You can do better than this. Think of your parents. They are worried about you. This woman, she is a very bad woman, do you understand? She has no moral fibre and she will bring you down with her if you continue on this path.”

The girl sobbed, “I’m sorry. I just wanted to prove to Daddy and Mummy that I can make my own way in the world.”

Sherlock touched her shoulder and said kindly, “This is not the way to do it. My brother, Mycroft, is going to take you home now. He will stay with you while you talk with your parents, okay?”

“Oh. I...I had better get my bag.”

“Of course. You say Ire...I mean Delia is in the bath?”

“Yes, she said she needed some relaxation.”

“Let’s go inside.”

Sherlock and Greg followed the trembling girl into the flat, while Mycroft remained outside to hail a taxi. Julia picked up her handbag and went back outside. Fortunately, a taxi had just come down the street and Mycroft helped Julia in, before entering the cab himself. He nodded at the two men as the taxi moved off.

Inside the flat, Lestrade asked, “Now what? Do we wait for her to get out of the bath?”

“I think not. I believe our best option is for me to surprise her, while you look for any incriminating evidence.”

“You’re going to barge in on a naked woman?”

“That won’t faze me. She was naked the first time we met.”

Greg looked at Sherlock in astonishment. “What the hell..?”

“Long story. I’ll tell you about it sometime. Oh, and make sure there are no syringes in her bedroom she can use. The first time we met, she also drugged me.”

“My God, Sherlock, you definitely need to explain that to me.”

“I will, but there is no time right now. We need to get this woman off the streets permanently.”

The two men studied the flat's interior. Lestrade went one way into the open bedroom. Sherlock could hear the faint sound of sloshing water coming through the closed door of another room. He knocked.

Irene Adler’s voice called out, “Oh, you have my coffee, Julia? Thank you. I’ll be out in a few minutes.”

Sherlock turned the door handle. It was not locked and he opened it, stepping into the small
bathroom.

“Well, well, Miss Erren. It appears I have come at a most unexpected time.”

Irene’s eyes opened wide in astonishment. “What are you doing here? How did you find me?” Then she seemed to collect her thoughts and she fixed her face into a smiling mask. She stood slowly, fully exposing herself to the detective’s gaze. “Did you change your mind about me? It’s still not too late,” she said in a low, seductive tone.

Sherlock looked at the naked woman in front of him dispassionately. She had a beautiful figure, shapely breasts and small waist, nicely curved hips. He felt nothing, however. Where the sight of a fully clothed Molly smiling at him was enough to make him desire her, this woman did nothing whatsoever for him. He felt merely revulsion.

“You’ve been busy, Irene. But this time you’ve gone too far. I would have let you go on with your own life in peace, but you crossed the line.”

Irene stepped out of the bath, water still dripping off her body and stepped towards him. “I have no idea what you’re talking about,” she purred, lifting a hand to stroke it along his jawline. Sherlock winced but stood silent. Then the dominatrix leaned in close and pressed her lips against his insistently, trying to elicit a reaction from him. Sherlock thought again about Molly and how different it felt when she was kissing him. Every touch and kiss by his fiancée electrified him, making his pulse accelerate. Sherlock noted that Irene’s breathing was erratic and her pupils had dilated. His heartbeat however was strong and steady. He was unmoved.

When Irene realized Sherlock was not affected by her, she pulled away and hissed, “Why are you here?”

“I suggest you put on some clothes. We don’t want to shock people at the police station.”

She put her hand up to slap his face, but the detective caught it easily and then twisted her hand behind her back. “Greg,” he called, “how are things going out there?”

“Very well,” came back the voice of the detective inspector. “It seems Miss Adler has been a very busy woman. Photographs hidden in a secret drawer of her nightstand.”

Irene struggled against Sherlock’s grip, but he held her fast. “Once again, Miss Adler, you’ve played the game and lost. This time you won’t be getting away.”

Greg came into the bathroom then and looked in astonishment at Sherlock standing with a naked Irene’s hand pinned behind her back. “I presume you have handcuffs, Greg?” Sherlock asked as if he was detaining any run-of-the-mill criminal.

“Er, yeah,” replied the rather discombobulated Lestrade, who obviously found the situation far beyond the realms of normalcy. He placed a handcuff onto one of Irene’s wrists, then, almost in a daze, the other wrist, after Sherlock released it.

“How am I supposed to get dressed with my hands cuffed?” asked the dominatrix angrily.

“Why do you care? You seem to enjoy being naked,” responded Sherlock dryly. Then he added, “we’ll find you a dressing gown.”

Sherlock went into the bedroom while Greg explained why he was arresting Irene. The photographs Lestrade had found were on the bed, along with a phone. Sherlock quickly looked
through the photos. There was only one he recognized, the one with Sir Edwin, and he slipped it into his pocket.

Then he picked up the phone and found a dressing gown, returning to the bathroom. He moved to drape the dressing gown around her, then quickly pressed Irene’s right thumb against the round button of the phone, saying to Lestrade as he did so, “Greg, why don’t you tie the belt around her waist to preserve her modesty?”

Irene looked at Sherlock but said nothing. His little ploy had worked.

The phone had responded to her fingerprint and opened to reveal its contents. Sherlock quickly searched through the photos and deleted them permanently. He was quite certain she did not have copies elsewhere, she was too arrogant for that. Besides, the physical photographs were proof enough. Sherlock threw the phone back on the bed.

He could hear Irene’s voice, trying to coax Greg into letting her go, but the inspector was a man of integrity and having none of it.

Soon afterwards the trio was on their way to New Scotland Yard, with Sherlock seated in the back with Irene, making sure she didn’t do anything stupid to try and get away.

Chapter End Notes

As I've said before, writing crime and resolutions is not my strong suit, so I hope this wasn't too ridiculous. Did the resolution satisfy you?

How did you find Sherlock's gentleness with Julia, and what he said to her? I tried to highlight how his demeanour has changed when relating to others.

What did you think of the naked Irene scene and how Sherlock was unmoved by her? I wanted to show how he truly only desires the woman he loves, as it should be.

Always love to hear what you think, especially when you answer the questions I pose :)

Chapter Summary

Justice is served and Sherlock and Molly are back together after a long day apart.

Chapter Notes

Thanks to all those who commented on my last chapter with their encouragement. I know there are several of you who make that effort on a regular basis, but I'm trying to speak to those who may be annoyed about me asking for feedback and wondering why I (and most other authors) request it, when I should be a"writing for my own enjoyment, not to seek external gratification." I do like writing - I could just keep it to myself on my iPad, but I choose to share it to hopefully brighten someone's day. I don't believe it is a sin to hope for the occasional pat on the back or "well done" if someone is enjoying it. Perhaps it is the performer in me, but it sure is nice to get that applause after you've been working hard on something, as in the olera I just finished. By the way, feedback can be constructive criticism. Don't be afraid to tell me if something does not feel right to you, or if I have a bunch of spelling errors. I try to correct them during text-to-speech proofreading, but, being legally blind, some inevitably slip through. Hopefully the following quote will help you understand.

In the words of C. S. Lewis: Pleasure in being praised is not pride...the saved souls to whom Christ says, "well done," are pleased and ought to be.

For here the pleasure lies not in what you are, but in the fact that you have pleased someone you wanted and rightly wanted to please.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sherlock was starting to feel the effects of the lack of sleep and food.

He had been stuck at Scotland Yard for hours.

Irene had been booked and fingerprinted, then taken into an interrogation room

Sherlock had watched for hours through a one way mirror as The Woman was questioned about her nocturnal activities and her past association with Jim Moriarty. At first, the woman had refused to speak, maintaining a stoic silence while questions were fired at her. Eventually though, when it became clear she was not going to escape the long arm of the law this time, she agreed to a deal.

In exchange for a lighter prison sentence at a minimum security prison, she had to give details of people from whom she had extorted money, and reveal the names of associates who had helped
During his long vigil, a text came through at last from John, confirming that he would bring Rosie over to Baker Street at nine o’clock in the evening. Apart from the brief time he spent reading that text, Sherlock sat unmoving in the small room opposite where the dominatrix was held. He waited patiently to hear what she would reveal. Fortunately, she said nothing about Sir Edwin, as she had not actually gotten far enough as to extort anything from him. The woman was a true menace though, and she had ruined many lives, both as Irene Adler and Delia Erren.

When Irene had finally signed her confession, Sherlock looked at his watch. He could not believe it was already seven o’clock. Molly would be finished with work in an hour and he still needed to touch base with Mycroft and pick up his laptop and Bible from his brother’s office.

He strode out of the room and ducked his head into Lestrade’s office to say goodbye. “Let me know if you need me to furnish you with any more infirmation,” he told the other man.

“Thanks Sherlock. I think we’re good for now, especially with her signed confession. I’m still waiting to hear about the way you met her though,” Greg said with a grin.

“Another time. I have to stop by Mycroft’s office, then pick up Molly. I haven’t seen her in almost a day.”

“Well, you must certainly go to your woman, then. I’m sure she will want to know what happened.”

“Definitely. I’ll see you soon.” With that, Sherlock left the Yard and made his way to Mycroft’s office. Mycroft had texted him at some point during the day to say that everything had been settled with Julia’s parents.

Back in his brother’s office once more, the men discussed what had happened after they had taken their leave of each other. Mycroft told him he had stayed while Julia had told her parents about meeting Delia, and how the woman had lured her with promises of wealth and independence. The family had cried together and comforted each other. It appeared as though things had been resolved in a positive manner and the young woman had learned her lesson.

Sherlock told Mycroft what had happened at the apartment and pulled the incriminating photo from his pocket, as well as telling Mycroft about deleting the photos. Mycroft had taken the photograph and put it away in his own locked drawer, presumably to keep it in case he should ever need it to keep Sir Edwin “honest” as he called it.

“Looks like you saved the day again, brother mine,” he remarked. “Weren’t you planning on picking up your fiancée from work?”

Sherlock looked at his watch. It was almost ten to eight. “Dammit,” he cursed. “You’re right. I should have texted her earlier.” He sent off a quick text to her, saying he would be a few minutes late.

“I’ll have my driver take you to the hospital, then home,” Mycroft told him. “I’ll be here awhile yet and I need to update Sir Edwin and let him know the crisis is over.”

“Thanks, Mycroft,” said Sherlock gratefully. He picked up his Bible and laptop and headed downstairs. By the time he exited the building, the car was already waiting for him.

Mycroft had already instructed the driver to head for the hospital, and Sherlock arrived soon after eight. He was so anxious to see his fiancée. He’d missed her so much. Leaving the Bible and laptop
in the waiting car, he headed to the lab.

It was quiet and for some reason the lights were off. He wondered for a moment if Molly had left already, but he turned on the lights, and there she was, in a world of her own.

[What happened next is in my one-shot “Their First Kiss.”]

Once they were settled in Mycroft’s luxurious town car, Sherlock took Molly in his arms again.

“God, how I missed you,” he murmured, raining kisses all over her face and then capturing her lips with his own. He could feel his heart pounding. Molly’s beauty owed nothing to artifice, the way Irene’s did. His Molly was no shell of a woman. She was warm, she was vibrant and oh, he loved her overwhelmingly.

Molly responded, winding her arms around his neck and kissing him back with as much urgency as he was kissing her. He felt as if they had been separated for years. The juxtaposition of Irene and Molly just heightened his awareness of their differences and why Molly was the one who touched his soul.

They remained locked in a passionate embrace until the car pulled over in front of their home. Sherlock knew his face had to be as flushed as Molly’s was, and they were both breathing hard when they alighted. Sherlock sent the driver off with a quick wave. He unlocked the outer door with fingers that shook slightly from the force of his emotions and waited for Molly to precede him inside. They climbed the stairs together and Sherlock hurriedly unlocked that door as well.

Inside the flat he put his arms around his fiancée again and they continued where they had left off. Molly’s hands tangled in his curls as they clung to one another. Finally they had to part for air.

‘You know,” he said huskily, holding his fiancée as if he’d never let her go, ”it’s just as well John will be here soon, because this is one of those times where I am feeling very weak.”

“You must be starving. I’m sure you didn’t eat anything besides those biscuits, did you?” questioned Molly.

“That’s true, and I left the rest of those biscuits at Mycroft’s office dammit, so I suppose he’ll polish them off. But I wasn’t talking about being weak for food, my love. I meant feeling weak in other ways, as in wanting you, needing you.” He ran a hand through his hair, leaving it in more disarray than it had been from having Molly’s hands in it.

“Oh,” she said, blushing “I know what you mean. I’m feeling that way too. And I still don’t know what has happened with everything since last night.”

“There’s plenty of time for that, and I should probably tell John about it anyway, seeing as he was there when I first met Irene as well. He knows her, and what type of woman she is.”

“So he saw her naked as well?” asked Molly with interest.

“That he did, and highly embarrassed he was.”

“And you weren’t?”

“Well, I suppose I was a little uncomfortable, having never seen a real, live naked woman before.”

“I’m a little jealous,”confided his fiancée.

“Why?”
“Because you saw her...without clothes.”

“Sweetheart, it takes more than being without clothes to make me want someone physically. You have all your clothes on and I want you so badly I can hardly stand it. With Irene, she doesn’t move me at all. Even when she stood up from the bath this morning, I felt nothing.” As soon as he said the words, Sherlock realized that was perhaps not the best thing to be telling Molly right then.

“You saw her naked, AGAIN?”

Sherlock could hear the hurt in his fiancée’s voice. “Please darling, don’t overreact. We needed to apprehend her when she wasn’t expecting it.”

“And you couldn’t wait for the woman to maybe finish her bath first, then talk to her?”

“Sweetheart, Lestrade was looking for incriminating evidence while I confronted her. Like I told you, her being naked meant nothing. The only woman I care about seeing without her clothes is you.” He could see Molly trying to process his words, to understand.

Finally she took a deep breath and nodded. “Okay. I’ll let it go for now, but I want the whole story later.”

Sherlock took her hands and kissed the palms, one at a time. “I will explain everything that happened, I promise.” He wanted to resume kissing his fiancée but the doorbell rang.

“Damn, that’s John, and we still need to see if that stuff arrived for Rosie today.” He had vaguely registered something large leaning against the wall downstairs before he and Molly had gone up to the flat - the desk. That meant Mrs. Hudson would have the feeding chair and play mat in her flat.

“Let’s go downstairs and meet John, and get the things from Mrs. H.”

“Good plan,”

They walked downstairs to find that Mrs. Hudson had let John in and was cooing over the baby. “Hi, John,” greeted Sherlock, adding, "and how is my little goddaughter?”

Molly echoed the same, but emphasized the “my” with a wink at Sherlock.

“We’re fine,” said John.

Rosie had a big grin on her face. As Sherlock leaned in to give her a kiss, accidentally on purpose pushing Mrs. Hudson aside, the baby reached up and tugged one of his curls.

“Told you I’m her favourite,” he boasted as the others laughed.

“Sherlock, Molly, I expect you want the things that came for you today?” asked the landlady.

“I’ll get them,” offered Moly. “It seems my fiancé is too busy flirting with our goddaughter.”

Sherlock looked over at Molly and grinned. It was hardly his fault that little Rosamund liked to play with his hair. “Let’s go upstairs, John. I’ll fill you in on what happened today.”

Sherlock took the baby from his friend and twirled her around. He felt so light, so carefree now that the threat of Irene was gone. Then the men went upstairs. Once inside the flat, John deposited a nappy changing bag and large backpack on the floor of the sitting room.
As they waited for the women, Sherlock told John about Irene’s visit to the flat as Delia Erren a couple nights earlier and her attempt to seduce him.

“I wish I’d been here to see that,” commented his friend.

“Well, I wish you had seen my avenging angel come in and give The Woman a slap that rivaled those she gave me when she tested me for drugs.”

“Bloody hell, that was fun that day - you deserved it,” declared John, “and you just took it from her too.”

“I do not disagree. That was also when I learned she was no longer engaged. Rather illuminating day, that was.”

“So, after Irene left, what happened that you had to meet up with her again?”

“Let’s just say she was up to her old blackmail tricks again. It involved one of Mycroft’s superiors. If she had revealed the incriminating photos, Mycroft was certain a department-wide investigation would have ensued.”

“I see,” said John with understanding. “The Magnussen cover-up eh?”

“Exactly. Therefore it necessitated immediate action to find her. Mycroft had shown me the blackmail note and I deduced, by comparing that note along with the one I received, that it was indeed Delia Erren AKA Irene Adler who was the author. I should have known immediately that her pseudonym was an anagram of her real name. I always miss something.”

“You saw but did not observe,” quipped John. At Sherlock’s scowl, he added, “Just kidding. You could hardly be expected to know she had come back to London after all this time.”

At that point, Rosie, whom Sherlock had been holding casually against his hip, started to fuss. He hadn’t even realized he had put the baby against his hip in the way parents did automatically.

“I think Rosie is mad that we are neglecting her,” he commented, lifting the child up once more to give her a little peck on each cheek, which prompted a delighted gurgle.

Molly arrived at that moment, laden with a large square box, in which the feeding chair was obviously contained.

“Mrs. Hudson is bringing up the other package with the play mat. She also said she is making us some sandwiches, because I told her we hadn’t eaten yet, when she asked.”

“Very thoughtful of her,” said Sherlock. “Here, love,” he offered the child to Molly. “You take Rosie while I open the box with the chair for our goddaughter.”

Molly took the baby and started cooing at her the same way the landlady had done, while Sherlock got a slim knife from a drawer in the kitchen with which to open the box.

Fortunately the feeding seat was fully assembled, with instructions on how to fasten the straps to any chair to keep it from tipping. After the hard time he had had with the cot-bed, Sherlock was relieved. Of course, there was still the small - or not so small matter of the desk downstairs that had to be assembled. He’d have to ask John to help him carry it into the flat.

Sherlock walked back into the sitting room to see Molly put her finger in the baby’s mouth.
“I can feel your wittle toofum,” she crooned, and both John and Sherlock looked at her in surprise.

“How did you know Rosie is cutting her first tooth?” asked John at last.

“Oh, I had lunch with Kayla today. She told me,” stated Molly, with a grin, and John looked embarrassed, as if he’d been caught cheating on his wife.

“John,” said Molly gently, “you shouldn’t feel embarrassed about spending time with Kayla. Do you think Mary would want you to mourn her for the rest of your life?”

“Well, no, of course not...”

“I suggest you just enjoy spending time with Kayla. From what she has told me, she and Rosie are already fast friends.”

John brightened. “That’s true. Kayla does have a way with her, It’s as if Rosie has known her since birth.”

“If that’s the case, why didn’t you ask Kayla to babysit?” questioned Sherlock, adding hastily, “not that I’m complaining about watching her, because I’m not.”

“Sherlock,” said Molly reprovingly, looking over the top of Rosamund’s head at her fiancé, “I’m sure John feels it is too early in their relationship to ask her to do something like that.”

“Fine, fine, you’re right, love. Sorry, John,” Sherlock said penitently.

John laughed. “Not that Molly isn’t correct about that, although Kayla did in fact offer, but did you just let her browbeat you into submission?”

Sherlock scowled at his friend. “She did not browbeat me. She just made me see reason.”

“You’ve really tamed the savage beast, Molly,” remarked John as the detective scowled some more.

As if in agreement, the baby let out a big “goo” which broke the tension between the men, and the three adults laughed.

Molly sat down on the sofa with Rosie as Sherlock narrated the rest of what had happened with Irene and how they had found her. When he got to the part with Sherlock disturbing her in the bath, John asked, “Why didn’t you just wait till she got out?”

“I said the same thing,” put in Molly with a grin. Sherlock was relieved to see she no longer seemed cross about the incident.

“As I explained to my fiancée,” said Sherlock with an emphasis on the word “fiancée,” “Greg Lestrade was hunting for the blackmail photos while I confronted Irene. I did not ask her to stand up naked in the bath. That was entirely her decision.”

Mrs. Hudson arrived at that moment with a huge stack of sandwiches on a plate in one hand and the package containing the play mat tucked under her arm. In her other hand was a stack of post for 221B. She set everything down onto the coffee table and inquired, “Who didn’t you ask to stand up naked in the bath then?” She looked over at Molly, who turned crimson at the landlady’s next words. “Have you been tempting your fiancée?”

“Of course she hasn’t,” said Sherlock in an irritated tone. “Molly doesn’t need to be naked to tempt
me.” Then it was his turn to blush as he realized what he had said.

John and Mrs. Hudson snickered at the embarrassed pair.

“Are you two having fun tormenting us?” asked Sherlock.

“A little.” John smirked as Mrs. Hudson nodded her agreement.

“So who was it then,” persisted the elderly woman, “the naked one?”

“The same woman who was here the other night.”

“Oh, the one who wore so much makeup you couldn’t tell what her face looked like underneath,” stated the landlady.

“Well, thank you for these sandwiches Mrs. Hudson. We’ll bring the plate back to you later,” said Sherlock, not unkindly, but in a manner which Mrs. Hudson knew very well.

“You’re welcome,” she replied. She knew she was being dismissed and retreated to her own flat.

Chapter End Notes

I had a bit of fun here with the whole naked Irene bit, then Mrs. Hudson and John having a bit of a giggle at Sherlock and Molly's expense. I hope you enjoyed reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

There needs to be a bit of fluff and fun following the angst, don't you agree?
Babysitting and Battling Desires - Molly (Friday)

Chapter Summary

Sherlock and Molly have another conversation about their battle with desire to be together physically.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Once Mrs. Hudson was gone, John asked Sherlock to finish the narrative about Irene Adler.

Molly listened in, still holding Rosie who had fallen asleep in her arms.

Sherlock recounted how he had accessed Irene’s phone and deleted the incriminating photos permanently, as well as confiscated the physical copy of the photo which was the one Irene was planning to use to extort money from Mycroft’s superior. Finally, he recounted the woman’s arrest and confession.

“So she’ll be locked up for a few years at least,” commented John.

“That’s so. I had half feared she might make some sort of attempt to disrupt the wedding. At least that is now no longer of concern.”

“I’m glad of it, mate. After what the two of you have been through, both before and after you got together, you deserve a hassle-free wedding.” He checked his watch. “You should be eating those sandwiches and I need to be going soon.”

The doctor walked over to Molly. He indicated the changing bag and backpack he had brought in earlier. “The video monitor is in the backpack, along with changes of clothes, the formula milk powder, extra bottles, bibs and baby cereal too which you mix with the formula milk. The changing bag has plenty of nappies and baby wipes as well as a changing mat. Oh, and there are a bunch of plastic bags in which you can put the dirty nappies.”

Molly listened intently as John explained how often to feed the baby, when to give her the cereal and how well she was sleeping. It had been a couple of months since Molly had babysat the infant who was now mostly sleeping through the night.

“If you have any questions, just text me. I have several seminars to attend over the weekend but there are breaks in-between when I’d be able to text you back.”

Molly could see that Sherlock had been mentally cataloguing everything John had said, so she felt sure between the two of them they could successfully watch the baby for the weekend.

Out loud she said, “I think we’ll be fine, but I’ll text you, or Sherlock will, just to let you know how things are going.”

“That’s right. Everything will be just fine,” agreed Sherlock.

“Alright then. I guess I’ll be going. Rosie had a bottle before we left the house, but she might need
another before you put her down for the night if she wakes up.”

“Okay. By the way, you don’t mind if we take Rosie with us to church on Sunday, do you?” asked Sherlock.

John was clearly surprised at the request. “Why would I mind? I know church is an important part of your routine these days, and I’m sure Kayla will be happy to see Rosie too. I hope Rosie behaves as well for you as she did for me last week.”

“Do you think you might come back to church sometime?” asked Sherlock curiously.

“I guess we’ll see,” said John in a non-committal manner. Molly had the feeling he would do whatever pleased Kayla. She only hoped he would come to understand and embrace Christianity fully the way Sherlock had.

“Before you go John, would you mind helping me bring up the big box from downstairs near the entrance?” asked Sherlock. “It’s my new desk.”

“Sure. That should be fun to assemble. It’s certainly past time you replaced the old one.”

“Indeed it is,” agreed Sherlock. The men went downstairs and returned a few minutes later, carrying the enormous rectangular box into the room and setting it on the floor.

Once John had kissed his daughter’s forehead and taken his leave, Molly looked at her fiancé.

“You need to eat, honey. I’m sure you haven’t had anything since the biscuits, have you?”

“No,” he admitted. “I suppose I am hungry. You need to eat too though, it’s well past dinner time now.”

“At least I had a late lunch. But you can pass me a sandwich. It’s a bit awkward to lean over for one with a baby in my lap.”

Sherlock gazed at her with such a soft expression in his eyes that Molly’s heart almost skipped a beat.

“Holding a baby suits you,” he said at last. “One day it will be our baby you’re holding. You are going to be such a wonderful mother.”

She smiled lovingly at him. “You’ll be a wonderful father too. But you won’t be a wonderful anything if you starve yourself to death, so eat!”

“Yes, love,” he responded, adding after a moment, “Oh my God, I AM browbeaten aren’t I?”

“Of course you aren’t,” she replied with a laugh. “I’m just making you see reason.”

They ate then. Sherlock wolfed down most of the plate of sandwiches, as if he hadn’t eaten in weeks. Molly managed two herself. She was very grateful that Mrs. Hudson was so generous to them.

“We really need to do something for Mrs. Hudson,” she commented, after they had eaten.

“I know, I was thinking that awhile ago,” agreed her fiancé. “Any ideas?”

Molly thought for a moment. Rosie stirred in her arms. The baby was on the verge of waking, and Molly gently stroked her cheek. “Mrs. Hudson does so much for us, and she has been looking after
“You for years, hasn’t she?”

“Pretty much. She used to bring tea upstairs for me every day and I never even thought about it, that she was the one doing it. I was so oblivious.”

“Why don’t we buy her a spa day?” suggested Molly. “She deserves to be pampered. I’ve heard about people doing that, but I’ve never looked into it. Maybe look it up on your laptop?”

“That sounds like a fine idea. I’ll do that. She will want a companion of course, don’t women always like to do things in pairs or groups?”

“I suppose so. She has a sister somewhere, doesn’t she?”

“Molly, love, the obvious solution would be for you to go with her.”

Molly stared over at her fiancé. “I wasn’t angling to be included, Sherlock, honestly. I was just thinking of doing something nice for our landlady.”

“I know you weren’t thinking of yourself, but I am, and it would solve two birds with one stone. Hudders gets a day of pampering, and I get to give you one at the same time,” he stated firmly.

Molly grinned at Sherlock’s cute nickname for the older woman. She knew her fiancé had made up his mind, so she merely asked, “When do you think would be a good time?”

“I’ll go downstairs and return Mrs. Hudson’s plate, then see if she is free next Saturday.”

“Okay then,” responded Molly as Rosie opened her eyes and blinked sleepily. “Hi, sweetheart,” she said to the infant. “Did you have a good nap?”

Molly watched as Sherlock took the now empty plate into the kitchen. She heard the water running and knew he was washing it. She was glad he wasn’t going to return the plate dirty. The man was really becoming quite sensible, she thought, smiling to herself.

“I’m going to go downstairs now,” he announced a couple minutes later, “and when I get back I’ll get the play mat set up and get the feeding chair onto one of the kitchen chairs.”

“Sounds good,” Molly said with a nid. She stood with Rosie, who was beginning to fuss. “As soon as Uncle Sherlock gets back, he can hold you while I fix you a bottle,” Molly told the infant who of course did not understand the words. She did however stop fussing as Molly held the baby against her hip and swayed.

Sherlock was back within five minutes. “Mrs. Hudson is free next Saturday, so I’ll look on my laptop for a place that offers spa days.”

“Would you mind taking Rosie for now? I need to get her a bottle.”

“Of course.” He took the infant from Molly and sat in his chair with the child on his lap.

As Molly prepared a bottle, she watched him from her vantage point in the kitchen. Her fiancé was playing with the baby. He was putting Rosie’s hands in front of her face and saying “Where’s Uncle Sherlock?” Then he would remove her hands and say “There he is!” Rosie was laughing with delight. Molly wondered where Sherlock had seen that little game. Probably from Mary, she guessed.

When the bottle was ready, Molly grabbed a bib and burp cloth from the changing bag, then she
walked over to her fiancé. “Do you want to feed her?”

Sherlock considered the question, then shook his head. “Maybe next time. I want to set up those things while you feed her. He stood and magnanimously offered his fiancée the chair. “Actually I prefer the sofa,” she told him. “That chair dwarfs me.”

She sat on the sofa and Sherlock brought the baby to her. Molly put the bib around Rosamund’s neck. While she fed the infant, Sherlock fastened the straps of the feeding seat securely to a kitchen chair, then removed the play mat from its packaging. He attached the three soft toy accessories to the loops of the arch that went over the mat.

Molly had to stifle a giggle when the detective looked up proudly, as if it had been an amazing feat to attach the toys without instructions. “Rosie is going to love it,” she declared. “Do you think you can figure out how to set up the video monitor in the upstairs bedroom? It’s in the changing bag.”

“I can do anything,” boasted her fiancé. He fished out the unit and took it upstairs. Evidently he figured it out correctly because he brought back the video screen which was displaying an image of the currently empty cot-bed.

“Perfect,” she told him. Rosie had almost finished her bottle and was falling asleep, so Molly lifted her onto her shoulder, patting the infant’s back gently until she let out a burp. “Good girl,” Molly praised her goddaughter, kissing the baby’s soft cheek.

“Sherlock, I’m going to see if I can put Rosie down for the night now.”

“I think I’ll draw myself a bath while you are doing that.” He bent over to kiss the baby. “Goodnight, sweetheart,” he told the little one. Rosie smiled at him drowsily and he smiled back. Molly suddenly noticed the lines of fatigue around his eyes. He hadn’t slept the night before, after all. He must be incredibly tired.

“Do you want to hold Rosie while I get your bath ready?” she asked solicitously.

“I can manage, love,” he told her with weariness evident in his tone, before leaving the room. She heard the sound of water running a couple minutes later.

“Somebody needs a nappy change before bed,” she remarked, wrinkling her nose at a sudden, unpleasant odour.

As she rummaged in the nappy bag for the changing mat, clean nappy and baby wipes, she heard the sound of water being turned off and Sherlock’s sigh as he obviously got into the tub.

After changing the baby and putting her into a sleepsuit for the night, Molly found a cotton blanket in the backpack which she could use to put over Rosie in the cot. She carried the sleeping infant upstairs and gently placed her in the cot, then laid the blanket over her.

Molly allowed herself a few minutes of indulgence as she watched the rise and fall of Rosie’s chest. She thought about what it would be like to have her very own child, hers and Sherlock’s sleeping in that cot. For so long she had forced herself to not think about children.

After she had broken things off with Tom, she had resigned herself to never becoming a mother, to just enjoying the opportunity of watching over Rosie once in awhile. Tears sprang into her eyes as she thought that now she would, God-willing, have the opportunity to nurture her own child, or even better, children. Life had changed so much in the past few weeks. It was a sign of God’s grace, that it was never too late to attain happiness. Yes, Molly thought, it may have taken longer for her than most, but the journey had been worthwhile.
Blinking away her tears, she went downstairs. It was getting rather late and Sherlock was probably already in bed. Molly was surprised to find that her fiancé was not in bed. In fact, the door to the bathroom was still shut. She knocked on the door softly. “Sherlock?”

Receiving no answer, she thought for a moment. Had he fallen asleep in the bath? It was certainly conceivable, considering the fatigue she had seen him displaying. Should she check? How ironic, she thought. Just a couple of hours ago she had been cross with him for interrupting that Irene woman in the bath, and here she was contemplating the same.

**Of course,** she reasoned to herself, **it wasn’t the same thing.** She was genuinely concerned for her fiancé. The bath water was undoubtedly getting cold and he needed to get into bed for a good night’s rest. She was very nervous at the thought of seeing more of his body than she had seen before, although, being in the tub he would almost certainly be covered by the bath water, right? Molly’s mouth went dry at the thought.

Hesitatingly she turned the handle of the bathroom door and opened it. She walked into the small room, keeping her eyes firmly fixed well above the level of the bath water, resisting the urge to peek downwards. Sure enough, Sherlock was laying back in the bath with his hands behind his head and mouth slightly open. He was fast asleep.

Judging by the fact that his hair was still dry, Molly concluded that her fiancé had settled into the bath, intending to just relax for a few moments before washing his body, and he had been so tired that he had fallen asleep.

She looked at his dear, beloved face with a day’s growth of stubble on it, and her breath hitched. He was so impossibly handsome. She would never understand how she had managed to capture his heart.

Molly sat on the floor facing Sherlock and ran a hand lovingly down his face, feeling the stubble along his jawline. “Sherlock?” she whispered.

His eyes opened and his blue-green gaze met her limpid chocolate one. She gasped as he sat up suddenly and pulled her head towards his, kissing her hungrily, possessively. When he released her a couple minutes later, they were both breathing hard. Heat surged through Molly’s body, and she felt a longing for Sherlock she had never felt before. She ached to be closer to him. Knowing the man was completely naked only served to fuel the flickers of desire leaping in her veins, and she stared at his face as if mesmerized, unable to look away.

“If you don’t stop looking at me like that, Molly Hooper,” growled Sherlock with a note of passion in his deep voice, “I am going to drag you into this bath, clothes and all, kiss you senseless and then undress you and make love to you.”

Molly gulped. Trying to force herself into some semblance of control. “I...” she swallowed, then tried again. “I need to go. I’ll let you finish bathing in peace.”

She stood on legs that trembled and left the bathroom, went into the bedroom and flung herself onto the bed. Then, without really understanding why, she began to weep. Love, desire, and frustration combined into a volatile cocktail of emotions. If she hadn’t used every bit of willpower to leave the bathroom, she knew she would have succumbed to these feelings. She understood why people fell into bed with their partners so quickly. It was the body’s natural reaction, to desire that ultimate intimacy between a man and woman.
When Sherlock came into the room a few minutes later, she could smell the fresh, clean scent of his body and hair. She curled into a ball, resisting the urge to look at him, at that dear face she so loved. Her chest heaved as she stifled another sob. She didn’t want him to know she had been crying, but of course, her fiancé was no fool.

“Molly? Sweetheart?” She felt the bed dip as he sat on it, and then he was sliding his arms around her from behind. “Why are you crying?”

“I can’t help it,” she managed to get out, as her chest continued to heave with silent sobs.

“Tell me,” he ordered, but in a gentle, deep voice. She had to take several breaths to try and calm herself before she could reply.

“I’m so ashamed,” she said at last, forcing herself to slow her breathing.

“Why?” he questioned, sounding utterly confused.

She still couldn’t look at him, dared not look at him, lest she forget her resolve and tell him instead that she wanted him to make love to her then and there. “I shouldn’t have gone into the bathroom,” she confessed. “I was worried about you being asleep and the water getting cold, but...but I still should have stayed away.”

“Why?” he asked again, insistently.

“You know why,” she whispered.

“No, I don’t know why,” he told her. This conversation was becoming eerily reminiscent of THAT phone call one. “Because...because just knowing you were in the bath and na..” she stopped, then forced herself to continue, to tell the truth, “naked, made me long to be with you physically in a way I’ve never felt before. My body betrays me, and these feelings consume me so I can’t think straight. It’s so wrong.”

Sherlock’s arms tightened around her. “Darling, what we feel for each other is not wrong. God is the one who gave us these urges, these desires for intimacy. I’m sure He wouldn’t condemn us if we acted upon them. We love each other, and we are committed to one another. I think our main issue is the guilt WE would feel afterwards.”

He paused, as if trying to process his own thoughts. “I know we are going to have moments of great weakness, and maybe being tested this way is something that will just make our relationship that much stronger. I can’t predict the future. Only God knows if we are going to make it all the way to our wedding night before we make love for the first time, but at least we are making the effort. I highly doubt most people in our situation would have gotten this far without consummating their relationship.”

Molly finally turned towards him, wriggling in his embrace so she could put her arms around him as well. Her tears had finally subsided, but now she was getting a headache as a result of the tempest that had overwhelmed her. “I know you’re right,” she said, and she looked at him. “Even Kayla told me today at lunch she is starting to have, you know, THOSE kinds of feelings for John, and they’ve only gone out a few times.”

“You see? And she’s a Christian as well. We must be something special indeed, to deny ourselves even though we have known each other for so long.”

“Well, technically we have only been engaged for four and a half weeks.”
“Maybe, but you told me you’ve always loved me, and even though I refused to admit it to myself until recently, I’ve loved you for a long time as well.”

“That’s true,” she sighed. Feeling a little better and stronger once again, Molly drew back slightly. “I really need to take my shower. Also I need to bring the baby monitor in here, in case Rosie wakes up in the middle of the night.”

“You do that, love,” responded her fiancé. “I think I had better get some sleep. It will be much more comfortable sleeping in the bed, than the bath, so I am rather grateful you woke me, even if it caused you, and me, some distress.” He gave her a loving smile and released her from his grasp.

Molly got off the bed and went to the sitting room. She retrieved the baby monitor and placed it on her bedside table. She could see Rosie on the screen, sleeping peacefully. Then she gathered her nightwear and went into the bathroom.

By the time she emerged from the bathroom, her fiancé was asleep. He had settled himself under the covers, close to the middle of the bed. She slipped under the duvet and scooted close to him. She was surprised when his arms came around her and he kissed her hair, murmuring, “Goodnight, my darling.”

“Goodnight, my dearest love,” she whispered back, then fell asleep, securely tucked against his body and warmed by it.

Chapter End Notes

Here comes the babysitting story! Hope you enjoyed Sherlock's sense of pride at setting up the play mat.
What are your thoughts on the conversation after Sherlock came out of the bath? They really are struggling to do God's will, but, as Sherlock said, if they did not make it to the wedding night, I think they would be the ones who felt guilty. God would forgive them.

I just had to do that little nod to TFP during their conversation.
Sherlock opened his eyes. The space next to him was empty and he turned his head to look at the alarm clock. It was after ten o’clock. He had slept a long time, but he knew his body had required it, after missing a whole night of sleep due to the Irene Adler case. He felt refreshed and ready to approach the day.

He wondered where Molly and Rosamund were. The flat was very quiet. He dressed and went into the kitchen. There was a note on the table from Molly, saying she and Rosie had gone downstairs to visit with Mrs. Hudson.

He put on the kettle to boil and popped two crumpets into the toaster. As he waited, his mind drifted back to the previous night, from the point at which he had opened his eyes in the tub to find his fiancée looking at him with such longing he had very nearly pulled her bodily into the bathtub with him. Instead he had contented himself with kissing her, although it really wasn’t nearly enough for what he desperately wanted. He had, however, had the presence of mind to give her the opportunity to leave, and she had wisely done so.

Sherlock had not been exaggerating when he had warned her. He had felt such an intense rush of desire for his fiancée. The whole Irene/Molly comparisons he had been making in his mind palace since the events earlier in the day had swept back over him in full force.

Yes, it was indeed fortunate Molly had scuttled out of the bathroom. By the time he had finished his bath, he was back in control of his emotions. When he had entered the bedroom and heard the sounds of his beloved sobbing, it had almost been his undoing. He felt as if they were teetering at the edge of a precipice and the slightest push would send them over.

His reflections were interrupted by the sound of the crumpets popping up. The kettle had also boiled and Sherlock absently made his coffee, then spread his crumpets with butter and honey. As he ate, he thought he should really do some more Bible reading. He also needed to look up a spa place. Where was his laptop anyway, and his Bible for that matter? Then he remembered. He had left them in Mycroft’s car.

Dammit, he thought to himself, now he would have to call Mycroft to have them brought around, and his brother would undoubtedly wonder how he managed to forget about them.

Breakfast finished, Sherlock decided he had better make the call right away. He really needed his laptop to make a spa booking. With trepidation he placed the call.

When Mycroft answered, Sherlock tried to adopt a casual tone. “Hello, big brother. I was wondering, could you bring over what’s left of my biscuits? Unless of course you ate them all?”
“Brother mine, I did enjoy a couple of them, but I most certainly did not eat them all. Is there any particular reason you need them so urgently?”

“Ah, yes, well...” Sherlock hesitated, then finished in a rush, “I kind of left my laptop and Bible in your car too, so I need them back as soon as possible.”

He could almost hear the wheels turning in Mycroft’s mind as he processed the request. Then came the inevitable question.

“How did you manage to forget such an important thing as your laptop? I can understand you forgetting your Bible but..."

“My Bible is just as important as my laptop,” cut in Sherlock curtly.

“Nevertheless, how is it you not only left things in my car, but even more surprisingly took this long to ask for them to be returned?”

Sherlock sighed. “John brought Rosie over for the weekend almost as soon as we arrived home, and I was updating him on what happened with Irene. In addition, I had no sleep the night before last if you recall, so I slept till after ten this morning.”

Unfortunately, his brother was not about to be distracted from the subject of why he had left his items behind in the first place.

“That still doesn’t explain why you left your things in my car.” Then to Sherlock’s complete astonishment, Mycroft made his own accurate deduction. “I presume you were a little distracted by your lovely fiancée whom you had not seen in almost twenty-four hours?”

“I shall neither confirm nor deny your deduction.” Sherlock was quite relieved that Mycroft could not see the flush that crept up his cheeks.

Mycroft chuckled, a rare sound indeed. “You don’t need to. Very well, I shall have my driver bring over your items some time this afternoon. I’ll text you when he is about to arrive.”

“Thank you, Mycroft,” Sherlock said gratefully and rang off.

Having no laptop or Bible at hand left Sherlock at loose ends, so he decided to head downstairs and see what the women were up to.

There was a low hum of conversation coming from Mrs. Hudson’s flat as he knocked. “Come in, Sherlock, it’s open,” called the landlady. Sherlock opened the door to see Rosie on Mrs. Hudson’s lap, and she was bouncing the baby on her knees.

Molly looked over at her fiancé with a smile. “You’re awake! Did you sleep well?”

“Very well thanks,” he responded. “I didn’t even know you got out of bed.”

“Rosie got me up at seven. I’m glad you didn’t hear her, you really needed your sleep after being up all night the night before.”

“Tea, dear?”

“No thank you. I just had breakfast and coffee.” To Molly he said, “Mycroft’s driver will be stopping by later with my laptop and Bible that I inadvertently left in the town car. He’ll also bring back the rest of my ginger nuts.”
“And you thought Mycroft would eat them all,” noted his fiancée with a grin. “I didn’t see the laptop or Bible in the car or I would have reminded you.”

“Oh well, it can’t be helped. Now I just have to wait to get them back. It’s rather irritating because I had things to do today.”

“I’d offer you the use of my laptop, if I had one,” put in the landlady.

“Same here,” Molly agreed.

“we must rectify that for you in the near future, sweetheart. Are you coming back upstairs or staying here awhile longer?” he inquired.

Molly stood. “I’m ready to come up. Rosie will need some lunch soon and She probably is due to be changed.” She turned to Mrs. Hudson and said, “Thanks for the tea and chat.”

The landlady handed her the baby and said, “Anytime, dear. It was so nice of you to bring Rosie down for a visit.” A shadow crossed her face. “One of my only regrets in life is that I never had children of my own.” Then she brightened. “When you have your own baby, you’ll let me be a surrogate grandma, won’t you. Maybe I could be called Nanny Hudson.”

“Of course, Mrs. Hudson, but I think Nanny Hudders would be more affectionate,” Sherlock spoke for both of them. “If you know how to look after a grown man like myself as if he’s your son, I think I can trust you with any children we might have. Good day for now.”

"I like that a lot. Have fun practicing parenthood!"

The engaged couple left the flat, leaving a beaming landlady behind them. “I think she gets lonely sometimes,” observed Molly.

“Undoubtedly. I’m glad you have made the effort to befriend her.” He opened the door of 221B and allowed Molly and Rosie to precede him inside.

Molly immediately started preparing a bottle to mix with the baby cereal she was to feed Rosie for lunch. “Sherlock, do you want to see if you can handle changing Rosie’s nappy?” she asked.

He backed away, “No, no, I think I’ll let you take care of that.”

“You’re going to have to learn sometime, you know. If we are going to have a child, you will have to do your fair share of nappy-changing.” She gave him a stern look. Then she added, in a softer tone, “Look, you hold her while I finish getting the bottle ready, then I’ll change her while you watch, fair enough?”

Sherlock nodded. That was definitely better. Having the responsibility of a baby was rather a daunting thought. He needed time to get used to the idea. It was rather fortuitous that he and Molly could get a little hands-on experience with their goddaughter.

The detective took Rosie from his fiancée. She was such a sweet little thing, perfectly formed fingers and toes, a tiny person. He lifted her to kiss her cheeks and regretted it as Rosie immediately grabbed at his hair, fascinated at the way it sprang back into place when she released it. “You are as bad as Auntie Molly,” he chided. The baby of course paid no attention to him and continued tugging and releasing the one curl until he moved her out of reach of his hair.

Rosamund’s lips trembled and she looked like she was about to cry. Fortunately Molly came in and took the baby, laying her on the changing mat.
“Now watch how I do this,” she ordered her fiancé.

He dutifully watched as Molly instructed him on the basics of changing a nappy. He supposed it wasn’t too difficult, although it was only a wet nappy. A dirty one might make him feel a little nauseous.

Molly took Rosie into the kitchen and put her into the feeding chair. She then began to expertly, in Sherlock’s opinion, feed Rosie the baby cereal. Amazingly, the child seemed to be quite accustomed to eating from a spoon. “You’ll be ready for proper baby food soon, won’t you?” remarked Molly.

Sherlock found the whole experience quite fascinating. The way Rosie opened her mouth for more after she had finished a spoonful and at the end, closing her lips tightly to indicate she did not want anymore.

Nevertheless, Molly tried to coax another spoonful into her. “One more spoon for Auntie Moly.” The baby reluctantly complied, then refused any more, so Molly wiped Rosie's face with the bib, then offered her the rest of the formula milk from the bottle, which the infant sucked at greedily until it was finished.

Molly lifted Rosamund to her shoulder as she had done the night before, and managed to get a burp from her.

“How did you become such an expert at this babysitting thing?” asked Sherlock curiously. “You said you were an only child, and you had no cousins either.”

“Oh, I did my fair share of babysitting around the neighborhood as a teenager,” she answered. “One of our neighbours had twins so I would watch them every now and then to give her a break.”

“Twins! I wouldn’t want to have twins. One baby at a time is enough.”

“I agree. It’s highly unlikely anyway. I don’t know of any history of twins in my family tree, not identical ones at any rate.”

“Well that is good news,” responded Sherlock in a relieved tone.

Molly laughed. “I suppose if I did happen to get pregnant with twins you’d be all upset?”

“That is an absurd notion, Molly. Just because I would prefer to have children one at a time, does not mean I wouldn’t want whatever God gives me - us.”

Molly reached up and kissed his cheek. “I was just teasing, honey.” Then she added impishly, “It’s kind of fun when you get all affronted about something.”

“Minx,” he responded. “You’re going to pay for that.”

She gave him a sidelong glance. “In what way?”

“You’ll find out.” He traced her cheek with his fingers, and Rosie let out a sleepy wail from where Molly still held her over her shoulder.

“Well, I think I’ll put Rosie down for a nap now,” pronounced Molly, before taking the baby upstairs.

Sherlock’s text alert sounded and he looked at it. Maybe it was Mycroft, saying the driver was
coming? Then he saw the name. It was Billy Wiggins. He glanced at the text.

“Can I stop by for my money, Shezza? I can be there in half an hour.”

Sherlock texted back, "I’ll be home.”

So Billy would be along in a half hour. Sherlock got his wallet and fished out six £20 notes which he put in his trouser pocket. He always made it a habit to have cash at hand, especially when he needed to use it to pay his homeless network people. He was actually going to have to replenish some of the cash at the bank the following week. He made a note in his calendar. Then he spied the post Mrs. Hudson had put on the coffee table the night before.

Molly returned downstairs to sit on the sofa as Sherlock also sat and opened the post. There was a cheque as promised from Colonel Ross thanks to Silver Blaze’s race win the previous Saturday. There were also a couple smaller cheques from grateful clients for cases he had easily solved.

“We should start getting responses soon from our wedding invitations,” commented Molly. “I think we need to speak to the catering service the church uses to choose our reception menu. I’ll ask Nancy at church tomorrow.”

“I hadn’t even thought about the food for the reception. With six weeks to go I suppose we really do need to move on that,” Sherlock agreed. He tossed the opened envelopes back on the table. “For now though, my bride-to-be, I demand payment for your earlier comments.”

Molly looked at him coquettishly. “And what form of payment do you require, husband-to-be?”

“As if you didn’t know,” he said in his deep baritone, before enfolding her in his arms. He kissed her hard, punishing her for her teasing and she reciprocated, pressing her lips against his until he felt the usual flicker of flame ignite within him at her touch. His hands moved to stroke her silky, unbound hair and she sighed against his mouth, sliding her own hands into his hair. He released his hold on her only when they were both fighting for air and breathing hard.

“Sherlock,” Molly gasped, “if that was punishment for my teasing you, I’ll be teasing you every single day.”

Sherlock quirked an eyebrow. “So you like it when I kiss you that way?”

Molly’s cheeks were flushed as she answered, “I like every way you kiss me.”

Sherlock leaned in to kiss her again, but the doorbell rang so he straightened up and stood instead. “That will be Billy.”

“Billy? Who’s Billy?”

“You’ll remember him when you see him. He was getting his wrist bandaged by Mary the day you slapped me for having drugs in my system.”

“Oh, THAT day. That was not a good day for me.”

“Well it was a very good day for me.”

“Why?” Molly asked, but Sherlock didn’t get to answer because there was a knock at the door. Mrs. Hudson had let the young man in. He needed to have a talk with the landlady. She’d let any Tom, Dick or Harry in if they said they were there to see him. One day it wouldn’t be someone who had been invited.
“Come in, Billy,” he called, “Door’s open.” Sherlock took Molly’s hand and they both stood up.

The young man entered, then stood shyly, seeing that Sherlock was not alone. “You’re ‘is fiancée then? Ain’t you the one that smacked ‘is face that day?”

Molly nodded. “That was me.”

“Shezza, you done good, she’s a feisty one ain’t she?”

“That she is,” agreed Sherlock amiably. "She keeps me in line. I have your money for you, Billy,” he informed the young man, producing the notes from his pocket. “Here’s what I needed to reimburse you for, plus a little extra for your trouble.”

Billy glanced at it, nodded and shove the money in his pocket. “Thanks Shezza. Got your wedding invite by the way. Can’t believe you would think of me to invite. I mean, I’m nuthin’ special and you’re a fancy, famous detective and all. You sure you want me to come?”

“Billy, you’ve helped me in the past, and I have seen the way you have gotten your act together. I can always count on your help with your ties to my homeless network. I would be very disappointed if you did not come.

“In that case, Shezza, I would be most honoured. Six weeks from today, right?”

“Right,” affirmed Sherlock.

“Well I’d best be going now. Nice to meet you, Doctor...”

“Hooper, but please call me Molly,” she supplied. “I’m very glad you will be able to attend our wedding. In fact you are the first person to respond.” She gave him a pretty smile and the young man positively blushed.

Sherlock looked fondly over at his fiancée. She always knew exactly the right thing to say. God, he was a lucky man to have captured her heart.

Billy left them and Sherlock squeezed Molly’s hand. “You made his day, sweetheart.”

“He seems like a sweet lad, and you said he’s cleaned up his act. Everyone deserves a second chance.”

“Or a third, or fourth, or even fifth, when it came to me, right?” he quipped.

“I would have given you as many chances as you ever needed. I would never have given up on you, at least as far as becoming a better man, one who didn’t need the drugs. I had pretty much given up on you ever loving me back, though.”

Sherlock pressed his forehead to hers. “You’re mine, Molly. I am never letting you go.”

She smiled, then asked, "So, um, I do have a question, Sherlock."

"And that is?"

"When did you invite Billy to the wedding? I'm sure I would have known who he was if I'd been the one to send the invitation."

"Thanks for not letting on that you didn't know about it. I felt he should be invited, especially in light of what he has done to help me, so I took one of the extra invitations from the drawer in the
kitchen and filled it out, then just put it with the rest you had gotten ready to post. I guess I happened to apply the stamp on that one, so you didn't notice it wasn't your handwriting on the envelope."

Molly laughed. "Sneaky, but you should have told me."

"I intended to, but to be honest, things got so busy, I forgot."

"Oh, you and that faulty mind palace," she teased.

He groaned. "Here we go again with the teasing, time for some more punishment."

She smiled and opened her arms to him to accept it. To her surprise, his expression changed when he looked at her. It grew serious as he whispered, "Only six more weeks, baby."

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed watching Sherlock and Molly with Rosie. I feel that Molly would be quite experienced in babysitting. Did you like the twins conversation?

Did you like Billy's comment about Molly being feisty?

To all of you who are mothers, I hope you have a very happy Mothers Day tomorrow!
Sherlock explains an analogy of his mind palace to Molly.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Only six more weeks, baby.”

Molly heard the words as if in a dream. She shivered in delight and anticipation. The last time he’d called her “baby” was when he’d been a little tipsy, that night he’d FaceTimed her from Dartmoor. Curiously, it gave her a special thrill when he said it now, as if she were the most precious thing in the world to him.

Instead of sitting back down on the sofa, Sherlock led her to his chair and pulled her onto his lap so she was seated sideways on him. Molly put her hands up and lovingly traced the planes of his face, touching them in the way a blind person would, committing every angle to memory. He really was beautiful, even if he disliked being called that. She gazed dreamily through half-closed eyes into his intense turquoise ones until he said abruptly,

“You’re doing it again, Molly.”

“Doing what?” she asked, confused by his tone.

“Looking at me, the way you did last night when I was in the bath. Giving me that come hither look that drives me crazy.”

Her eyes snapped open fully. “I’m sorry. I’m not doing it on purpose. I’ve told you before that you look totally hot with stubble. You’re just so beau...I mean handsome that I could sit here and look at you all day.” She stroked the stubble on his face tenderly.

“I’d much rather you be kissing me.” He pulled her close and gave her a tender kiss that belied the look of passion in his eyes, and Molly knew he was holding himself strictly in check. Then she leaned her head against his chest, feeling the steady thump, thump of his heart beat, at a slightly faster rate than normal.

“Before Billy came in, you said the day I slapped you was a very good day for you. Why?”

“Sweetheart, that should be obvious, if you remember what I said to you afterwards.”

“Oh.” Comprehension dawned. “That was when you realized I’d broken off my engagement. I hadn’t seen you since the wedding, so it had already been a month since Tom and I split.”

“It was right after John and Mary’s wedding when Lady Smallwood came to me for help, and I found out about Magnussen and his blackmailing methods. I needed to get his attention, so I started using again, but in a very controlled fashion.”

Molly slid her arms around his waist, holding him tightly. “There’s no such thing as ‘using in a
controlled fashion.’ Using is using, and there’s always a risk factor. Of course the amount of drugs in your system that day was nothing compared to when I examined you a few months ago.” She gave an involuntary shudder, then looked up at her fiancé. “I have to give you credit, though. You stopped cold turkey as soon as you were out of the hospital after Culverton Smith was exposed. The tremors in your hands, the withdrawal…”

“You, John and Mrs. Hudson got me through it. I had to prove to you I wasn’t a junkie. I have to confess though, I still had the needles hidden away, until Sherrinford. The moment I got back home, I threw them away. I had to. I knew I could never be worthy of you if I kept them.”

“Thank you.” Molly pressed her lips to his, and he deepened the kiss, placing a hand behind her head. She luxuriated in the embrace, leaning into him, until the sound of a baby crying interrupted them.

“Someone’s awake,” said Molly unnecessarily, reluctantly pulling away from her fiancé and standing up.

“You know what? We never had lunch,” Sherlock told her. “You go get Rosie and I’m going to get us something to eat.”

“Okay,” agreed Molly. She went upstairs and picked up the fussing baby from the cot. When they came down, Sherlock was gone. Apparently he had decided to go out and get something for them to eat. Probably just as well he wasn’t attempting to cook, after that breakfast disaster, she thought, chuckling at the remembrance.

Molly changed Rosie’s nappy. Just as well Sherlock isn’t in the room, she thought. He would probably have gagged at the smell. She double bagged the dirty nappy and deposited it into the rubbish bin.

“Auntie Molly is going to fix you a bottle now,” she told the infant who looked distinctly happier now that she was freshly changed. “Would you like to play on the play mat?”

Sherlock had set up the mat on the floor towards the middle of the room and she placed Rosie gently on the mat so she could look up at the hanging toys and reach for them.

While preparing the bottle, Molly glanced several times over at Rosie who seemed content to grab for the toys and push them with her little hand. The door to the flat opened as Sherlock returned. Molly finished getting the bottle ready and left the kitchen to pick up Rosie and feed her.

Her sweet fiancé was on his knees in front of Rosie, encouraging her to grab at the toys. Molly’s heart did a somersault. Her Sherlock, playing with the baby. It was such a beautiful sight and made her long even more for a child of her own.

“What do you want to feed her?” she asked him.

Sherlock glanced up at her. “I’d like that. There’s Chinese on the coffee table. I got four different things, figuring we can have the leftovers at dinnertime. That way you don’t need time away from our goddaughter too cook.”

“Thanks, sweetheart.” Molly bade Sherlock take a seat on the sofa and she handed him the baby, then the bottle, after placing the bib around Rosie’s neck.

Instead of going towards the food though, Molly watched Sherlock as he positioned the bottle correctly for Rosie to start drinking from it. She grabbed her phone and quickly went into the
camera setting to take a photo. She thought it would be cute to send it to John, so he could see everything was going fine.

Molly sent the photo to John with the words, “Thought you might like to see this.”

Then she went into the kitchen and took two plates out, forks, and also spoons for serving the Chinese dishes. She wondered if Sherlock remembered her favourite chicken with cashew nuts. Probably not. She had bought takeaway once for herself and him, during those few days he had stayed at her place after his supposed death. She remembered he had asked for szechuan beef. Opening the containers Molly discovered first what appeared to be a sweet and sour dish, probably pork. Then there was some squid dish with a dark sauce, the szechuan beef he liked so well, and the fourth container was chicken with cashew nuts.

She looked over at her fiancé who had finished feeding Rosie and had put her on his shoulder. He was trying to get her to burp, but was being so tentative with patting her back, Molly knew he could be there for ages.

“Let me,” she said, taking Rosie and expertly patting her back to produced the desired burp. “You have to pat her back just a little harder,” she explained.

Molly laid the baby back on the play mat, where the infant seemed content to reach for the hanging toys once again.

Sherlock was already helping himself to the food. “I can’t believe you still remembered my favourite Chinese food,” she remarked.

He looked at her. “Why wouldn’t I? I only delete unnecessary information from my mind palace. I’ve never deleted anything when it comes to you. I can revisit every one of those memories we’ve shared from the past seven years, although I suppose eventually some of them will fade as we continue to make new ones together.”

“It’s funny,” he added. “I have deleted many of the cases I’ve solved, because they are like closed files, no longer of relevance. Many of the cases John has documented on his blog I hardly remember even working on.”

“How do you know what to keep and what to delete?” asked Molly with interest. “Really?” asked Molly with interest. “How do you know what to keep and what to delete?”

“I suppose you could think of it like this. Cases I’ve successfully completed that require no great skill are like books I’ve finished reading that can be thrown away. Some cases I’ll retain certain things from, in the event I may have need of a special skill I learned for it, like the one I told you about where I had to know how to waltz. I pulled out a few pages from the book that pertained to me learning that skill and threw the book away. If you asked me the exact details of that case, I would not be able to tell you. Then there are the open-ended books, works in progress.”

“I think I understand,” said Molly slowly. “Our relationship is one of those open-ended books, a work in progress.”

“Exactly,” agreed her fiancé. "I can review all the previous chapters in our ‘book’ because it is still there and accessible. The book of Sherlock and Molly will always be open-ended. The early chapters may fade over time because it is destined to be a huge volume, God-willing. I hope and pray we have many, many years before our volume is complete, and it will occur only at death.”

“That is such a beautiful analogy to explain how your mind works. Thank you for sharing it with me. I pray too that we have many years ahead of us.” She kissed his cheek, then started to dish out
her own food.

They sat and ate, plates on their laps, keeping an eye on their goddaughter. Presently, the detective got up, went to the kitchen and brought back two bottles of water, handing one to Molly.

“Thanks,” she said. “What’s this squid dish? I’ve never had it before. It’s pretty good.”

“It’s squid in black bean sauce. I’ve never had it before either. I was just wanting to try something different.”

By the time they were finished with their meal, Rosie had fallen asleep. “Do you want to put the leftovers in the fridge or carry Rosie upstairs to the cot?”

“I’ll take the baby. I’m enjoying playing at being a father. It’s good practice.”

She grinned at him. His words just made that longing for a child that much more acute. Then she chuckled.

Sherlock had just picked Rosie up and had been about to head upstairs, but he paused. “What’s funny?”

“Oh I was just putting the cart before the horse.”

“Pardon?” he inquired, eyebrow raised.

Molly felt herself blushing. “Put Rosie to bed and I’ll tell you when you come back.”

He looked at her for another moment, then nodded and headed upstairs.

Molly busied herself with the task of clearing away the dishes and getting the containers put in the fridge. Then she decided to do the dishes immediately, always preferring to see a clean kitchen.

Without a word, Sherlock came into the kitchen after putting Rosie in the cot. He picked up a tea towel and dried the dishes. Once the kitchen was again spotless, he took her hand and led her to the sofa.

“Now tell me what you were laughing about earlier, and why you made that comment.”

“It’s rather silly,” admitted Molly. “Seeing you with Rosie that way just brought out all my maternal instincts. I do so long to have a baby with you.”

“I suppose by your earlier comment you were referring to the fact that there are certain ‘conditions’ that must be fulfilled in order for us to have a baby,” he said with a quirk to his full lips.

“Well yes. One thought leads to another and then another...”

He silenced her with a kiss, moving his lips over hers in a way that made her ache to be closer to him. Instead, she just slid her arms around his waist and enjoyed the tingles that rippled through her at his touch.

Several minutes went by as they expressed their longing for one another with kisses and the occasional exploration of one another’s mouth with their tongues.

Sherlock’s phone pinged with a text alert and he withdrew from Molly with a wry smile. “And of course, there’s the usual interruption to stop us from getting too carried away.”
“You know if it wasn’t your phone, it would have been mine, or an unexpected visitor, or it would have been Rosie waking from her nap.” She giggled.

“Quite so,” he agreed, reaching for his phone and reading the text. “Oh good, Mycroft’s driver should be here any minute. I’m going to head downstairs so I don’t keep him waiting.”

While Sherlock was gone Molly decided to check her email. She got her phone and went to her inbox. Her attention was immediately caught by an email from Kaitlyn, from just an hour earlier, which read,

Dear Molly,

Thought I’d send you an email because it’s free ha ha. Text between countries, not so much.

We’re having a wonderful time here. My grandparents had their surprise 50th wedding anniversary party last night and they were so excited to see us. We had been staying at my aunt’s house and going out sight-seeing each day, my grandparents had no clue we were here. David has been enjoying his first trip to America. I have to tell you about the BLT sandwiches here, soooooo good. They toast the bread and it’s a great idea because the bacon doesn’t make the bread soggy. David made me promise to do that from now on when I make them. You should try it with Sherlock.

Speaking of which, hope all is going well. Do you owe me that £20 yet? I’ll bet your reunion last Friday was pretty special ;)

Can’t wait to catch up. We leave tonight and get home Sunday morning with the time difference. I’ll probably sleep most of the day Sunday, but I’ll see you at work on Monday.

Hugs,

Kaitlyn

Molly rolled her eyes when she read the comment about owing money. Kaitlyn was going to be disappointed, she thought, smiling.

Her fiancé re-entered the flat, laptop and Bible in hand. He put them down on the coffee table. “I’m glad to have those back,” he remarked. “What are you smiling about?”

“Oh, it’s just an email from Kaitlyn. She asked me if I owe her the twenty quid yet,”

Sherlock chuckled. “We need to win that bet, if only to prove to our friends we can stick to our resolve.” He kissed her lightly on the cheek. “I’m going to go into the kitchen and look up spa places on my laptop now. Do you want to check them out as well?”

“I’ll join you in a few minutes after I finish checking my email.”

"Very well." He picked up his laptop and went into the kitchen.

Molly resumed checking her email. Ads as usual, a couple were spam. Then she saw an email address she recognized. It was from the mysterious person who had sent that other one which said she and Sherlock were a bad match.

She opened the email and gasped.
Another email, well, well, so much for Sherlock and Molly getting an extended period of peace and quiet.

How did you like Sherlock’s analogy about his mind palace and deleting things in it?

Don’t you love the idea of Sherlock playing with Rosie? I can totally see him getting into it.
Sherlock had just booted up his computer when he heard Molly’s gasp. What could have caused that?

With concern in his voice, he called over to her, "Molly? What’s going on?"

Instead if replying, his fiancée walked into the kitchen and handed him her phone. Sherlock looked at the tiny screen, blinking a few times. He had set his own phone to a slightly larger font some time before, to make for easier texting, but Molly’s was using the default setting which seemed tiny indeed, and it was hard to read.

“I hate to say it,” he remarked, “but I think I need reading glasses.”

Molly stared at him in surprise. “Really?” You are having trouble seeing?”

“Only when the print is small. I’ve been putting it off. I hate the thought of getting old and needing glasses.”

Molly giggled. “You’re not getting old. Actually, I think you would look studious and sexy in glasses.”

Sherlock gave her a suggestive look. “Sexy? I think I’ll go and buy some reading glasses on Monday.” She gave him a swat on the arm and he grimaced. At least it hadn’t been one of her famous face slaps. “Love, why don’t you just tell me what caused you to make that exclamation?”

“It’s probably nothing, and I don’t want you to over-react, but I got an email when you were out on the Irene Adler case, from someone who said we are a bad match. I was going to tell you about it, but it slipped my mind. Just now I found another one from the same person.”

“What does it say?” asked Sherlock grimly. As if it wasn’t enough he had enemies. Now Molly was getting negative emails?

Molly read the email from her phone. “It says, ‘Oh, Molly. Don’t trust him, he will only hurt you.’”

“You are unfamiliar with the email address?”

“It’s a generic hotmail one. I nearly deleted the last one as spam, but then I thought it was strange to have my name, rather than email on the subject line. This one had the same.”

“I don’t like this, Molly,” he stated. “How would someone have your email address?”
“I thought maybe it was someone who found my blog from years ago. I had my email address on there. I suppose now that I’m engaged to you, someone could have done a Google search and found my blog?”

“It’s possible,” conceded Sherlock. “That doesn’t explain why someone would send you an email with negative comments about me. That would tend to indicate the author has some personal knowledge of me and my history.”

Molly sighed. "It’s probably nothing. Just some random person trying to cause trouble. Maybe it’s a woman who wants you for herself and is hoping we will break up.”

“I highly doubt that. If it is though, they will be very disappointed when we walk out of the church as husband and wife in forty-two days. For now, we can do nothing. Let me know if you receive another email. If they start to become threatening in any way, I’ll make sure we find out who is sending them.”

“That’s fine with me,” agreed Molly. “Alright, let’s have a look at spa places.”

“After that, I’m buying you your own laptop or an iPad. Staring at your email from that little screen is probably not helping your eyesight any either.”

“My eyes are fine. Next week we are going to find you some reading glasses, old man,” Molly teased.

Sherlock huffed. “We can think about that later.” He did a Google search for London spa centres. The couple settled on Spa Verta.

“Battersea is almost forty-five minutes away but it seems reputable,” commented Sherlock.

“There’s a couples spa package,” pointed out Molly. “Maybe we could do that sometime.”

“Perhaps,” he replied non-committally. “For now though, you and Mrs. Hudson can make sure it is worth a return visit.”

Sherlock booked the women a signature spa package for the following Saturday morning. “Shall I add lunch for you both?”

“Sure. You know how chatty Mrs. Hudson is. She’ll probably want to talk about the experience. Better to do it with me than bore you with the details.”

“Good point,” agreed Sherlock, adding the cost of lunch to their packages and making the booking. “There, that’s done,” he said. “Can we cuddle on the sofa now till Rosie gets up?”

“Are you sure you don’t want to research places that sell reading glasses?” asked Molly cheekily.

“For that comment, Molly Hooper, I am going to need to punish you. Go to the sofa, now,” he commanded. To his satisfaction, she complied. He shut down his laptop and followed her.

Molly sat on the sofa primly, hands folded in her lap. “I’m ready for my punishment.”

Instead of sitting beside her, Sherlock knelt before his fiancée and looked her in the eyes. “Do you remember a few weeks ago, the morning after you agreed to move in with me, how you left for work without saying goodbye?”

Molly nodded.
“And do you remember the text I sent saying I was going to have to punish you, and what your punishment was to be?”

“Yes, of course I do. You said extra kisses, which really didn’t give me an incentive to behave. I mean really? How is that a punishment?” She gave him a sultry look from beneath her lashes that made him draw in his breath.

“Damn it Molly, you’re making me forget what I was going to say.” He thought for a minute, then remembered. “Oh yes. Well, this time your punishment is that you have to be the one to initiate the kissing for our next, shall we say, three encounters?”

He was gratified to see Molly’s eyes widen. She rarely took the initiative, so it would be interesting to see how quickly she fulfilled the conditions of her punishment.

He was even more gratified to note her immediate compliance. She reached for him, grasping his curls and pulling him in for a very sensual, very satisfying kiss. Her lips pressed his firmly, demanding he yield to her. It was quite an intoxicating feeling, allowing her to take charge. Unfortunately his knees were not enjoying the experience, so he drew back.

“Sherlock?” Molly questioned nervously. “Was I being a little too forward?”

Sherlock chuckled. “You could never be that. No, it’s my knees. I think I’m getting old. They were protesting my position.”

“First, reading glasses, now your knees, you’re positively falling apart,” teased his cheeky fiancée again.

“Enough of that,” he huffed, rising from his knees to take a more comfortable seat on the sofa, “or I’ll have to extend your punishment to five initiations of kissing.”

“I get credit for one already.”

“That one didn’t count because I was uncomfortable and had to shift positions.” Seeing that Molly was about to protest, he quickly added, “but you may continue where we left off.”

“Maybe I’m not in the mood for kissing you anymore.” Her eyes were dancing as she spoke and he knew she was lying.

“Well, I’m in the mood and I demand you submit to your punishment.”

“Make me,” was her rather breathless response.

Sherlock was in a quandary of his own making. So he did the only thing he could think of. He gave her his sexiest sideways glance and said, “Please?” It worked.

Molly got up, then slid onto his lap and wound her arms around his neck, holding him tightly and kissing him. She lightly kissed her way down to the pulse throbbing at the base of his throat as flames of desire licked at his insides. It was torture, it was madness to have given Molly this power over him, he was really only punishing himself, but oh, did the feel of her lips excite him.

He groaned as she tangled her fingers into his dark locks and returned her lips to his. He felt his self-control slipping as his hands itched to roam her body and touch her. If something didn’t happen to interrupt them soon, it was very possible their passion could overwhelm them into going further than just kissing. Even as he thought it, there was the sound of a wail that came through the baby monitor which Molly had left on the coffee table.
Molly immediately hopped off Sherlock’s lap. “Thank God for Rosie,” she said a little shakily, and he knew she had been as lost in their passion as he had been.

He winced uncomfortably. “While you take care of her, I’m going to go have a shower, a nice cold one,” he grimaced.

“I shouldn’t have sat on your lap. I’m sorry,” said Molly penitently.

“Sweetheart, my body is going to respond to you in whichever manner we are kissing. I can stand to take a few cold showers, as long as I know I won’t have to take them anymore after we are married.”

The wailing in the monitor became louder as Molly said, “You know I’ll deny you nothing once we are married. I want to be with you as much as you want to be with me.” With that, she gave him a chaste kiss and headed upstairs to get the baby.

Sherlock went to the bathroom and turned on the shower. He undressed and stood under the stingingly cold spray and shivered. He decided to forgo washing his hair to a time when he could stand under a warm spray of water. Cold showers were not fun, he reflected, but they did a good job of forcing him back into a regular state of being, where his desire did not threaten to take control over his higher intellectual functions.

By the time he was out of the shower and dressed, he could hear Molly’s voice coming from the kitchen as she carried on a one-sided conversation with their goddaughter. He entered the kitchen and watched again as Molly fed Rosie her cereal.

“Do you want to give it a try?”

Sherlock hesitated, then nodded. Molly handed her fiancé the spoon and showed him how to hold the spoon by Rosie’s mouth. She would open it when she was ready for the next spoonful of cereal. In just a few minutes he felt like a pro at it. Then of course, Rosie had to bang her hand into the bowl and what was left splattered over the tray of the chair and into Sherlock’s face.

He sputtered as a bit of the cereal entered his mouth. “Ugh, that stuff tastes nasty,” he complained.

Molly laughed and handed him a damp cloth to wipe his face. “I think that means she has had enough,” she stated. “I’ll take care of cleaning her and the chair.”

“Why didn’t she do that to you?” he asked grumpily.

“Honey, that’s nothing. Wait until you are the recipient of her occasional projectile vomiting.”

He cringed. “Please spare me the details.”

Molly just smiled as he wiped the cereal off his face. “Just as well you shaved, or it would be much more difficult to clean your face. There’s some stuck in your hair too,” she pointed out.

"It is fortunate I didn’t wash my hair earlier. I suppose I’ll have to do that later.”

“It’s only a little bit. Give me the cloth and I’ll get it out.” He complied, and Molly wiped the bits of cereal from his hair. Then she attended to the rest of the clean-up while Sherlock deposited the bowl and spoon in the sink.

Once all was restored to cleanliness, Molly changed Rosie and put her on the play mat. The engaged couple played with the baby together. To Sherlock it was an intriguing experience, like a
dress rehearsal for the real thing, for when he and Molly would have their own baby to take care of.

Later in the evening, Molly took a shower while Sherlock heated up the leftover Chinese food for them.

While he waited for Molly to come and eat, Sherlock texted John.

“How’s your medical conference going?”

John’s response came through quickly. “Fine. Done for the day. One more tomorrow morning and I’ll be over for Rosie at about three o’clock. Tell Molly thanks for the photo.”

“What photo?” Sherlock texted back.

“Just one she sent me last night of Rosie.”

“Oh. John, can I ask a favour when you get here?”

“Sure. What do you need?”

“That desk I bought from Amazon needs to be put together. Could you help me? I had a bit of trouble with the cot-bed until Molly helped me.”

“Sure thing. I did offer to help with the cot, you know.”

“Well I’ve never tried assembling anything before. It’s harder than it looks.”

“Well now you know. So, how is my daughter doing?”

“Just fine, even if she decided to get baby cereal all over my face.”

“That must have been quite the sight! Give her a kiss for me. Let me know if you have any other questions about Rosie, otherwise I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“See you then.”

Sherlock put his phone back down and looked up as Molly entered. “John said thanks for the photo.”

“I thought he’d like it.”

“When did you take a photo of Rosie?”

“Yesterday, when you were feeding her the bottle.”

“Very sneaky of you. Well, he will be here tomorrow at three and will help me put together my new desk.”

“That’s great,” enthused Molly. That means I don’t need to be the one giving you instructions.”

He frowned. “You know the cot was the first thing I ever assembled, and I think I did a pretty good job in the end.”

“With my help.”

“Yes, with your help,” he acknowledged.
After Rosie was settled for the night, they got into bed. Molly read her devotional while Sherlock delved into the book of 2 Samuel. He read for awhile, then was astonished to read about Bathsheba.

“Molly, David wanted this woman Bathsheba, and he had her husband basically killed. I thought he was supposed to be this great king. I don’t understand.”

“Actually I really like it that all the heroes and great kings of the Bible have flaws. It shows their humanity. As you keep reading, you will see that David repented of his sin. We all do things that make us ashamed. Remember, asking for forgiveness and being truly sorry for our sin is what sets us apart as Christians.”

‘I think I understand,” said Sherlock thoughtfully. “It’s just that I expected King David to be as close to perfect as possible, and reading about what he did surprised me. I guess it makes me feel a little better about all my short-comings.”

“Honey, we all have short-comings. The main thing is that we try to overcome them and live a life that gives glory to God. I think the people who know and love you have seen how you’ve changed, especially since you became a Christian. I’ve loved you when it was hard to do so, but it is so easy now to love you because you no longer act superior to others, and you are not afraid to express your emotions.”

He smiled at his beautiful fiancée who always knew how to encourage him. “I love you, sweetheart.”

“I love you too, my darling. I think we need to get some sleep. We have church in the morning and will need extra time to get Rosie ready.”

“Your wish is my command.” He turned to put his Bible on the nightstand, and when he turned back, it was to find that Molly had scooted over as close to him as possible. She pressed herself against him and kissed him, a sweet one of tender longing. Then she drew back and said with a smirk, “That’s three thirds of my punishment done.”

Sherlock pulled her back close and held her in his arms. “Sweet dreams, my angel.”

She slid her arms around him as well, and they slept, entwined together and warm.

Chapter End Notes

The plot thickens - is the email just a joke or something more sinister?

I figured Sherlock is of an age where he needs reading glasses, hope you like the idea of the "punishment" he is demanding of Molly after her teasing comments.

Rosie making a mess - my daughter would do stuff like that, so I thought it would be fun to add something like that.

What did you think of the conversation about King David and Bathsheba? I actually love the fact that all the great people of the Bible had flaws. They were human, just as I am.
The sound of whimpering coming from the baby monitor brought Molly to wakefulness.

She was still tightly locked into Sherlock’s embrace. He was so warm and she felt so cozy that it was difficult to disengage herself from his arms. However, Rosie needed her, so Molly ducked out of the circle of her fiancée’s arms. It was only six o’clock, so she slipped on one of Sherlock’s dressing gowns instead of getting dressed and padded up to the extra bedroom.

Molly leaned down into the cot, saying in a low voice, “Come, lovey, we need to let Uncle Sherlock get his rest. Do you know how much Auntie Molly loves Uncle Sherlock?” She spread Rosie’s arms wide, eliciting a giggle. “This much.” Then she added, “I hope we have an adorable baby like you one day. Of course, with a daddy like Uncle Sherlock, I’m sure our baby will be perfect.”

She picked up the little girl, carried her downstairs and put her into the feeding seat while preparing a bottle.

To Molly’s surprise, Sherlock walked into the kitchen wearing another of his dressing gowns. He came to her and slid his arms around her from behind.

“I’m sorry I woke you,” said Molly. “I was trying not to make any noise.”

“That baby monitor is quite sensitive to sound, you know.” He leaned down to kiss the tip of her ear and whisper, “So how much do you love me? Didn’t you say it was this much?”

He grasped her wrists and spread her arms wide.

Molly chuckled. “Well actually Rosie’s little arms don’t spread that far, but I think you get the general gist.”

“I love you more,” he told her solemnly.

“We’ve been through this before. I love you just as much, and I’ve loved you longer, so I win.” She turned into his embrace and stood on tiptoes to kiss him. “There, punishment conditions fulfilled.”

“No way,” he protested. “A chaste kiss on the lips does not count. I am expecting much more from you, Molly Hooper.”

“Well it’s going to have to wait then because I need to feed the baby now.”

Sherlock reluctantly released his fiancée. “I suppose I’ll go and get dressed now. Much as I want us
to have a child of our own, I am going to be jealous of the time you have to devote to anyone other than me.”

“You’ll still get plenty of attention,” she assured him, eyes twinkling.

While her fiancé was absent, Molly fed Rosie her bottle, took her to the mat and changed her nappy, then dressed the infant in the clothes John had provided for the day. She was just lifting the child back into her arms when Sherlock reappeared. “I’ll take her so you can get dressed.”

Molly relinquished Rosie and dressed for church. There was still a good amount of time till they needed to leave, thanks to Rosie waking so early, so she picked up her Bible and devotional to look at the day’s reading. After she had finished, she watched Sherlock’s interaction with Rosie.

Sherlock seemed content to play with his goddaughter on the play mat, dangling the toys towards her and then pulling them out of reach. Rosie enjoyed that for all of five minutes until she decided she didn’t like being denied her toys and her lips started to tremble.

Sherlock immediately scooped her up and played pat-a-cake with her, thus restoring the infant’s good mood. He really did have an innate knowledge of what to do, Molly thought to herself. He would be a wonderful father.

Molly made coffee and crumpets for herself and Sherlock. She ate first, seeing as he was happily playing with Rosie, then claimed the baby so he could also eat.

They were a bit like ships passing in the night as they took it in turns with the baby, stealing a kiss from one another each time one passed the child to the other. Would it be that way when they had a child of their own, snatching kisses here and there? Molly wondered.

After Sherlock ate, he again took charge so Molly could apply makeup and do the last minute preparations for church. Then she joined in the fun, playing with the little girl, She lost track of time, and when she next glanced at the clock, it was time to leave for church.

Molly and Sherlock made it to church with only five minutes to spare. They hadn’t accounted for the extra time it would take to get Rosie in and out of the taxi in her car seat. Molly looked for Kayla and, instead of sitting in her usual pew, elected to sit with her friend. Sherlock was carrying the car seat with Rosie in it.

He unbuckled the baby and took her out, passing the car seat to Kayla to rest on the pew beside her.

Molly noticed that her fiancé seemed disinclined to relinquish his hold on their goddaughter and she wondered if he was a little concerned that Kayla might replace him as Rosie’s favourite person.

Kayla was delighted to see the little girl and Molly knew her friend was dying to hold the baby, but too polite to ask. She thought about asking Sherlock to give Rosie over to her friend, but she didn’t have the heart to disappoint him and besides, he looked so sweetly contented, holding the baby on his lap.

When everyone stood to sing the praise songs, which were not being led by Caleb and Abigail this time, her fiancé remained seated with the infant. He did participate though, making Rossie’s hands come together as if she was clapping in rhythm along with the other congregants.

Once or twice Molly saw him looking at her as she sang along with everyone else. He would give her a smile that filled her with such joy. His blue-green eyes were so expressive.
After they sat again, Kayla whispered n her ear, “He’s always looking at you, Molly. It is so obvious that he adores you. That’s the way I want to be looked at.”

“You never know, Kayla. I think John has a great capacity to love. When he’s ready, if you are meant to be, he’ll look at you like that too.”

She knew her friend was pleased by the words.

During Pastor Briggs' sermon, Molly noticed Rosie’s eyes growing heavy, and the child was soon fast asleep. Sherlock held her tucked under his chin. He was the very picture of paternal solicitousness, and it warmed Molly's heart. If he was this sweet to Rosie, how much more so would he be with their own child?

Pastor Briggs was talking about joy. He gave an interesting acronym to represent it - Jesus, others, yourself.

“If you remember to put Jesus first and others before yourself, you will experience true joy.”

Molly had heard the acronym before and thought it a good one, but of course it was Sherlock’s first time, and she saw he was listening intently. Seeing him so eager to learn more about God and faith made her heart swell even more with love for him.

When the service was over, several people came up to Molly and Sherlock to say hello. A couple were curious about the little girl who was with them, and Molly explained she and her fiancé were babysitting the infant.

Then Molly went in search of Nancy Schmidt to ask about the caterers for the wedding reception. She found the secretary and asked her about it.

“Oh yes. Let me give you the business card for Eileen, who is in charge. I believe she can come and meet with you about your menu choices and other reception details, like seating arrangements.”

Nancy gave Molly the card, who then returned to where Sherlock was still standing with Kayla.

Rosie had woken at last, and Kayla was holding her. Apparently Sherlock had decided to allow her friend a turn at holding the baby.

“Molly, I invited Kayla to come over to Baker Street for a while this afternoon.”

Molly was touched at Sherlock’s thoughtfulness. She was certain he had made the invitation knowing John was expected at three. Perhaps her fiancé was playing matchmaker. “That sounds lovely,” she responded to his comment. “When are you coming, Kayla?”

“I have a few things to do at home first. How does two o’clock sound?” asked her friend.

“Sounds good to me.” Turning to Sherlock, Molly said, “I got the number for Eileen, who does the catering for wedding receptions at our church. Nancy says she would be able to come to our place and show us menu options. Maybe we can call her after lunch?”

“We should do that,” he agreed.

“I should get going if I want to be at your place by two,” said Kayla. She handed the baby back to Sherlock, who put her in her car seat.
Rosie was starting to fuss, obviously hungry, so the pair said a hasty goodbye to Kayla and left for home.

By the time the taxi dropped them off at Baker Street, little Rosie was making her protests known volubly. Molly had tried putting the dummy in her mouth, but she was not to be appeased.

Sherlock was completely at a loss and asked Molly anxiously, “What do we do? Is there something wrong with her?”

Molly, who had experience with fussy babies assured him, “It’s okay, sweetheart, she’s just hungry. As soon as she has a bottle, she’ll be fine.”

Once inside the flat, Molly immediately got busy making a bottle for the infant. She decided not to make any cereal today because Rosie was getting more fussy by the minute.

Even Sherlock was unable to pacify her, despite his deliberate attempt to put her hands within reach of his curls.

“Not so irresistible after all, are you?” teased Molly, handing her fiancé the bottle. “See if that works.”

While he sat with Rosie and fed her, Molly got a bib and fastened it around her neck.

Rosie sucked on the bottle greedily. She was almost finished with it when a very bad smell assaulted Molly’s nose.

Sherlock wrinkled his nose but stoically continued to feed her the bottle until it was finished.

“I can take Rosie and change her,” she offered.

To her surprise, Sherlock declined the offer. “I need to be able to do this if I want a baby of my own,” he told her. “You’ll probably need to help me though.”

Molly got a new nappy and wipes out of the changing bag while Sherlock lifted Rosie to his shoulder and patted her back in the same way Molly had. When the baby gave a good burp, the detective looked inordinately pleased with himself. “I did it,” he said proudly.

Then he gently laid Rosie onto the changing mat and hesitantly unfastened her nappy. He made an involuntary gagging sound when the odour assailed his nostrils. Turning his head away, he took a deep breath and held it, returning to his task, using the baby wipes to clean her properly. He fastened the new nappy after folding up the dirty one. Then he exhaled loudly, and Molly couldn’t help but laugh.

“Good job,” she praised him. “Hopefully when you’re a daddy you can do it without having to hold your breath.”

“I don’t know about that. The smell nearly made me sick.”

“I agree it wasn’t pleasant, but you do get used to it. I’ve heard too that it is easier to tolerate your own baby’s dirty nappy,” she said encouragingly.

“Maybe when the time comes, I’ll have to find ways for you to change our baby instead,” he said with a sidelong glance and seductive smile that immediately made her pulse quicken.

Trying to sound matter-of-fact and unmoved, she said, “That won’t work if you are the only one
home at the time.”

He pouted. “I could always wait for you to get home and say ‘The baby just dirtied her nappy - here you go.’”

Molly laughed at his silliness. Funny how he’d said “her” though. Men usually were all about wanting a son and heir.

“Sherlock,” she asked, “if you could choose the sex of our first child, what would you want?”

“A miniature Molly,” he said promptly, and she was touched.

“So, having a son wouldn’t be important to you?”

“Well, of course, we’d just keep going till we had a son as well,” he flashed her a cheeky grin.

Molly rolled her eyes. “You know my position on that.”

“I know, love. To be perfectly honest, all I really care about is that our babies are healthy, and that you are too.”

He took Molly in his arms and kissed her tenderly. She allowed herself a couple minutes to enjoy it, then pulled away to make some sandwiches for lunch so they could be finished before Kayla arrived.

Just as they had done before church, Sherlock and Molly tag-teamed their eating and watching their goddaughter. Molly also put in a call to Eileen and arranged for the woman to come over at seven-thirty on Thursday.

Two o’clock arrived and the doorbell rang. Molly dashed downstairs to get the door. Mrs. Hudson had popped her head out of the door to her flat, ready as usual to let in the visitor, but returned inside when she saw Molly opening the door.

Molly gave her friend a hug. “Glad you could make it. Rosie’s getting sleepy, but I’m sure she’ll be glad to see you.”

“I’ll be happy to see her too,” responded Kayla.

The pair made their way upstairs and went into the flat. Kayla immediately gravitated toward the baby. Sherlock was holding her, but relinquished the infant readily enough. Molly knew it was because he had had ample opportunity to spend with his goddaughter.

Kayla sat on the sofa and rocked the child gently, and as if by magic, Rosie closed her eyes and slept.

While Molly and Kayla talked quietly together about potentially going shopping the next evening for shoes, Sherlock got out his laptop to peruse John’s blog and his emails.

Molly heard him tapping away, obviously replying to some emails and she wondered if he had any potential cases to do over the next few days.

Molly’s text alert chimed and she looked at it. It was from Kaitlyn.

“I’m home!” read the message.

Molly texted back, “I missed you at work this past week. We’re both working till four tomorrow.
Would you be willing to go shopping for shoes after work and grab some dinner?”

“Sure,” came the quick response. “Can’t wait to find out if you owe me money yet.”

Molly laughed out loud at that and Kayla looked at her inquiringly.

“Kaitlyn’s good for tomorrow, so if you can meet us in the hospital lobby after four, we’ll go shopping and get some dinner.”

“Sounds good,” said her friend. "I'll head to the hospital as soon as I'm finished at work. What was so funny that made you laugh?”

Molly lowered her voice. “Kaitlyn and I have a twenty quid bet going that I’m going to win.”

Kayla’s eyes were wide with curiosity. “What kind of bet?”

"She thinks Sherlock and I are not going to make it to our wedding night with our virtue intact.”

Her friend giggled. “I wouldn’t bet against you, Molly. You’re the strongest person I know.”

Molly was a little surprised. “You still think that even after our talk on Friday, where I told you Sherlock and I have had our struggles with it?”

“Even after that talk; I have faith in you, my friend.”

“Thanks for your support,” Molly said sincerely.

The doorbell sounded again and Sherlock closed his laptop. “Ah, that will be John,” he remarked to nobody in particular.

Kayla’s eyes grew wide and Molly realized she had had no idea he would be coming over at this time. This was certain to be interesting.

Chapter End Notes

Sherlock changed a dirty nappy, how about that? I must admit, I used to hold my breath when I did that LOL.

Hope you enjoyed this chapter, a calmer one this time.
Sunday Surprise – John

Chapter Summary

John arrives at Baker Street and is surprised to find Kayla there.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

John was weary. The medical conference had been long and, on the whole, rather boring. Guest speakers droned on about new advances in cancer treatments and the like. It was always the same. The new advances never led to a cure for anything. New medications sometimes helped prolong peoples lives, but there was always a trade-off.

John sighed, as he drove towards Baker Street. He felt the conference had been a waste of his time. He had missed his daughter terribly, and he had missed Kayla.

Kayla, slim, tall, brunette. Well, not exactly tall, his height actually, 5'3" - but still taller than Mary. In some ways Kayla was the complete opposite of Mary. Where Mary exuded confidence, Kayla was shy, but not to the extent where she allowed someone to force her into agreeing with something just to please them. In fact, he and the school teacher had already had several conversations about child-rearing. She came from a place of knowing the ways of young children, while he had some limited experience with Rosie.

Mary was a strong woman who was used to getting her own way. Kayla had an inner strength, but did not try to force her opinions on him. She simply explained her way of thinking and patiently listened to his.

John still felt an enormous weight of guilt over the fact that he had allowed himself to be attracted to another woman, despite being married. How could he have even thought of anyone else? He was nothing but a cheater, even if it had only been texting.

Strangely, Kayla intrigued him in a way Mary never had. She was quite like Molly Hooper, if he really thought about it. There was an inner radiance within her, a quiet serenity. He was certain there were no skeletons in Kayla’s closet. In fact, on the two occasions he had kissed her, he had felt she was not very experienced, although certainly not unwilling either.

In light of the fact that Kayla went to Molly’s church, he was almost certain she was a virgin. This was something new for him. Mary had been well versed in the ways of love, and he himself had had several love affairs over the years. He didn’t think he had ever gone out with a virgin before and it terrified him. He certainly didn’t want to hurt her, yet there was a definite connection with her which made him want to get to know her better.

It was funny, one of his previous girlfriends, Jeanette, had been a school teacher, but she had never spoken much about her job, it seemed just a job, rather than something she enjoyed. Kayla was passionate about the little ones she taught. She obviously adored children.

And then there was Rosie. For some unaccountable reason the infant had instantly bonded with her, and it was obvious Kayla adored her. In fact, he kind of wondered if it was Rosie that Kayla liked
best, and it made him a little jealous.

Oh well, he had plenty of time to get to know Kayla better. He hadn’t texted her during his absence, worried that he might find himself distracted, but he thought he would do so when he arrived home. Maybe they could go out for dinner again with Sherlock and Molly, or maybe alone.

Arriving finally at Baker Street, surprisingly on time, he was fortunate enough to find a parking spot nearby. He parked and made his way to 221B, then rang the doorbell.

Mrs. Hudson greeted him and sent him upstairs.

John knocked on the door and Sherlock opened it immediately. “Hey John, how was the conference?”

“It was...” he stopped as Sherlock stepped out of the way and Kayla was revealed to be on the sofa with Molly, calmly holding a sleeping Rosie.

“Hi John,” she said softly, and it was as if nobody was in the room with them. Until that moment he hadn’t realized how much he had missed her. This could not be happening to him. He wasn’t ready to fall for someone so soon after Mary, but his heart was beating uncommonly fast. She looked like the Madonna with child, as she gazed at him with a curious light in her eyes.

He probably would have stood there, transfixed for some time if Sherlock hadn’t broken the silence with a hearty, “Cup of tea?”

John looked at his best friend, things in the room shifting back into focus. “Er, yes. No eyeball please.” He made reference to the running joke between them from the day Sherlock had dropped an eyeball in his own tea.

John walked towards Kayla. “I wasn’t expecting to find you here.”

“I didn’t know you’d be coming over to pick up Rosie now, either.” She glanced questioningly at Molly. “Did you and Sherlock plan this?”

Molly threw up her hands. “I had nothing to do with it. Sherlock is the one who invited you.”

“Oh, I...” began Kayla.

“Anyone else up for tea?” interrupted Sherlock cheerfully.

*Sherlock, cheerful? He really was a new man.*

“Yes please,” chimed the women in unison.

John got on his knees before Kayla, stroking his daughter’s hair as she slept. “Hi sweetheart,” he said. “I missed you,” but his eyes drifted up to meet Kayla’s as he spoke.

“I’m sure she missed you terribly,” said Kayla, adding in a low voice, “Me too.”

John felt flustered. He could not understand what this sweet woman saw in him. Why had she never married?

Sherlock came into the sitting room and set down three cups. “Here you go,” he said, indicating which tea belonged to whom.

“Where’s yours, honey?” asked Molly.
Sherlock shrugged. “Didn’t feel like having one right now. I want to start getting things out of the packaging for my new desk. You still up for helping me put it together, John?”

John blinked, he had been lost in thought. What had Sherlock said to him? Something about his desk? “Yes of course, as long as the girls are okay with continuing to watch Rosie.”

Molly rolled her eyes at him. “Really? You need to even ask? Sherlock and I have had fun playing mummy and daddy this weekend.”

“We certainly have,” agreed Sherlock, as he pulled out the various pieces for the desk. “Except for when I had to change her dirty nappy. Molly made me do it.”

Molly chuckled. “That’s not true, and you know it!” To John she said, “You should have seen it; Sherlock had to take a big breath and hold it, just to complete the task.”

“Well at least I did it,” pouted her fiancé.

John let the banter wash over him. He wondered if he’d ever get used to seeing Sherlock and Molly this way, so obviously in love, teasing each other. He would not have believed it possible a couple of years ago. He wondered if Sherlock’s turn to faith had contributed to the way he was now. Probably, he decided.

As a good Catholic, John had learned the catechisms at an early age and attended church each week with his mother, but he had drifted away from the church as he grew older. Deep down he knew he believed in God and Jesus and all that, but he wasn’t devout by any means. Occasionally he would go to church, make his confession to the priest, and be on his way, merrily sinning once again until enough had accumulated that he felt he should seek absolution again. He had been firm with Mary however on having Rosie christened.

Mary had not ascribed strongly to any belief system. She had been content to go along with whatever John wanted when it came to religion. She had been the one to insist on both Sherlock and Molly being Rossi’s godparents, as well as Mrs. Hudson of course. He had a strong feeling she had suspected that Sherlock’s feelings for Molly were there, just tucked away. Everyone knew Molly was devoted to him, although it was unspoken.

John sipped his tea, reflecting further on belief systems. In that way, Mary and Kayla were polar opposites. Kayla’s faith was a strong one, and she had mentioned Jesus several times when he had conversed with her on various topics. They had even had a discussion about the guilt he felt over Mary’s premature death. He felt so comfortable with her, had admitted to texting another woman while Mary was watching the baby. She had not judged him, merely told him that God didn’t punish people for making mistakes.

He really wasn’t a good enough man for someone like her. She deserved a man who was a strong Christian like herself, not a backslidden, sometime Catholic. He set aside those thoughts as he finished his tea, and settled into helping Sherlock assemble his desk.

As the two men worked together, John found it rather amusing how his friend could be so clueless when it came to instructions. He kept insisting the writers were making things far more complicated than they needed to be. Then he would try to put together a random piece of the desk with another, sure it was the right one, only to discover he had read the instructions incorrectly. Those part numbers were labelled in pretty tiny lettering and John idly wondered if his friend needed glasses. Sherlock seemed at times to be squinting at the lettering.

What should have taken one hour took almost two. By the time they were almost finished, Molly
had taken it upon herself to order pizza for delivery.

Rosie had woken from her nap, and Molly had prepared her cereal. Kayla was feeding the infant when the doorbell rang to indicate that the pizza had arrived.

The two men positioned the new desk in the same place where the old one had been and regarded their handiwork admiringly.

“Not a bad job, if I do say so myself,” commented Sherlock, picking up his laptop and reverently placing it on the new desk.

“The desk looks a bit bare without papers strewn all across it,” teased John.

“Patience, my friend. It will happen, in time.”

Molly paused in what she was doing, collecting plates, utensils and serviettes. “You had better not let that desk get too messy,” she informed Sherlock with a wink. “I run a tight ship around here.”

Sherlock saluted. “Aye, aye, captain.”

John shook his head in amusement. Those two were positively idiotic at times, these days.

After everyone had eaten enough for dinner, John decided it was time for him to leave.

“I should probably get going,” he told his friends.

“Do you want to come over tomorrow, while Molly is at work?”

“I need to put in a day’s work at the practice. There are a few new things that I learned at the conference, a couple new treatments I need to look into, to decide whether I want to offer them to patients.”

“Sherlock - Kaitlyn, Kayla and I are going out for dinner and shopping for shoes tomorrow evening, perhaps John could come over then?” Molly was standing close to her fiancé as she spoke.

“That sounds like a fine idea. It will make your absence easier to tolerate.” The detective turned toward her, settling a lingering kiss on her lips.

John cleared his throat, “‘John Hamish Watson,’ if you’re looking for baby names,” he said, repeating the same words he’d used when Sherlock had been intrigued by Irene Adler. Of course, he’d only been kidding then, this time he was rather more serious.

“We’ll take that under advisement,” said his friend, after reluctantly breaking off the kiss.

Seeing his friends kiss that way had made John long to kiss Kayla again too. He gave his head a mental shake. “I can be here by five if you like.”

“Sounds good. I’ll walk to the fish shop and pick up some chips. What about Rosie though?”

“I’ll bring her along. Maybe Mrs. Hudson can watch her if she isn’t busy.”

“Have you ever known her to be busy with anything, aside from her culinary creations and frequent trips up the stairs to keep an eye on us?”

“Good point,” conceded John, chuckling.
He got his daughter settled in her car seat, also collecting the changing bag and backpack he had brought. "Thanks again for watching her." he told the engaged couple. Then he looked over at Kayla, who had been mostly quiet. “Can I take you home?”

She smiled at him. “That would be lovely.”

After wishing his friends farewell, John and Kayla left the flat and went to his car. He got Rosamund positioned correctly, then turned to open the door for Kayla, but she had already climbed into the vehicle. So much for being a gentleman.

As he drove Kayla home, they talked of general things, he about the conference, while she told him funny stories about some of her young charges over the years. It was so easy to talk with her. They never ran out of things to say, but he still had this niggling feeling in the back of his mind that he was not good enough for her.

John was able to find a parking spot directly in front of Kayla’s flat. Rosie had fallen asleep, so he felt it would be okay if he walked Kayla to her front door.

When they reached it, Kayla turned to him with that lovely smile and musical lilt to her voice, saying, “Thank you for taking me home, John.”

She looked so beautiful, illuminated dimly by the street light behind them, and John couldn’t resist the temptation. He put his hands on her shoulders and kissed her, not the way they had kissed on the previous two occasions, but really kissed her, tasting her, her sweetness and her innocence as she yielded herself to him. He deepened the kiss and she responded by putting her arms around his neck.

The doctor felt his pulse quicken as Kayla instinctively leaned into him. It was all moving so fast, and he realized he wanted more than she’d be willing to give. At the same moment he realized he couldn’t do this to her. She was too pure. She had limited experience with men, and he felt she would end up yielding to his desires if he pressed his suit. He broke off the kiss, breathing hard.

“I can’t do this,” he said, struggling to gain control of himself.

“Do what?” she asked, the confusion evident in her expression.

“This,” he gestured with his hands. “Kiss you like this. I think...I think we need to stop seeing each other.”

Kayla gasped and her eyes filled with tears. “I’m sorry,” he said, backing away from her and getting back into his car, then starting the engine. As he drove away, he glanced in the rearview mirror. She was standing there with her hands to her face looking after him. He blinked back tears of his own.

This was for the best, he told himself. She deserved better than a man who had almost cheated on his wife, and who came with baggage, notably one infant and years of short term love affairs that meant little to nothing. Better to hurt her now than later.

Chapter End Notes

Did you enjoy seeing John's POV? How do you find his conflicting feelings about
Kayla and his guilt?

Could you imagine Sherlock having trouble with assembling the desk? I could picture it so clearly in my mind - his confidence about it, but his ineptitude nevertheless LOL.
Sherlock and Molly share a special dance together.

After the door had closed behind John, Kayla and Rosie, Molly said, “Did you see the way they look at each other? I think they are falling for each other - hard.”

“That would seem to be the case,” agreed Sherlock. “John needs someone in his life to replace Mary. He is not the kind of man who is comfortable with being alone for long, at least, from what I have seen since we met. He moves from one woman to the next like a bee seeks nectar from one flower and then moves to the next. I feel bad that I can’t be there for him as much as I used to be, but my life with you is now my priority.”

“I think they make a lovely couple, but I certainly hope he would not consider Kayla as just another flower. She is a very special person who deserves the love of a good man,” said Molly. “So, Sherlock, no more baby, and a whole evening ahead of us. What are we going to do with all this free time?”

“I can think of a few things,” he murmured, placing his arms around his fiancée’s waist and nuzzling her neck. “You know, I’ve been feeling rather neglected today.”

“Oh really? Do you need me to give you some love and attention, taking the initiative to complete my punishment?” She said the words in a seductive tone and heard his sharp intake of breath.

“If it wouldn’t be too much trouble.” Sherlock returned her smile with a seductive glance of his own.

“Let me put on some music first.” Molly got her phone and went to her saved eStore tunes. Sherlock probably didn’t know it, but he would certainly recognize the title words from the list of wedding reception songs she had made the previous week. She set the song on repeat.

The music started to play. Molly had loved the song “A Thousand Years,” from the moment she had heard it during Part One of the final Twilight movie.

“Heart beats fast
Colours and promises...”

“Dance with me, Sherlock.” She came to him, reaching to put her arms around his neck.

Obligingly, he put his arms around her waist and they swayed together, not really moving.

When the words of the chorus played, containing the song title, Sherlock smiled in recognition. “This is one of the songs you picked to be played for our reception.”

“It is,” she acknowledged. “Aren’t the words beautiful?”
“I must confess I wasn’t really paying that much attention until the ‘thousand years’ words played. I was too busy looking at you, thinking how beautiful you are.”

“Well, you can listen to the lyrics next time around. I put it on repeat.”

She drew his head down to hers, moving her hands up to caress his ebony curls, then kissed him deeply as the music continued to play, starting over when it reached the end.

They continued to stand there as the romantic song became a background for their embrace.

Sherlock moved his hands up to rub Molly’s back, and she pressed herself closer. Her “punishment” duly fulfilled, Sherlock took over the initiative, removing his mouth from hers to trace a fiery path down her neck to the rapid pulse at the base of her throat.

Molly let out a gasp of pleasure as he flicked his tongue over her pulse point before making a trail of kisses back up to capture her lips with his again. Her mouth parted and they explored the intimacies of each other’s mouths with their tongues until they were both breathing hard. She sighed in disappointment at the loss of contact when he suddenly pulled back from her.

“Stop the music,” he ordered huskily, “or it’s going to lead us straight to the bedroom.”

With shaky legs, Molly walked over to her phone and turned off the music. The sudden stillness lay over them and she looked at Sherlock. His chest rose and fell rapidly, and his eyes were dilated to the extent that she couldn’t even detect their normal turquoise depths.

“I guess we had better not listen to that song again until our wedding day,” she said, returning to put her hands around his waist, holding him for support as she tried to force her legs to stop their trembling. She laid her head against his chest, feeling his heart beat thrumming.

Sherlock kissed her hair and held his arms around her once again. “Agreed.”

The minutes ticked by and they stood unmoving, waiting for their breathing to return to normal, for their mutual desire to return to the smouldering embers that always existed between them, which ignited into flame when they kissed.

Finally, Molly’s legs stopped trembling and she felt recovered enough to suggest, “Why don’t we sit down now?”

“I’d ask you to sit on my lap in my chair, but it would only lead to me requiring yet another cold shower,” he commented, making her blush at the thought.

So they sat together on the sofa and Molly turned on the television. She flipped through the channels, finding nothing of interest, then suggested, “We could watch Netflix? We never did watch any more episodes of ‘The Crown.’”

Sherlock settled his arm around her shoulders. “I have to concede that I’ve already deleted the first episode from my mind palace. I think I’m just not good with episodic television. If you wish to watch it, go ahead. I would much rather be watching you.”

Molly sighed happily at the feeling of his encircling arm. “No, it’s okay. I’ve kind of lost interest too. I can always watch it by myself anyway. I was just trying to find some sort of distraction.”

“It is an immense burden to require distraction from ourselves,” grumbled Sherlock.

“Oh, we could look online for places that sell reading glasses,” suggested Molly. “I noticed you
were having a little trouble reading the fine print on those instructions.”

He grimaced. “You saw that, did you? I suppose I should make it a priority to buy those reading glasses. And you should increase your default font on your phone too.”

“What, so you can sneak into it again? I think I’ll leave it the way it is, so it will be a deterrent for you.”

“No fair, Molly,” he pouted. “I only went into it to get those contact numbers.”

“I know, and I’m teasing. I keep thinking though that I do need a larger screen when it comes to reading and responding to emails or shopping online.”

“Well, that should provide an effective distraction. Let’s look online now for something for you. Do you want an iPad or a laptop, or both?”

“I think both would be overkill, honey. I’m thinking an iPad would be good. That way I can use the FaceTime app on the larger screen next time we are apart. That tiny phone screen didn’t do you justice.”

“I’m not planning to be apart from you again anytime soon, but an iPad it is.”

Sherlock procured his laptop from his desk and balanced it on his knees, tapping away on the keyboard.

“Now that you have a desk, couldn’t you be using your laptop on it?” suggested Molly helpfully.

“Sweetheart, I just took it off the desk to use it. In case you hadn’t noticed, I don’t have a chair to sit on.”

“I can’t believe I didn’t notice that.”

“Maybe you need glasses too, love.” It was Sherlock’s turn to tease her.

“Hey, you’re just as bad for forgetting to buy a chair for the desk.”

“I know, I’m an idiot.”

Molly leaned over to kiss his cheek, making sure she didn’t dislodge the laptop from his knees.

“Never, my love. You’re the sweetest, most wonderful man in the world.”

“You told me not to put you on a pedestal, sweetheart. Don’t you put me there either. I don’t deserve it.”

“I never said you were perfect, but you are pretty close these days,” grinned Molly.

He stopped tapping on his keyboard to look at her with a serious expression on his face. “If I am, it’s because you make me want to be a better man, so I try harder.”

“What about pleasing God?”

“Well that’s a side benefit. He gave me you, therefore pleasing you also pleases God, right?”

“Irrefutable logic, honey.”

Molly would have kissed his cheek again, but Sherlock shifted his face slightly so she kissed his
mouth and their lips lingered for a few moments. She pulled back before they could get carried away.

“How’s the search for an iPad going?” She gestured at the screen.

“You just need to tell me what size you want - the 12.9 inch or 10.5?”

“I’d love the big one, but it’s kind of expensive.”

“Don’t worry about cost. I can afford it. Don’t forget I’m rather flush with money right now, thanks to my brother.”

“Well, alright then. Thank you. I’ll take the big one.”

“Okay.” Sherlock tapped a few more keys. “Done. One iPad Pro with 128GB of storage should be arriving Wednesday. Amazon Prime to the rescue, as usual.”

Molly clapped her hands. “I can’t wait! Now you have to look up reading glasses.”

He groaned. “Do I really have to?”

“Yes,” said Molly firmly. “Look up the best place to get them, and take John with you to give his opinion.”

“But we were going to look for a case to do together.”

“What if you have a case where you need to see tiny print on something?”

“I do have a magnifying glass you know, Molly.”

“Sherlock!”

“Fine, fine.” He tapped on his keyboard again. “There’s an article by the Daily Mail about buying cheap reading glasses.” He scanned the article then said, “According to this, the best ratings for reading glasses are at T K Maxx.”

He searched for the closest location. “Okay, there’s one in Charing Cross. I’ll take a taxi there tomorrow. I don’t think I’ll have John go with me, because I’d rather go in the early afternoon. I’m sure I can get some impartial opinions from a store clerk.”

“Fine,” huffed Molly. “Those female sales clerks had better not try and steal you from me when you put on those sexy glasses.”

“Well, at least if the glasses are a hit with the ladies, they will probably be a hit with you, which is all I care about. Now will you quit nagging me, woman?” he growled, closing his laptop.

“I don’t nag, I respectfully request,” she said, grinning.

Sherlock put his laptop on on the new desk then took Molly in his arms. “I think I’m ready for another few minutes of kissing now.”

Molly was only too happy to comply, thrusting her hands into his ebony curls as usual. Oh how she loved his hair. For once, Sherlock did the sane, threading his fingers through her hair so he could clasp the back of her head and keep her lips firmly pressed against his.

A little sigh of pleasure escaped her lips.
Sherlock immediately drew away a little. “God, Molly, you need to stop doing that.”

Molly gave him a puzzled look. “Doing what?”

“Those damned sighs and gasps of pleasure you make when we are kissing.”

“I can’t help it, Sherlock. Your lips always feel incredible.”

“I feel the same way,” he said in his deep voice. “But I am learning that is our signal to pause before we carry things too far.”

Molly nodded. “I need to go take a shower anyway and get ready for bed.”

“Would you like me to make us some tea?”

“That would be lovely, thank you, darling.” After a chaste kiss, Molly went to the bedroom to grab nightwear, then headed into the shower.

When she came out, having used the black currant vanilla body wash for a change, and went into the kitchen, Sherlock sniffed the air appreciatively. “You smell good enough to eat.”

Molly had to laugh, because he was actually holding the container of ginger nuts she had made, and snacking on them.

“Have you been eating those since I left for my shower? There don’t seem to be too many left.” She raised an eyebrow.

“I haven’t eaten any for days. I’m catching up.”

“You have an answer for everything!”

“Mhm,” he mumbled through a mouthful of biscuit.

Molly picked up her tea and sipped it. “Hurry up and take your shower. I need to get to bed soon.”

“Mhm,” he mumbled again, grabbing yet another ginger nut before he departed for the shower.

Molly immediately hurried into the bedroom to write a few lines in her diary. It had been over a week since she had last written in it, and rather an eventful one at that.

As soon as she had finished writing, Molly remembered her mum was coming for dinner on Tuesday and she needed to make sure she had the ingredients for her fettuccine Alfredo.

Grabbing a blank piece of notepaper from her pad with the wedding to-do list that now was housed in a drawer in the kitchen, she made a shopping list for the needed items. Hopefully Sherlock could make a trip to the supermarket for those things.

When Sherlock re-entered the kitchen a short time later, she handed him the list.

“Sherlock, would you mind picking up a few things for me from the supermarket tomorrow? I need some stuff so I can make fettuccine Alfredo on Tuesday when my mum comes over.”

He looked at the list briefly, then nodded. “I’ll take a little walk in the morning.”

“Thanks, honey.” She put her empty cup in the sink. “I’m off to bed. I want to read my Bible for a bit before I sleep.”
“Okay, I’ll finish my tea and wash these few dishes, then I’ll be in too.”

Molly marvelled at his words. It was still amazing to see him take pride in keeping the kitchen neat, after the way he had been before, with half-finished experiments on the table, as well as beakers and test tubes littering it. She knew he regretted the loss of his microscope, though.

Slipping under the duvet, Molly took up her Bible. Before she continued her reading in 1 Samuel, she thought for a moment about the microscope Sherlock had lost. An idea occurred to her. She would need to speak to Mrs. Hudson about it though. It would be a wonderful wedding gift for Sherlock if all went well. She would ask the landlady on Saturday, during their spa day.

She started to read, and a few minutes later was joined by the man she loved.

He took out his Bible as well, turning to where he had left off. Molly noted that he was well ahead of her, more than halfway through 2 Samuel.

“How fortuitous I got you the large print version,” she commented.

“This is large print? It doesn’t seem so to me.”

Molly showed him her Bible for comparison. Her text font was significantly smaller. Plus the Bible itself was noticeably smaller than his.

“Okay, I thought it was just bigger because of all the pictures,” he commented. Then he added, “So that’s why mine is easier for me to read than yours was. Now it makes sense.”

They read in silence for some time, until Sherlock closed his Bible. “Well, that’s Samuel finished. The Old Testament is definitely harder to read. So much slaughter.” He replaced his Bible on his bedside table and Molly closed hers as well. She still had a few chapters to go, but she knew what Sherlock was saying. It was very heavy reading.

Placing her Bible on her nightstand, Molly turned off the lamp and turned to him. She could just make out his face in the dim light afforded by the glow of the digital alarm clock.

She wiggled closer to the centre of the bed, and he did the same, until their bodies were pressed together. She could feel the warmth of his chest through the satin fabric of her chemise, and a feeling of contentment spread over her. His left hand took her right hand and held it against his chest. They kissed in the semi-darkness, then slept.

Chapter End Notes

I did the research on reading glasses. It was interesting to read about T K Maxx when we have T J Maxx in America. Also, I myself have the 12.9” iPad. It is a Godsend with my limited vision!

What did you think of that dance between Sherlock and Molly? I really love "A Thousand Years." If it had been released before my wedding, I would have wanted to use it at the reception.

So Molly has something to ask Mrs. Hudson about. Can you think of what it might be?
Sherlock decides to wear his new jeans, then goes to buy reading glasses.

When the alarm went off at six, Sherlock was tempted to slap the snooze button, but he turned it off instead, knowing Molly needed to get up for work. Surprisingly, she had not heard the alarm, so he brushed her lips with his and whispered, "Good morning, sweetheart. Rise and shine."

Her response was to clasp her hand to his neck and draw him in for a longer kiss. Then she said, "I’m not going to see you till later in the evening, what with going shoe shopping and all. I needed a better kiss than that first one."

"In that case I need a better one than the last kiss."

He cradled her head with one hand and slipped his other arm around her waist, pulling her closer, then gave her an intense kiss that lasted almost as long as if he’d pressed the snooze button.

When he finally released her, Molly said breathlessly, "Well, that should keep me going for a few hours."

Sherlock chuckled. "Perhaps I'll stop by your work once I get my reading glasses and we can have a top up."

"Oh, that sounds like a very good idea. If you show me in a public place, I will be less likely to get carried away when kissing you."

Her fiancé chuckled again. "Molly Hooper, you are too much."

She poked out her tongue at him.

"Sassy too," he commented, before saying, "I'll get you some breakfast while you get dressed."

Sherlock got up, slipped on a dressing gown and went to the kitchen. He turned on the kettle and put bread in the toaster, noting they were out of crumpets. He could pick those up at the supermarket, when he got the other ingredients for Molly’s special dinner. He saw that the flowers he had given Molly had wilted, and threw them away in the rubbish bin. Perhaps he’d pick up some more for her to replace the wilted ones.

He had just made coffee and put butter and jam on the table when Molly came in. She had already put her hair up in a ponytail for work and applied a little makeup, so was obviously ready for work.

"Thank you, honey," she told him, putting butter and jam on her toast and sipping her coffee. Sherlock joined her.

After breakfast, the couple indulged in a few more minutes of kissing before Molly had to leave.
As soon as she left, Sherlock took out his phone. He knew Molly would be working with Kaitlyn today, and he wanted to find out if she had been able to get the body washes while she was in America. He still had Kaitlyn’s phone number from when he had called her about being with Molly on her special “Say Yes to the Dress” day. He sent off a text.

“Hi Kaitlyn. It’s Sherlock. Were you able to get those items I asked for?”

A short while later, his phone pinged with her response. “Got some stuff. I should talk with you about it. How are you going to collect them?”

He texted back, “I’ll be stopping by the hospital some time in the afternoon to see Molly. Keep an eye out for me, and I’ll try to attract your attention before she sees me.”

“Will do,” was the response.

That accomplished, Sherlock took the piece of paper with Molly’s shopping list. He added “crumpets” and “flowers”. He added a few more staples to the list as well.

He returned to the bedroom to get dressed. He spied his new jeans that he had still not been game to wear in public. Well, if he had to buy reading glasses, why not try a new style as well and see what Molly thought of it? He pulled on the jeans. They felt strange. Sherlock decided his usual suit jacket would not go with the jeans, so he just put on a navy blue shirt, leaving the top button open as usual. Then he decided to walk to the supermarket. It would be easy enough to carry the groceries home.

He suddenly remembered the cheques he had to deposit and retrieved them from the coffee table, before putting the shopping list into his pocket.

Then, Sherlock put on his Belstaff but didn’t bother with his scarf. Idly, he reflected that even his beloved coat would soon be unnecessary during the day as the weather continued to get warmer. He set out for the supermarket at a brisk pace.

After a quick stop at the bank, he walked to the supermarket and got everything on the shopping list, then found a single rosebud for Molly. He returned home with the items. It was amazing how the bags seemed to get heavier as he walked, he thought ruefully.

Back in the flat, Sherlock cleaned out the vase properly and put in fresh water, then added the rosebud. He put it in the centre of the kitchen table.

The groceries were put away and Sherlock looked around at the tidy kitchen. It still amazed him how different it looked these days. It was as if the explosion that destroyed all his scientific implements had been the catalyst for him to discontinue leaving stuff lying around. It was a bit like going from a child to a man, and accepting the responsibilities that went along with it.

Sherlock knew his desire to be a husband and father had wrought a lot of those changes. Then of course, there was his heart change when he became a Christian. Sharing faith together was the single biggest thing that bonded Molly and himself even more. He felt his spiritual nature was growing at the same rate as his relationship with her.

Sherlock went to his desk and picked up his laptop, then sat in his leather chair with the laptop on his knees. First things first, he thought. He went straight to his go-to site, Amazon, of course. There was a very nice looking office chair with arms that he thought would work well - adjustable height, reclining seat, on wheels and it was Prime eligible, so he could have it by Wednesday. Well pleased, he purchased the chair. Another task accomplished.
He went through emails, deleting spam and ads, then read requests for help. Sherlock flagged a couple potential cases to show John later.

For lunch, he debated whether to make something, or buy something. He remembered then that he was planning on buying chips for dinner, so decided he would just have a simple lunch of a sandwich.

Afterwards, Sherlock shot off a quick text to Molly.

“Hi, love. Shopping all done. Bought an office chair. Off to TK Maxx now”

He didn’t get a response immediately, so figured she was busy, probably doing a post-mortem.

Sherlock hailed a cab to take him to Charing Cross. He had almost reached his destination when his text alert for Molly pinged.

“Sorry it took me awhile to reply. Just finished a post-mortem. It took longer than expected so I haven’t even had lunch yet. Don’t forget to stop in and show me those reading glasses. Love you XX”

“Love you too,” he texted back quickly before alighting from the taxi.

Inside the store, Sherlock located the department with all kinds of sunglasses as well as reading glasses. He was a little daunted by the choices, so opted to find a sales clerk. A young employee saw him hovering around the display racks and offered her assistance.

“I am looking for reading glasses,” he explained. “I am not sure of the magnification I require.”

“We usually recommend you don’t start with more than a 2x magnification if it is your first pair, as it may cause eye strain,” she told him. “What kind of price range are you looking at? We have everything from simple to designer frames.”

“I would prefer not to go over £30. I am not interested in designer frames, just efficiency.” Then he added, “And not too ridiculous looking.”

“We have quite a number of frames that would fit your criteria. Let me pull a few for you to try on. What magnification were you looking for?”

“I suppose the 2x would be good.”

The sales clerk walked around the display, picking up several potential frames, then returned. “If you want to take a seat here,” she indicated a nearby desk, “you can try on the frames and inspect them in a mirror.”

“Very well,” agreed Sherlock. He took the proffered frames and tried them on one by one. Two did not fit correctly over the bridge of his nose. Another was too wide on his face. Still another was not comfortable behind his ears. Two, however seemed perfectly acceptable. They were both black frames that weren’t too thick. One was slightly more oval shaped in the lens, the other more rectangular.

Sherlock called over the clerk, who was busy putting some sunglasses on display.

“Excuse me,” he said. “Could I have your opinion on which of these to choose?”

“Of course,” said the woman agreeably. He observed that she seemed a little too anxious to please.
He tried on the oval-shaped pair, followed by the rectangular pair. He noted a glint in her eye as she said, “Definitely the second pair. I know this might be a little forward of me, but could I give you my telephone number?”

Sherlock looked at her in surprise. Was she asking him out? “I’m sorry,” he said. “I’m getting married in a few weeks.”

“Damn,” she muttered, “the good ones are always taken.” Then she said, “Well, I’m sure your fiancée will really like you in those glasses. It gives you a studious, yet sexy look.”

“Thank you,” he chuckled. That was exactly what he wanted. He purchased the glasses and made his way via taxi once again to the hospital.

Sherlock went upstairs to the lab. He was in luck. Molly was not there, but Kaitlyn was.

“Hi Sherlock,” she said, in her usual exuberant manner. “Your timing is perfect. Molly just went downstairs to the canteen a few minutes ago for a late lunch. She had a lengthy post-mortem to do, then an immediate report was due for it.”

“Excellent,” responded the sleuth. “So, were you able to obtain the items I requested?”

“I’m so sorry, Sherlock. I went to Bath and Body Works and looked for them and couldn’t find them. When I asked about it, I found out both of those, the jasmine vanilla and the black currant vanilla, had been discontinued.”

Sherlock groaned. “And I thought I was being so clever to have you buy some for me.”

“Well, I hope you don’t mind me doing this, but I didn’t want to return home empty handed. I found a new one called vanilla and patchouli. It’s not quite the same obviously, but I thought it had a similar scent, because of the vanilla. I brought them to the hospital for you. I got two each of the body lotion and the nourishing body oil, and four of the body wash. I figured she would go through the body wash fastest. They had a sale of buy 2, get 2 free, so it was a good deal. I got it all for about the £100 you gave me.”

“Sounds like you got me quite the bargain,” he commented.

“I did. Let me get them from my locker.” She was about to leave the lab, when she suddenly stopped in her tracks. “You look different.”

“Yeah, I left my coat at home.”

“No, it’s not that. You aren’t wearing your usual suit jacket either.” Then her eyes widened. “Oh, my God. Are you wearing - jeans?” She made a fanning motion with her hands. “Be still, my beating heart.”

“You had better not say that in front of David,” commented Sherlock. Secretly though he was a little flattered. If Kaitlyn liked his ensemble, hopefully Molly would too.

“Hey, I love David, but I can recognize a hot body when I see one.”

“Don’t let Molly hear you say that. She might decide you shouldn’t be her maid of honour.”

The blonde giggled. “She knows I think of you more like a big brother these days. Besides, not to be rude or anything, you’re a bit long in the tooth for me.”
“Wow, you sure know how to deflate a man’s ego,” grumbled Sherlock. He wasn’t really offended though. Kaitlyn was a very sweet girl and if he had a sister, she’d be the kind he would like. Then he remembered, he did have one, who happened to be a psychotic killer.

“Anyway, I’ll be right back - bro,” chirped Kaitlyn before leaving the lab.

Sherlock chuckled. She was quite a character.

A few minutes later, she returned with a paper bag that had the Bath and Body Works logo on it. She pulled out an identical type of bottle to the ones Molly already owned and said, “Here, have a sniff.”

Sherlock took the proffered bottle and gingerly unscrewed the cap. He sniffed the liquid inside.

“I really like it,” he pronounced. “Like you said, it’s not quite the same, but I like it just as well, so hopefully Molly will too.”

“Oh, I’m sure she will like it if you do,” grinned the blonde impishly. “As a matter of fact, I bought some of the stuff myself and I plan on having David use the body oil on me. You should use it on Molly. Who knows what will happen? Women like a good massage,” she said wickedly.

“Kaitlyn, I am well aware you have a little bet going on with my fiancée. I’m warning you, it will be you paying up on our wedding day.”

“Yeah, I’m a little disappointed in you two. I was hoping I’d win it while I was away.”

Sherlock laughed out loud. Kaitlyn was a lot of fun.

“Would you hold onto the bag for me? I want to wait here for Molly, surprise her when she gets back. I’ll grab the bag when I leave. Are you sure I don’t owe you anything?”

“Nope. With the exchange rate, I am pretty sure I should be giving you some money back.”

“No need for that. I appreciate what you did for me.”

“You’re quite welcome. I’m going to go do some other stuff. I have a few other people I can check in on who could use my help. So I’ll give you a little privacy, just in case you need it.”

She gave Sherlock another broad wink, and he chuckled as she left the lab with the paper bag.

He had a sudden thought. Why not turn off the main light, and then he would surprise Molly when she came in to see him waiting?

Sherlock went to the overhead light and turned it off, then sat in his customary spot by one of the microscopes. He recalled that night, a lifetime ago, when he had waited for Molly in the darkness, assuring her that she counted and how much he trusted her. He’d needed her help, and she had willingly given it to him. He’d been so desperate to find a way to escape the web that Moriarty had trapped him in. If it hadn’t been for Molly, who knew what would have happened? Thank God those years were behind him. In hindsight he could see the hand of God in his life even then, before he had believed, when he had foolishly denied His existence. Even then, God had led him to the only solution to his predicament.

Sherlock pulled his reading glasses out of his pocket. He wanted to put them on only when Molly entered. Reading glasses were good to help with reading fine print, but they made everything else blurry. He would put them on for long enough that his fiancée could take a good look, then remove
them again.

It wasn’t long before Sherlock heard footsteps approaching the lab, Molly’s.

Chapter End Notes

Ah, reading glasses, most of us need them as we get older.

Did you enjoy the scene at the department store? How did you enjoy Sherlock's conversation with Kaitlyn?

Don't you think Sherlock would look hot in jeans? (ok, let's face it, he would look hot in a potato sack!)
Chapter Summary

Molly and Sherlock have an interesting conversation about their upcoming honeymoon. Molly, Kaitlyn and Kayla go shoe shopping and have a serious conversation.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Molly opened the door to the lab. “Why are the lights off?” she muttered, “And where is Kaitlyn?”

Even as she reached to turn on the overhead light, a very sexy male voice said, “Did somebody call for a slightly long-in-the-tooth consulting detective who needs reading glasses?” She had let out a little gasp when she heard his voice, and she turned the light on just in time to see her gorgeous fiancé perch a pair of reading glasses on his nose.

Molly paused for a moment, drinking in the sight. The glasses made his eyes look huge, but he looked very studious and sexy wearing them.

She began to walk towards him. “Sherlock! What are you doing here? I was expecting a text first, not for you to just turn up out of the blue.”

“Why, Molly? Can’t I just come and visit you whenever I feel like it?” Then he added with mock suspicion in his voice, “You aren’t hiding any other fiancés around here, are you?”

She giggled at his nonsense. “Silly man.”

She came around to the other side of the laboratory bench, to where Sherlock was sitting and stopped short when she saw what he was wearing.

“Oh my gosh, I think I’m about to faint. You have no idea how unbelievably hot I’m finding you right now. Those jeans…” She gulped. “You fill them out very nicely.”

Sherlock slid off the stool and closed the remaining distance between them, saying silkily, “Is that so, Molly Hooper?” Then he pulled the glasses off his face and dropped them on the bench. Molly sighed a little in disappointment.

“I’m sorry, love. Those glasses might be good for reading, but I’ll be damned if I’m going to wear them at the expense of being able to see you clearly,” he explained. He slid his arms around her waist, underneath her open lab coat. “I missed you today.”

Then his lips were on hers, and Molly put her hands around his neck, locking her fingers together. There was something a little naughty about them kissing this way when she should be working. She still had an hour left of her shift.

She couldn’t help but press herself even closer against him. Sherlock wearing those jeans - Why did that make him even hotter than usual? she thought dazedly as he continued to kiss her with long drawn out kisses that muddled her mind. He let out a groan against her mouth and her breath
hitched.

Public place, her foggy brain told her. Kaitlyn could come in at any moment. You are still at work.

“Sherlock!” she finally gasped into his lips.

He broke the kiss immediately, and she released her hold on his neck so he could take a step backwards.

His breathing was uneven, ragged as hers was. She saw him reach to tug at his suit jacket, which he wasn’t wearing, then drop his hands. “How is it you are able to drive me wild, even when you are wearing a bloody lab coat?” he asked huskily. “And dammit, these jeans are uncomfortably tight.” He shifted as he spoke and winced.

Molly’s eyes widened, and she blushed. “Sorry, sorry. Maybe you should wait a few weeks before you wear those jeans again, like when we are on our honeymoon.”

“Probably a good idea,” he agreed.

“I could always borrow a lab coat to bring along on the honeymoon,” she suggested impishly.

“Quit saying stuff like that, woman. For a good girl, you certainly like to be a naughty one.”

Molly held up her hands in protest. “I said I’d bring it on our honeymoon. Once we are married, we’re allowed to do all those naughty things.”

“But you are torturing me by talking about them when the wedding is still weeks away,” he growled.

“I have to give you something to look forward to.”

“Oh believe me, there is a LOT I am looking forward to, and that goes without you saying anything suggestive.”

“All I said was I’d bring a lab coat,” she pointed out reasonably, reaching to brush a tiny kiss against his lips.

“I think I shall have to refer to you as my very naughty angel from now on. Isn’t that the title of one of your Barbara Cartland romances?”

“It is. I really like that one. All those stories of arranged marriages where the heroine falls in love with the man she marries, sooooooo romantic,” she gushed.

“Personally, I prefer to choose my own bride and marry for love, you know, kind of the way I’m doing with you,” he said with a chuckle.

“Well of course, but romantic fiction is so much fun. I think you would make a fine Lord, or a Marquis, or a Duke. You could be on the cover of one of those novels, you know.”

“Perhaps then I should retire from being a detective and take up modelling,” he said gravely.

“Oh no you don’t. You get enough fame as a detective. I don’t want even more women making eyes at you.”

“Funny you should say that. The clerk at T K Maxx asked for my number.”
Molly frowned at that.

Sherlock placed his thumb on the frown lines, smoothing them away. “Don’t worry, darling, I told her I’m getting married soon. You know I have eyes only for you.”

She smiled at him. “I’m glad to hear it. And now I really need to get back to work. Are you heading home?”

“John’s only coming at five. Can I hang around? Check out some things in the microscope?” She saw him looking longingly at the piece of scientific equipment.

You know you have carte blanche here, Mike Stamford’s orders. Still don’t know how you wrangled that one.”

“I had a hand in getting him and his wife together.”

“Really? You’ll have to tell me about that sometime.”

Sherlock nodded.

“Do you want to check out some pathology slides just for fun?” asked Molly.

“I’d like that. I haven’t touched a microscope since the explosion which destroyed mine. Since we’ve been engaged I haven’t required the use of one either.”

“Alright then. I have some slides you can give your opinion on. I’ve already done the report on them, but just didn’t get around to filing them away, because somebody distracted me when I got back from my lunch break.” A pointed look. “Where is Kaitlyn anyway?”

She wasn’t really expecting an answer, but Sherlock responded. “She said she had some other places to go where she could offer help. She’s quite amusing, you know. Still sure she’s going to win that bet.”

Molly placed the labelled slides in front of him, and he eagerly went to work, examining them.

She attended to other tasks, signing off on a couple reports including the one from the post-mortem she had finished earlier.

At ten minutes to four, she started tidying up. Sherlock looked up from the microscope.

“Definitely cancer cells,” he pronounced, indicating the slide he was looking at.

“Yup. Too many of these tests end up indicating cancer.”

“Well, love, thanks for giving me something to occupy my time with while you finished work.”

Molly smiled up at him, then took the slides and put them away.

She headed for the locker room to stow her lab coat and retrieve her hand bag. Sherlock followed.

When she turned from her locker, he held her to him and gave her a swift kiss. “I’ll miss you tonight,” he told her. “Have fun, but not too much. Don’t overdo the cocktails this time.”

Molly gave his arm a light punch. “Be glad that wasn’t one of my infamous slaps,” she told him. “Don’t worry, no more than two drinks, I have work tomorrow, you know.”
Kaitlyn entered the locker room at that moment.

“Well, I need to go to the loo and freshen up,” Molly told her fiancé.

“Ok, sweetheart. I’ll see you later tonight.” He gave her another kiss before she left the locker room.

“I’ll just grab my stuff and meet you in the loo,” Kaitlyn told her.

In the women’s toilets, Molly reapplied her lipstick and neated her ponytail.

Kaitlyn came in a few minutes later and did the same. Then the women headed downstairs to meet up with Kayla.

Kayla was already waiting in the lobby when the pair arrived downstairs. The three hailed a taxi and headed for Westfield, where Kaitlyn knew of a shop that specialized in bridal shoes and the dying of same to match dresses.

“Oh,” exclaimed Kaitlyn. “When I got back from America there was a message on the answering machine to say my dress came in. Did you get a call too, Kayla?”

Kayla had been unusually silent during the taxi ride. She was always rather quiet, but today she looked especially tired and disinclined to talk. Molly wondered what had transpired after John had taken her home last night.

“What was that?” Kayla said, blinking to apparently focus on what Kaitlyn had said. “Oh yes, I got a call too. We should definitely pick up the dresses while we are here. If we do that first, we can have them at the shoe store to see about matching the colour for our shoes.”

“Oh, perfect timing,” bubbled Kaitlyn.

At the huge mall, the girls immediately headed for the bridal boutique to collect the dresses. Then they headed to the shoe shop.

Inside the shop, the three women inspected the different bridal shoes and dyeable satin ones. There were open and closed toe shoes, court shoes, wedge ones. Some had a buckle, others didn’t.

Molly tried on a couple of styles and settled on a satin crossover closed toe court shoe. The heel would afford her a little extra height to make up the significant height difference between Sherlock and herself.

Kaitlyn and Kayla chose matching satin dyeable closed toe court shoes.

Molly was able to buy hers immediately, while her friends would have to wait a week for theirs to be ready. They had showed their dress colour and the sales clerk had found a dye colour sample that was almost an exact match.

Once outside the shop, Kaitlyn said, “Let’s go to Victoria’s Secret. I think you need some lingerie for your honeymoon - or before, if you don’t want to wait that long.” She winked and Molly blushed, while Kayla smiled, her first one for the day, Molly noted.

Obediently, Molly and Kayla followed the blonde to the store. Kaitlyn had obviously been there before because she knew its location, and also exactly where to go once they got inside.

“So,” said Kaitlyn once they were in the lingerie section, “What kind of lingerie do you think your
fiancé would like?”

“I have no idea,” answered Molly honestly. “It’s not like we’ve discussed it.”

“Perhaps you should,” smirked her friend.

Molly noticed Kayla standing a little apart from them. She looked close to tears.

“Kayla, what’s wrong?” she asked with concern.

“It’s nothing. Well, it’s something, but we can talk about it later. Come on, we need to find you some nice lingerie - for your honeymoon.” She gave Kaitlyn a pointed look.

Together, the girls looked at various items. Molly finally decided to purchase three different types of lingerie - teddy, a babydoll and a corset, all in white.

“They sure are pretty,” commented Kayla with a note of envy in her voice.

Kaitlyn didn’t hesitate to confide, “David just loves it when I wear a corset for him. Lingerie is so much fun, even if it doesn’t stay on for long.” She winked at the two virgins who both blushed. Kaitlyn was too funny and completely without modesty.

“How is it I’m like ten years younger than you two, yet I’m the one educating you in lingerie?” she asked with a giggle.

Molly just shook her head at her incorrigible friend and went to pay for her items. The white corset would work under her wedding dress, so that was another thing accomplished in regards to the wedding.

They left the store and headed to an indoor café to eat dinner. Molly wasn’t very hungry, having had such a late lunch, so she chose just a sandwich. Her friends had sandwiches as well as salads.

Molly saw again that Kayla was not looking at all happy. She barely contributed to the conversation. Her friend obviously needed to talk.

“Why don’t we head to that cocktail bar we went to last time?” she suggested. “We could just have a drink or two and then go home.” Fixing her gaze on Kayla she added, “You need to open up about what is going on.”

Kayla flushed and nodded.

The three women left the café and headed for the cocktail lounge. Once there, they ordered cocktails, all three opting for strawberry margaritas, then went to sit in a quiet corner booth.

Once the drinks were served, Molly turned to her brunette friend. “Okay, Kayla. You haven’t been yourself today. What is going on? Did something happen with John?” Turning to Kaitlyn, she explained, “Kayla has been seeing John for a couple of weeks.”

“Not anymore,” responded Kayla in a low voice. “He said he doesn’t think we should see each other anymore.”

“What?” Molly was astounded. “You seemed to be getting so close. What on earth happened?”

Kayla blinked back tears. “I don’t really know. He was kissing me goodnight and it was really wonderful. It all felt so right. Then, all of a sudden he said he was sorry, he couldn’t do this anymore, and he left.” Tears spilled down Kayla’s cheeks and Molly felt tears of sympathy gather
in her own eyes.

“I just don’t understand,” continued Kayla brokenly. “Did I do something wrong? Did I scare him off by being too forward, too eager to accept his kiss?”

Kaitlyn spoke up. “That doesn’t make sense. Knowing Molly the way I do, and knowing you and she share the same views on sex and stuff, I think it’s far more likely the opposite is true.”

“What do you mean?” inquired Kayla.

“I think maybe he’s worried he’ll hurt you, or maybe he thinks he might compromise your principles.”

“Wow, that makes total sense,” agreed Molly, marvelling at her friend’s shrewd interpretation of the situation.

Kayla wiped away her tears. “If that’s true, there’s nothing I can do about it anyway. I might as well just resign myself to being alone for the rest of my life.”

“Don’t give up on him, Kayla,” urged Molly. “Let me just send a text to Sherlock.”

Molly pulled out her phone and wrote, "Find out what happened between John and Kayla last night.” She sent off the text, then explained. “John should be over there now.” To Kaitlyn she added, “They made plans last night for him to come over, when I said I’d be out.”

“Molly,” said Kayla, "you should just leave things be. I mean, if it was meant to be, things would work out. Obviously it isn’t.”

The women sat in silence for awhile, drinking their margaritas. When the mixologist came over, seeing they were finished, they each ordered another.

Kaitlyn broke the silence. “If you ask me, love is worth fighting for. David and I have been together for over two years. We’ve had our rows at time, but they never last long and we are committed to one another.”

“That’s right,” agreed Molly. “Just look at Sherlock and me. It took me seven years to be with him. Even when I was engaged to Tom, I still knew in my heart that Sherlock was the one I wanted. I believed we were soulmates, even when he didn’t.”

“it’s not the same, though,” Kayla pointed out. "You and Sherlock have a long history to fall back on. I...I can’t wait seven years to make someone realize they want to be with me. I want to have a family of my own and I’m starting to think it’s just not in my future.”

“I don’t believe that for a minute,” Molly told her friend stubbornly. “I’ve seen the way you look at each other. There’s a spark, a connection. Besides, Rosie adores you. God’s hand is in this somewhere. Don’t give up hope.”

Her text alert from Sherlock sounded and she glanced at it. “Will do,” was the response.

“Sherlock will get it out of John anyway, I’m sure,” she said confidently.

Kayla looked slightly more hopeful. “I just want John to be happy. He deserves it, after what he has been through with his wife dying and all. If it isn’t supposed to be with me, I’ll just have to accept that, I just hope he doesn’t have to be alone for the rest of his life.”
“You and Molly are damned saints, so selfless,” said Kaitlyn, shaking her head.

“That’s what being a true Christian is about,” pointed out Kayla. “Not about being saints of course, I’m far from that, but I try to be selfless. In church on Sunday, our pastor said to think that true joy comes from using it as an acronym - Jesus, Others, Yourself, which means to put Jesus first, others second, and then yourself.”

Molly nodded. “Yeah, I really like thinking of joy that way.”

Kaitlyn groaned. “Don’t you two start getting all religious on me now.”

Molly laughed. “We’re not. We’re just saying what we believe. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion. I like having the moral compass to go by, even if I fail miserably.”

“That’s rubbish,” Kaitlyn said. “You turned your fiancé from an atheist to a Christian.”

“I just planted the seeds, Kaitlyn. Jesus watered them, and he made his own decision. If Sherlock’s heart hadn’t been soft, open to new things, it would not have been possible.”

“Well, you know I do believe in all that stuff. I’m just not as gung-ho about it”

Even Kayla had to grin at that. “You’re so funny, Kaitlyn.”

The three women sat and chatted for another half an hour as they enjoyed their drinks.

“Oh!” exclaimed Kaitlyn at one point. “I have to show you this song. I heard it last week while I was in America. You just have to play it during your wedding reception. It’s called ‘I Found,’ by Amber Run. It’s sooooo perfect for Sherlock!”

“Really?” asked Molly. “How so?”

“Let me find it on YouTube.”

Kaitlyn pulled out her phone and found the song, then showed it to her two companions. They listened to it, and Kayla said, “That is so pretty!”

“I’ll have to show it Sherlock. If he agrees, we can ask for it to be added to our reception song list.”

“Don’t you think the lyrics are spot on? asked Kaitlyn. “The whole ‘I found love where it wasn’t supposed to be, right in front of me.’ It’s so Sherlock isn’t it?”

“Well it is true I’ve been in front if him for seven years,” laughed Molly. “I’ll show it to him when I get home.”

By the time the women were ready to leave, Molly had a nice fuzzy feeling from the alcohol, but not enough to make her feel as if she was intoxicated. Certainly it was nothing like her intoxication of almost three weeks earlier.

The friends shared a taxi as they had done on the previous occasion. Molly handed Kaitlyn some money before alighting from the cab at Baker Street. “I’ll talk to you soon, Kayla. See you tomorrow Kaitlyn,” she said before closing the door, waving as her friends left in the vehicle.

Molly checked her watch. It was only a little past eight o’clock, but she figured John was probably gone by now,

She unlocked the outer door of 221B and headed upstairs. Before she could reach for the door of
the flat to open it, Sherlock did so.

Chapter End Notes

More hot Sherlock, I know :)

Look up "I Found" on YouTube - or better yet, look up the YouTube Sherlolly video called "Focal Point" which uses the song. That is where I discovered it - it's perfect for Sherlock, and the video is incredibly sweet, along with the voiceover at the end. Tell me what you think about it.

How did you find the conversation between the three women? Did you like it? How do you find Kaitlyn's attitude about faith? Personally, I think a lot of people are like that - they know about the Bible etc. but they don't really KNOW about it. There is a huge difference between head knowledge and heart knowledge.

If you are struggling with what you believe, I recommend you watch "The Case for Christ." It is a movie about Lee Strobel's journey from atheism to Christianity. He approached it as a skeptical journalist, trying to disprove the resurrection, upon which the Christian faith is based and ended up being convinced, based on the historical evidence, that it was the truth.
After Molly left to go freshen up for her outing, Kaitlyn quickly grabbed the Bath and Bodyworks bag and thrust it at Sherlock.

“You had better get out of here fast if you are trying to keep those as a surprise for Molly. I’ll wait a couple extra minutes here to give you a head start,” she said conspiratorially.

“Thanks again,” said Sherlock, and he took his leave. He took a taxi to Joe’s fish shop, bought enough chips to share with John, and walked the few blocks home.

Back home, Sherlock hid the bathroom items at the bottom of his wardrobe and booted up his laptop in preparation for John’s arrival.

Within a few minutes, his friend had arrived with Rosie. Mrs. Hudson had waylaid John in the hallway and was already taking the baby from him.

“Hey!” expostulated Sherlock. “At least let me say hello to my goddaughter before you take her away!”

Mrs. Hudson held Rosie out towards Sherlock, and he gave the baby a kiss on the cheek.

“Now off with you two,” chided his landlady. “You had Rosie all weekend and I barely got a look in, Sherlock. Now it’s my turn.” Then off she went, changing bag and Rosie in hand.

Sherlock preceded his friend upstairs. “I have my laptop already open,” he announced to John.

“Huh? Oh yeah.” Sherlock observed his friend closely. John did not look well at all, he looked as if he hadn’t slept the night before. Perhaps Rosie had had a bad night.

“Well, let’s have our chips first and then we can look at a couple potential cases,” he suggested. “Would you like some tea?”

“Coffee would be better actually. Last night’s insomnia is catching up to me.”

Sherlock looked again at his friend. “May I ask what caused your insomnia?” he said carefully. He was not used to offering a listening ear, it was uncharted territory for him, as a new, more sensitive man.

“No, you may not,” said John, rather curtly.

“Fine, fine,” soothed Sherlock. I’ll go make us coffee and bring in plates for the chips.” He was
almost glad to have been rebuffed. If John was upset about something, what kind of advice could he offer anyway? By John’s tone, it was probably something between Kayla and his friend. Sherlock had no experience with relationships besides his current one which, of course, was going brilliantly.

He smiled to himself as he prepared the coffee. Many men would envy him for having such a special relationship with Molly. He and his fiancée were devoted to one another in a love that was so much more than physical. He knew he could never be tempted to stray from her. Sadly, he knew John had been tempted, and he wanted his friend to find the same love he and Molly shared.

Once the coffees were made, Sherlock brought them into the sitting room, along with the chips and plates.

As they ate, the men discussed neutral topics. John talked about the boring conference, life as a single parent, how his sister Harry was doing. Sherlock talked about the latest things he and Molly had done in preparing for the wedding.

“Oh yeah,” remarked John, "I got your invitation. It’s really nice. But totally unfair you didn’t put your full names on it like I did.”

“You’ll have to blame Mary for that,” said Sherlock, then adding apologetically, “I’m sorry, that didn’t come out right. I mean, she was the one who insisted on putting your full names. Molly and I agreed it wasn’t necessary. Everyone is going to hear my ridiculously long name before our vows, so once is enough.”

Sherlock was pleased to see his friend actually smile at that.

“So, John,” he asked casually, “will you be bringing a guest besides Rosie to the wedding reception? Molly and I will need to know the numbers for the caterer eventually, and I want to save you the trouble of mailing a response to the invitation.”

“Of course I won’t be bringing a guest,” expostulated his friend. “Kayla is already in the wed..” he broke off, adding lamely, “I mean no, no guest.”

Sherlock looked at him shrewdly, but made no comment.

After they were finished with their dinner, Sherlock got his laptop off the desk and showed John the emails he had flagged as potential ones they could do together.

“No murders in the bunch,” commented John.

“You know those usually come through Lestrade, and I think he has been giving me a break, knowing how busy Molly and I have been with wedding planning. We have most of the stuff organized now, though. We see the caterer on Thursday night, then we have to wait for invitation responses. I think I might actually have time to work on more complicated cases while Molly is at work, so I’ll probably give Greg a heads up that I’m available if he needs me.”

“I’m sorry I can’t be your constant companion during cases,” said John sadly. “What with Rosie, and working as the sole breadwinner now, it’s difficult to have time for anything ‘fun.’”

“I miss those days when we were going from one crime to another, yet at the same time I don’t. It’s very strange. I guess my focus has shifted, and doing that work does not consume me as it once did.”

“Well, that’s a good thing, mate. You needed balance in your life, and Molly brings you that.”
“That is true,” agreed Sherlock, nodding. “So which of these cases should we take? The missing person or the missing money? Or the totally boring 2 on my scale cheater which I could probably solve in my sleep, thus most likely can do alone.”

“Hmmm, that’s tricky. Missing money usually means a good reward at the end, but a missing person means more personal reward.”

“Valid points, my friend. Then we shall do the missing person.”

“I knew you’d say that. Even before you became a new man, whether you liked to admit it or not, you were always about finding people and saving lives.”

“I don’t always save them,” said Sherlock sombrely. “It still haunts me I didn’t save that elderly, deaf woman who was rigged to explosives thanks to Moriarty.”

“There was nothing you could have done in that case, Sherlock. She didn’t follow his rules and paid the price.”

“I know that, but I still feel guilt. I was so cocky about solving Moriarty’s puzzle. Perhaps it was my punishment for acting that way.”

Unexpectedly John immediately denounced that theory with, “God doesn’t punish people for making mistakes, you should know that. I have blamed myself in that way about Mary’s death. Although I shifted the blame to you, which was most unfair, I felt in my heart perhaps her death was my punishment for being tempted by another woman.”

Sherlock opened his mouth in surprise. Famous detective though he was, a man who prided himself on observing rather than seeing, he had not expected to hear this. How foolish, to miss the signs of a best friend suffering guilt and blaming himself for Mary’s loss. He had known that John felt guilt about texting that woman, who of course had turned out to be Eurus, but not about John blaming himself for Mary’s death. Sherlock could make one deduction about John’s change of heart about it though - Kayla.

He stored the thought away for later, returning to the matter at hand.

“Anyway, when can we make time for this case? With a missing person involved, I should think some haste is in order. Tomorrow is not good for me, because Molly’s mother is coming for dinner. Would Wednesday suit?”

“Let me check my schedule.” John looked at his phone and consulted what was obviously his personal appointment calendar for the practice. Finally he looked up. “I have several morning appointments, but the afternoon ones are regular check-ups that can be rescheduled. I could be here at one.”

“Perfect,” answered Sherlock. “I’ll just send off an email to this woman, and let her know we shall be arriving before two o’clock on Wednesday.”

He started to type up the response on his laptop, and as he did so, heard Molly’s text alert come in. He stopped typing to read the text.

“Find out what happened between John and Kayla last night.”

He contemplated the text for a couple minutes. It was unlike Molly to send off a text like that, no “love you” at the end, nor a question that needed to be answered, just an order. Obviously something had happened between John and Kayla, as he had half suspected.
He finished typing out his email response and sent it off.

Then he responded to the text with a simple, “Will do.”

“Well,” he said. “Email is sent. I’ll keep an eye out to make sure the time suits for our new client and let you know.”

“I heard your text tone. How’s Molly doing?”

Sherlock took a deep breath and decided to use the golden opportunity to open the conversation about Kayla.

“Molly is fine. I deduce that Kayla is not. John, what happened last night when you took her home?”

John flushed. “I don’t want to talk about it.”

“Please, John,” pressed Sherlock. “You’ve been there for me through all my difficult times. What sort of friend would I be if you could not talk to me in your time of need? Do you want me to deduce what I think has happened?

“Go ahead,” said John faintly. “You’ve always been right about me before.”

“Very well,” said Sherlock. “I observed you did not sleep well last night. There are obvious signs of fatigue around your eyes. You confirmed it by asking for coffee and mentioning insomnia. You did not want to tell me what caused it. Obviously, if Rosie had a restless night, you would have just said it. Therefore I can only assume your insomnia was caused by Kayla.”

He continued. “Your response to my question about bringing a guest to the wedding was also telling. If you hadn’t broken off in the middle of your sentence, I would have thought nothing of it. After all, it is perfectly natural that you would think of Kayla as your guest, but she obviously doesn’t count, as she is already going to be there. Therefore I can only assume that for some incomprehensible reason, you have broken things off with her. Am I correct so far?”

“Aren’t you always?” His friend sighed.

“Shall I deduce why you have ended things with her, or do you want to tell me yourself?”

John sighed again. “You seem to be on a roll, you might as well just go ahead and tell me what I already know. Then you can tell me what a moron I’m being.”

“Alright then. From our conversation we had a short while ago about guilt, and what you told me about it, it is obvious you and Kayla have had some discussions about her faith.”

John nodded mutely at that.

“Furthermore, I deduce that her words have made an impact on you. She is very much like Molly, and I believe you may be feeling inadequate as a boyfriend, or however you wish to define your relationship. You feel, as I did with Molly in the beginning, that you cannot live up to her expectations. You do not wish to hurt her in the future, so you decided it was best to end things before they went any further. Presumably, you have fears for compromising her virtue.”

John stared at him, agog. “I have no idea how you can tell so much from so little information.”

“Well,” admitted Sherlock, “Molly’s text was the final piece of evidence I needed.”
“Whatever do you mean?” inquired John.

“Her text asked me to find out what happened between you and Kayla. Obviously, Kayla is suffering, as you are.”

John broke down then. “You have everything right,” he said, tears coming to his eyes. “She IS too good for me. I had to end it, don’t you see?” He looked pleadingly at Sherlock, as if willing him to understand. “She’s so unbelievably sweet, not at all judgmental about things. I don’t deserve a woman like that. I’d only hurt her in the end.”

“Why do you think you would hurt her? Do you worry you would not be faithful?”

“Oh God,” groaned John, “I’m more worried that I’d ruin her. She’s a virgin, for Christ’s sake. And when I kissed her last night I just felt I’d end up compromising her. She was so...yielding...if you know what I mean. So totally open to my advances. I felt like I could easily seduce her.”

Sherlock furrowed his brow. “Why can you not just talk about that with her? Look at me and Molly. We have thus far managed to avoid temptation...well, for the most part.”

“But you’re engaged, getting married in a few weeks. If you make it to your wedding night without giving in to temptation, you still don’t have much longer to wait.”

“Believe me,” said Sherlock, “Forty days still seems like an eternity to wait, especially after forty years.”

“But at least you know the end is in sight. I’m not like you. I’ve had several sexual partners. I like sex, it feels good.”

“But sex is not love,” pointed out Sherlock. “If Kayla gave you her virginity, it would be because she loves you, I am certain of it. Even though Molly and I have made the mutual decision to wait, due mainly to the faith we share, not everyone makes the same decision. Perhaps you need to examine your feelings in more depth. Is it merely sexual desire you feel for Molly’s friend, or is it more? Does she make you want to be a better man?”

“Mary made me want to be a better man, and I still cheated on her, in a manner of speaking.”

“I cannot tell you what you should do. It must be your decision but, in my opinion, you should not throw something away because you fear what might happen, and certainly you should not make the decision alone, without even talking with Kayla about it.”

“It’s too late for that. I burned my bridges last night,” said John, as tears leaked from his eyes.

“That is preposterous, and you know it. You are miserable, and apparently, so is she.” Sherlock got a tissue and handed it to his friend. “I am no expert on relationships, as you know, I just ask you to consider talking things over with Kayla.”

“Fine, I’ll consider it.” John blew his nose. “I need to get going anyway. I have to at least try and get some sleep tonight. I was rubbish at work today, just on autopilot.”

“I am here if you need me John, just a text away.”

“How the hell can you be this way? So damned supportive.”

“Is it a bad thing?”
“Of course not, but it’s so not the Sherlock I dealt with for almost seven years.”

“The old Sherlock does not exist anymore, John. When I became a Christian, I became a new man. I would hope the way I am now is a vast improvement.”

His friend smiled at last. “It is. I just have to still get used to it. Well, I guess I’ll go now.” He rose from the sofa and Sherlock patted him on the shoulder.

“Think about what I said, John. Good night.”

As John left the flat and walked downstairs to pick up his daughter from Mrs. Hudson’s flat, Sherlock looked thoughtfully after him.

His friend was at a crossroads. He hoped John would take his advice and at least talk with Kayla.

He sat in his chair, still thinking of John's dilemma. A short while later he vaguely heard the sound of the outer door opening. Molly was home, and talking about Kayla with John had made him feel his own fiancée’s absence even more acutely, so he went to the door, opened it, and waited for her.

"I missed you," he whispered, taking her into his arms and kissing her passionately.

Chapter End Notes

How did you find the idea of Sherlock being the one to counsel John? I think it is an important development in his character as a new Christian. Did you like the way Sherlock used his deductive skills?

Do you think John will take Sherlock's advice?

Am I updating this story too fast? I'm sorry this is dragging out so long. I did not intend for it to become such a mammoth length, which is why I'm updating it so quickly. Would you rather read at a slower pace? Is it keeping your interest? Your honest opinions would be most appreciated.
A Solicitous Fiancé - Molly

Chapter Summary

Sherlock looks after Molly when she starts to experience cramps, and a rather embarrassing conversation ensues.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

A Solicitous Fiancé - Molly (italics needed)

As soon as Sherlock started kissing her, Molly dropped her Victoria’s Secret bag and the one containing her shoes. After several minutes of being thoroughly kissed on the threshold, Molly finally broke away just enough to ask, “Are we going to stand in the doorway all night, or are you hoping Mrs. Hudson will pop out of her flat to interrupt us when things get too heated?”

Sherlock chuckled, took her hand and led her inside. He glanced down at the floor, noticing the discarded bags.

“I see you’ve been doing more than shoe shopping,” he observed with a wicked glance at her. “Are you planning on showing me those items in that Victoria’s Secret bag?”

“If I do show you, I won’t be displaying them for you until our honeymoon,” she returned, with a toss of her head.

“Oh, so it IS lingerie you have in there. I very much look forward to seeing it.”

“I should put my things away.”

“Not yet,” he asserted, before locking the door of the flat.

Molly looked at him coquettishly. “You actually locked the door. Guess you aren’t worried about me trying to seduce you in my highly intoxicated state,” adding naughtily, “or by putting on that lingerie for you.”

Sherlock made no answer but led her to the sofa, where he sat, inviting her to take the seat next to him by patting it.

Molly sat obediently, then gave a little gasp, as Sherlock took her in his arms again and kissed her, hard. He teased her mouth open with his questing tongue, flicking it inside to tangle with hers briefly. Her heart began to pound loudly in her chest. He was still wearing those incredibly hot-looking jeans, and that, combined with the slight headiness she felt from the two margaritas was an irresistible combination.

Sherlock moved her as he kissed her until she was lying back on the sofa and he was above her. Wild sensations were flooding her and Sherlock’s breathing was getting ragged, matching her own. His hands gripped her shoulders, and his fingers moved in a massaging motion. Dizzily she thought, “Is this it? Are we really going to do this, right here, right now?” The thought both excited her and terrified her.
And then he stopped, sat up calmly and pulled her back to a sitting position. They were both breathing hard, but the was a glint of mischief in Sherlock's eyes.

“What the hell was that about?” she asked, a little disconcerted.

“Teaching you a lesson, my sweet.”

“I don’t understand?”

“You and your flirting, asking if I’m not worried about you seducing me, and talking about lingerie, little vixen. You shouldn’t tease me with those little sexy looks, because one day I just may not stop.” He licked his lips. “You do taste good though, like strawberry.”

Molly blushed. “I only had two strawberry margaritas. Perhaps I should have stopped at one.”

“Yeah, you don’t hold your liquor as well as I once thought. Plus you said ‘hell’ as well. Not like you to use such language.”

Molly rolled her eyes at that. “Even I slip up sometimes. I’m not proud of it. Especially that day after I examined you, when I said, ‘For Christ’s sake, Sherlock, this is not a game.’ Not one of my best moments, but I was so frightened for you.”

“I don’t remember that too clearly. I suppose I was too high at the time.”

Molly gave an involuntary shiver. “You may not remember it much, but I will never forget it. And the worst part was, I still thought you looked damned hot with that stubble. It made me weak at the knees.”

“There you go with the language again, my love. I think you had better stick to a single cocktail in future.”

“Very funny. So now you are done teaching me a lesson, why don’t you tell me about John and what happened between him and Kayla.”

Sherlock slid his arms around Molly from behind, and she leaned back into his embrace, placing her own arms so her fingers could link atop his.

Sherlock proceeded to tell her about his accurate deduction of his friend.

“Kayla is obviously influencing him,” he remarked. “At one point I told him I still felt guilty about the deaf, elderly woman’s death at the hands of Moriarty. I said I wondered if it was my punishment for being so cocky about solving his puzzle.”

“What elderly woman?”

“It was when you were going out with the bastard.”

“Three times, Sherlock! Three times, and I broke it off as I have told you before,” she huffed in annoyance. "He never even so much as kissed me, although in hindsight that makes sense as he was obviously using me to get to you. At any rate, tell me about the woman."

“Moriarty was rigging people to bombs and challenging me to solve his little puzzles, in order to save them. The old woman went “off script” and he caused the bomb attached to her to explode.”

“Oh, my God, that’s terrible. But it isn’t your fault. Besides, God doesn’t punish us for doing something wrong. We all make mistakes.”
“That is pretty much what John said to me. He obviously got that from Kayla.”

“So, is he going to talk to her?”

“I don’t know. I hope so. He’s my best friend and I hate to see him like this. He’s trying to close himself off from love.”

“Funny, that sounds like someone I used to know.”

Sherlock looked at Molly in surprise. “You’re right. I hadn’t even thought about that. Now I can see why he got so frustrated with my former attitude about love.”

“I feel like we need to pray about this. Would you mind if I prayed for our friends now?”

Sherlock kissed her hair. “My sweet girl. You can pray and I’ll listen.”

“Okay.” Molly closed her eyes and prayed.

“Dear Lord, Please provide your guidance for our friends, John and Kayla. Open John’s heart to love again. Be with them and lead them on the right path. May your will be done, in Jesus’ name, Amen.”

“Amen,” echoed Sherlock, turning his hands, palms up, to grasp hers.

“You’re a good friend, Molly,” he told her.

Molly squeezed his hands, then let out an involuntary groan as she felt a sharp pain inside her.

“Molly, darling, what’s wrong?” asked Sherlock anxiously.

“It’s nothing to be concerned about,” she answered, grunting as another spasm struck her.

“If you’re in pain, I’m concerned,” her fiancé said.

She twisted to look at his face, seeing fear and worry in his eyes.

“Honey, don’t worry about it, it will pass.”

“Tell me what’s wrong,” he demanded.

Molly blushed. *This was going to be embarrassing.* “It’s nothing millions of other women don’t go through every month.”

“Oh.” She saw comprehension then in his eyes. “You mean you are getting, er..” he flushed as well, unable to continue.

“Ugh,” she said, then winced again. “You’re going to have to get used to this happening every month.”

“You get these pains every month? How long do they last?”

“It’s just cramps. I usually get them up to a day or so before my...” she swallowed. *Why was it so hard to say the words, so embarrassing?* She forced herself to continue, “my period. Then it usually comes and goes on the first day. After that, I’m usually fine.”

“How can I help you?”
“I have some Co-codanol in the top drawer of my bedside table. I could use a couple of tablets with a glass of water.”

“I’ll get them right away,” declared Sherlock solicitously. He gently extricated himself from her and stood, then hurried to the bedroom.

He was back in two minutes, tablets and glass of water in hand.

Molly took them from him gratefully and swallowed the tablets, followed by a few sips of water.

“Is there anything else I can do?” Sherlock asked, still looking concerned.

“Actually, a bath would be nice.”

“Is that a good idea? I mean if you’re, you know...bleeding and all...”

Molly had never seen Sherlock look more embarrassed. This was obviously a subject he had never imagined he’d have to contend with.

“It hasn’t started yet,” she told him gently. “I told you, I start getting cramps up to a day early. A bath will help relieve them.”

“Oh, okay.” He still stood there, looking uncertain.

“Sherlock, this is something we will have to deal with together, for a few days each month. And I warn you, at times I get a bit irritable.”

He nodded, then said hopefully, “It won’t happen if you get pregnant right away though, will it?”

“Well that’s usually true. Something to look forward to, I guess.” Then she added, “Are you going to run the bath for me or should I just do it?”

“No, no, I’m going,” said Sherlock, backing away hastily, as if she had a disease.

Molly sighed. Well, that was awkward, she thought. Then she thought again. At least we haven’t needed to have awkward conversations about different methods of birth control.

She got up off the sofa and collected her things for the bath, grabbing a pad for her pants as she did so.

Sherlock came in to the bedroom just then, having started the bath. He saw what Molly was holding and his eyes widened. “Is that...the thing you have to use...for your..p-period?” he stammered and Molly suddenly dissolved into giggles.

“Oh my gosh, Sherlock,” I have never heard you stammer like that,” she chortled, and suddenly, he was laughing as well, and the embarrassment about it all faded away.

Molly inserted the pad into her knickers and he seemed rather fascinated at learning something new.

“Actually, I’m quite grateful for advances in these things,” she remarked to her wide-eyed fiancé.

“What do you mean?” he asked.

“Oh, they are far less bulky than they used to be, just like nappies are a lot thinner these days, and better at trapping wetness. Plus you can get pads with wings.”
“Wings?”

“Yeah, extra bits you turn down around your knickers. And then of course different lengths depending on how heavy the...”

Sherlock stopped her then. “It’s okay, I think I’ve got the picture now. You don’t have to explain.”

Molly grinned at him. He was so totally adorable when he was shy.

He left to turn off the taps in the bathroom and returned to the bedroom. “Is there anything else you need? Help with undressing, for instance?” He darted her a cheeky look.

Molly did not even bother to answer her silly man, just made her way to the bathroom, closing the door behind her.

Sherlock had used an ample amount of the jasmine vanilla body wash/bubble bath and there were plenty of bubbles. She disrobed and sank into the water gratefully. The tablets were already starting to help the niggling pains, and the warm water helped even more. Molly remembered the last time she’d had a bath, after hurting her ankle. She remembered how Sherlock had admitted to seeing her breast, and the remembrance made her blush again. For heaven’s sake, he had seen her breasts, and yet she was embarrassed about talking with him about a perfectly natural part of being a woman.

Sherlock tapped at the door, and she almost said, “Come in,” automatically, but changed it to, “Yes, Sherlock?”

“I was wondering if you’d like a cup of tea?” her sweet fiancé asked. He was so good at looking after her.

“Yes please,” she answered. As she washed her body, Molly thought about Sherlock’s off-hand comment about her getting pregnant. She mentally calculated her cycle up till the wedding. She was usually on a very regular 28 day cycle. Using those numbers she calculated that her best time to conceive would actually occur during their honeymoon. Molly washed her hair, then dipped her head back into the water to rinse it. She applied conditioner and then waited two minutes before turning on the shower taps to rinse out the conditioner. Molly quickly got out of the tub, pulled the plug to let the water out, then hastily put it back in. She should see if Sherlock wanted a bath too.

“Sherlock,” she called.

His voice came clearly through the door. “Yes, love? Your tea’s ready.”

“Do you want me to leave the water in for you to have a bath as well?”

“Alright,” he said, a little hesitantly, and she wondered why.

Molly towelled herself dry and donned her chemise and knickers, then went into the bedroom to borrow a dressing gown.

Surprisingly, Sherlock had placed his blue one on her side of the bed. His own fresh boxers and maroon dressing gown were waiting on the bed also, ready for him to take to the bathroom, and he was standing there in just his boxers. Molly’s heart gave a little leap.

“How did you know I’d want a dressing gown?” she asked.

“You seem to have developed a taste lately for extra long ones,” he said matter-of-factly, “especially my blue one.”
Molly blushed. “I like wearing it. It smells like you...your own body scent, mixed with your aftershave and deodorant. It makes me feel closer to you.”

“Well, I’m right here now,” he said, opening his arms in invitation as she walked into them. He gave her a long, lingering kiss. Molly loved the feeling of his chest pressed up against hers and she resented the satin of her chemise separating them.

Sherlock broke the kiss. “I’d better go have that bath now,” he told her huskily. “Perhaps a cold shower would have been more prudent.”

With those words he left the room, carrying his boxers and dressing gown with him.

Molly put on the dressing gown, then went into the kitchen, where she found her tea. She suddenly remembered the bags still near the front door of the flat, and went to retrieve them, stowing them in the bottom of her side of the wardrobe. By the time she had returned to the kitchen and finished drinking her tea, Sherlock had joined her. His hair was damp and she felt her heartbeat accelerate once again. He was so...beautiful. She knew he didn’t like being called that, but it was the most appropriate word. She sniffed at him appreciatively. “You smell like jasmine vanilla.”

He groaned. “I was afraid of that. That’s why I almost said no to having a bath. But I really do like a nice soak, and why waste a good tub full of water?”

Molly sniffed at him again, lifting her face higher. Now that she thought of it, there was another lovely smell assailing her nostrils, the crisp citrusy scent that usually clung to her fiancé’s clothes. “If it helps, I also smell your aftershave.”

Sherlock stroked his freshly shaven chin. “That’s a little better at least.”

“I’m going to read in bed for awhile. How about you?”

“I’ll join you. Are you feeling better, darling?”

“Much, thank you, and thanks for the tea as well.” She kissed his cheek and went to their bedroom, with Sherlock right behind her.

They both got under the covers and reached as one for their Bibles. We’re acting like a married couple already, reflected Molly. She turned to where she had left off, determined to finish Samuel 2, as Sherlock had already done.

“What should I read next?” Sherlock asked.


“Good idea.” He flipped through his beautifully illustrated Bible and found Romans, which was after Acts.

An hour later, the pair both closed their Bibles. Molly had finished Samuel 2, and Sherlock had finished Romans.

“How did you find reading that?” queried Molly.

“Much easier than the Old Testament,” Sherlock said with a grin. ”The was one thing I didn’t understand though. What does it mean to be ‘justified through faith?’ I’m not familiar with the word.”
“I learned many years ago a great way to remember the meaning of the word. You can think of it by breaking down the word to say ‘just as if I’d never sinned.’ So being justified means your sins have been washed away through faith.”

“That’s a good analogy. I’ll remember that. Thanks, sweetheart.” Sherlock leaned over to give her a quick kiss, before putting his Bible away.

Molly did the same with hers, then suddenly remembered what she had been thinking about in the bath. She looked over at him, to see he was already studying her face with a tender expression on his.

“Sherlock?”

“Mhm?”

“You know how you were joking earlier about me getting pregnant right away?”

“Yes, love.”

She drew a deep breath and reached out to touch his hand.

“Well, I was calculating my monthly cycle in the bath and...why are you looking at me that way?”

“What way?”

“I don’t know, like..like I’m the most fascinating thing you’ve ever seen.”

He raised her hand to his lips and kissed it, then smiled. “Because you are. Just reading the Bible together, you answering my questions, you’re teaching me so much. Sometimes I wonder if you’re really an angel, my own personal angel.”

Molly’s hand quivered a little at his beautiful words.

“I do feel like God made us for each other, before time began, that you are my soulmate. But I’m definitely no angel.”

“Close enough.”

He moved a little closer to the centre of the bed, starting to close the distance between them.

“Wait!” she entreated. “I never finished what I wanted to say.”

“About you getting pregnant right away?” His voice was very deep, and there was a note of passion in it that her body responded to.

What was I trying to say? Oh, that’s it. “Anyway, going by my usual cycle, my um, fertility would be at its maximum during our honeymoon.”

His eyes widened slightly and he inched closer. “You mean it really is possible that you could get pregnant that fast?”

“Well it’s certainly a possibility, as long as there are no other factors that come into play.”

He looked down then, away from her. “You mean my former drug use.”

Their hands were still linked, and Molly squeezed his, moving closer to him. “Of course not. I wasn’t even thinking of that. If I’m not pregnant in six months then I guess we will have to reevaluate things. There’s no point in worrying prematurely.”

“What if, what if my use of drugs in the past has rendered me sterile?”
“I don’t think there is a big risk factor for short term use, and your stints, that I know of, didn’t last long. But IF that turned out to be the case, and it’s a very big if, we would just deal with it together. Nothing will stop me from loving you or wanting to be with you.” She stroked his cheek.

And then his arms were around her, pulling her close, as he kissed her desperately, reassuring her that he would never let her go.

She returned his kiss, letting him know without words that she felt the same way. They fell asleep, still holding each other close, their faces only inches apart.

Chapter End Notes

This was a rather interesting chapter to write. Talking about women's "cycles" is probably not usually done in fanfiction. But, I have always tried to make this story as real as possible, and I totally feel this conversation could have happened, and that Sherlock would have no clue about it. After all, he would not have had any practical experience with being around hormonal women.

Have you heard that explanation for the word justified? I heard it many years ago and have never forgotten it.

What did you think of Sherlock's fear about sterility?
The sound of the alarm woke Sherlock, and he opened his eyes in time to see Molly twisting out of his still embracing arms to turn it off. He would have pulled her back to him, but she sat up and turned on the lamp.

Remembering their conversation from the night before he asked carefully, "So, uh, how are you feeling?"

She looked at him with a wry smile. "I'll find out in a minute." Then she headed off to the bathroom.

While she was gone, Sherlock sat up in the bed, clasping his hands behind his head and thought about that rather embarrassing conversation, and what had led to it. It was the first time he had witnessed Molly in pain, well except for her ankle injury. While he didn't like her being in pain, he did like having the opportunity of looking after her. He hadn't really thought before what it must be like for women to go through those cycles every month, it must be uncomfortable. Not like the ads even he had seen on the telly would seem to indicate. Those ads made it seem like it was something women looked forward to every month.

Molly returned to the bedroom and said, "Well, Auntie Flo has arrived,"

"Auntie Flo?" questioned Sherlock, perplexed.

While talking, Molly went about the room, collecting her garments for the day. "Yeah, it's a running joke with us women at the hospital. She comes, stays for a few days each month, then leaves."

"Oh." Sherlock processed this information and filed it away in his mind palace. "Do women often speak of such things?"

"Of course we do, Sherlock. We have to deal with each other at work, and the occasional mood swings that come with it." Keeping her back to him, Molly tugged off her chemise and Sherlock was treated to the lovely expanse of her back, before she picked up her bra.
He gulped, immediately tempted to lean across the bed and grab her from behind. Resisting the impulse, but watching, fascinated as Molly deftly donned her bra, he said, "Er, those things you wear for protection...do you ever use the other...things too, so you can do all that fun stuff they show on the ads, like dancing and swimming and such?"

Molly turned and looked at him, eyebrow quirked as she began to put on her blouse. "You mean tampons?"

_I really should be averting my eyes while she dresses_, he thought. _Thank goodness her bra is safely on._ "Uh, yeah, those." _Awkward._ He felt himself flush.

"I don't really use them," she admitted. "I find them rather difficult to use. Some of the girls at work have informed me that it's easier to use them once...you've had sex." Then it was her turn to blush as she realized what she'd said.

Sherlock could see how red her face was, as she tugged her jumper over her head.

"So we should just get on with it then, eh?" he joked, trying to ease the tension and make her smile. She didn't. Instead she looked even more embarrassed.

"Uh, was that a Bit Not Good, as John would say?"

"You could say that," she nodded. "It's hard enough keeping my hands off you, without you making jokes about it."

'I'm sorry," apologized Sherlock as Molly pulled on her trousers. "Well, at least we have a few days ahead when having sex is off the table."

When she didn't say anything right away he was just about to ask if that had also been a Bit Not Good as well, when she burst into laughter.

She hopped on the bed and put her arms around him, while his instinctively closed around her. "You are too adorable, sweetheart," she said, giving him a tender kiss. "Do you know why I know you were just being funny and trying to joke around?"

A little disconcerted, he said, "You're getting better at reading me?"

"Well, that too, I suppose," Molly said. "But it was because you said the word sex. You never refer to us as having sex, or wanting to have it. It's always wanting to make love which, in my book, is much more tasteful."

"Well, it's true," he said, holding his fiancé close. "I don't want to have sex with you. I want to make love with you, because I love you." He furrowed his brow. "Is that unusual?"

"I think it's a generational thing. From some of the conversations I've had with colleagues at the hospital, women who have kids, teenage aged ones I mean, these days it's just all about sex."

"Perhaps that's why society is so out of hand," Sherlock said thoughtfully. "If you are just having sex, it doesn't seem like love needs to be involved. When you and I make love, it will be an extension of the love we feel for each other."

Molly kissed him again. "For a man who lacks the practical experience in that department, you sure are wise. And just so you know it, I feel the same way." She drew away from him then. "Are you getting up now too?"
"Might as well, I've passed the point at which I'd be able to get back to sleep. It's a narrow window. Too much talking." He yawned and stretched.

"I'll make you a coffee then," Molly said. Then she made a little sound under her breath, obviously experiencing another of her cramps.

"Shall I get you some more tablets?"

"No, it's fine. I'll get them." She opened her bedside drawer and pulled out the tablets, popping two out of the foil, then left the bedroom.

Sherlock got out of bed and dressed. He saw his discarded jeans on the floor, but decided to go back to his usual trousers. More comfortable. Those jeans had been awfully tight, uncomfortably so when he was teaching Molly a lesson the previous night, and apparently teaching myself one as well, he thought. He wondered idly what had happened to the lingerie.

Then he heard an exclamation from Molly as he was making his way to the kitchen.

Ah, she had finally seen the rosebud, he surmised. As soon as he entered, she pounced on him, kissing him deeply. He put his arms around her, thoroughly enjoying her spontaneity. When they drew apart, he said huskily, "I was wondering when you'd see that."

"I didn't even look at the kitchen table last night, just passed through it before we went to bed. That was so sweet of you. It's lovely, and extremely romantic of you."

"I like doing things for you and surprising you," he said with a tender smile at the woman he loved.

Sherlock popped two crumpets in the toaster, commenting, "I know you're partial to these, so I bought some more yesterday."

Molly placed their coffees on the table. "Honey, can you give me the number for the DJ for our wedding?"

"Why? Did you think of another song?"

"Actually Kaitlyn heard it while she was in the States. It's very you."

He quirked an eyebrow. "Me?"

"Yes. I can play it while we eat breakfast."

"Alright." Sherlock put Molly's crumpets on a plate and got the butter and honey out for her while she looked for the song on YouTube, then hit the play button.

"It's called 'I Found,' by Amber Run. Listen to the chorus," Molly explained as she buttered, then put honey on the crumpets.

Sherlock popped his own crumpets into the toaster and leaned against the counter, listening.

When the chorus came on and he heard "I found love where it wasn't supposed to be, right in front of me," he nodded.

"You're right, it IS me. You were in front of me for years and it took the events at Sherrinford for me to realize I wanted, no, needed love - your love."

Molly smiled at him through a mouthful of crumpet.
"I'll get the DJ's number and put it into your phone."

Sherlock grabbed his phone off the charger and found the contact info for Andrew. By the time he had it ready, the song had finished playing and Molly handed him her phone.

Sherlock put the information in, gave it back to her and took his crumpets from the toaster.

"Thanks sweetheart," Molly said. "Or should I say honey, like I sometimes do, seeing as we are having honey and all."

Sherlock grinned. "Remind me to tell you sometime about my apiarist grandfather."

Molly looked at him questioningly. "Your grandfather kept bees?"

"Yes." He checked his watch. "You had best leave or you'll be late for work."

Molly glanced at her watch as well, then exclaimed, "You're right, I had better go!" She gulped down her remaining coffee, offered a most unsatisfactory peck on Sherlock's cheek, grabbed her phone, handbag and jacket, then dashed out the door. She hadn't even finished her crumpets.

Shrugging his shoulders, Sherlock thought, waste not, want not, and polished them off, followed by his own. Afterwards he mused, **Yep, no more fastidious Sherlock, now I even eat Molly's leftovers. Things certainly continue to change.**

Molly's abrupt exit made Sherlock decide he'd go to the hospital later to pick her up after work. That goodbye kiss was just not good enough.

Left at loose ends, Sherlock thought it would be a good idea to do some practicing. It had been a few days since he'd played his violin, and he wanted to make sure his piece for Molly was perfect.

He picked up his violin and bow and started to play the melody that would demonstrate the great love he felt for her.

A knock sounded at the door while he was playing, and Sherlock frowned in irritation. He stopped playing and strode to the door, opening it with rather more force than necessary.

"What do you want, Mrs. Hudson?" he growled at the landlady, who looked stricken at this rude display she hadn't witnessed since he and Molly had become engaged.

Seeing her expression, he immediately felt awful. "I'm so sorry," he said sincerely. "Please come in. I'm just practicing the piece I wrote for Molly for our wedding. There's this one tricky part I'm having trouble with. I think I may have over-extended myself."

"Oh, Sherlock, I'm sure you'll do it perfectly. I just wanted to come up and tell you how lovely it sounds. But, it would be nice if you waited until eight to start playing, instead of before seven. Just as well I'm an early riser."

Sherlock groaned. "I hadn't even considered the time. Molly just left for work and I thought I'd get some practice in."

"May I stay for a few minutes to listen?"

"As long as you don't breathe a word about it to my fiancée. I want to surprise her with it on our wedding day."

Mrs. Hudson nodded and took a seat on the sofa as Sherlock continued to play. He went through the piece several times, working on the difficult section until he had mastered it. Finally, he played
the piece through without a mistake and without looking at the music.

Mrs. Hudson applauded. "I'm sure Molly will be delighted with it, dear. As well as everyone else. My goodness, I had thought the piece you wrote for John and Mary's wedding was lovely, but this one, it's obviously special to you. Somehow I can feel the love in it."

"Thank you Mrs. Hudson. That is what I want my fiancée to think of it, well she will be my wife by then." Even as he said the words, Sherlock felt a thrill of anticipation. Just a few more weeks.

Mrs. Hudson rose. "Well, I am going to head back down. I'm baking scones this morning if you'd like to have some for lunch."

"I would be delighted. You know how I love your scones."

Mrs. Hudson beamed at him, then left.

Sherlock put his violin away, then his manuscript paper too, so Molly wouldn't see it.

He had time to do some other things. Why not do what he had promised to himself and look at the wedding hymns? Sherlock retrieved his phone and looked up "O Perfect Love." Fortunately he recalled the next words were "all human thought transcending," which enabled him to find the song.

Sherlock booted up his laptop and found the lyrics. Then he played the song on his phone while reading the lyrics. Finding the words a little difficult to read, the detective sighed and fetched his new reading glasses. It made a vast improvement.

After two run throughs, Sherlock started to sing along, not too loudly, because he didn't need an audience again from his landlady. Playing violin in public was one thing, singing an entirely different one.

He was rather pleased to discover he really could match the pitch, and his deep baritone had a nice ring to it, well at least he thought so. Sherlock sang through the whole piece three times and was satisfied he would be able to remember the tune to sing it during the wedding ceremony. He had listened to the other hymn, but not with lyrics open, so Sherlock found the "Love Divine, all Loves Excelling" words on his laptop, and then the YouTube video with the version Molly had asked for. He practiced singing that hymn three times as well.

Thus satisfied with his work, Sherlock went to his email. There was nothing new of interest, until his attention was caught by one that simply said "Sherlock Holmes" in the subject line.

Intrigued, he opened it, only to discover a message that read, "You'll be my enemy always if you do anything to hurt her."

Sherlock had received all sorts of emails in the past, denouncing him, or flattering him, but something about this one made him hesitate to dismiss it. He flagged the email, noting it was a hotmail address. He wondered if it was the same person who had been sending emails to Molly. For all he knew, he might have accidentally deleted other missives from this sender.

Sherlock did a search using the email address of the unknown person. Sure enough, two others popped up in his deleted folder, both with the subject title "Sherlock Holmes." One was dated from two weeks earlier, the other from the previous week. The first said, "You are heartless. You should just leave Molly now before you break hers heart." The second read, "It took you so long to get together, she deserves better than that."
The emails were very strange, random even. Why would someone be against his and Molly's union? It was almost as if the person knew Molly and wanted to protect her. He thought about Sally Donovan, who referred to him as "freak." Very rude woman, that one. Thank goodness she had been transferred away from New Scotland Yard. He supposed it could be her, especially as he had been the one to expose her affair that led to her transfer.

Sherlock ran a hand through his hair in frustration, almost dislodging his reading glasses. He took the glasses off and steepled his fingers together, closing his eyes.

Who hated him enough to send nasty emails to both Molly and himself?

Sally Donovan was definitely his prime suspect. He would have suspected Irene, if not for the fact she was now in custody. Her motive would have been purely to cause a rift between the couple and move in on Sherlock herself. He shuddered at the memory of the dominatrix and her attempt to seduce him. Her methods truly repulsed him.

There was Molly's ex-fiancé, he supposed. It didn't seemed likely though. For one thing, Molly had indicated their split was an amicable one. Besides, if Tom were to be angry with someone, it was far more likely he'd be angry with Molly herself, not him. Their relationship had been over already for several months before Sherlock had proposed to Molly.

Sherlock searched his mind palace for other options, but found no tangible ones. There were many shadowy possibilities of random, disgruntled people from his past, so it was possible, though not likely, that someone was just stirring the pot in retaliation for being caught in a crime that Sherlock had solved.

He remained in silent contemplation for some time, sifting through past cases and potential enemies. Every now and then, a stray thought would intrude - Molly coming home after drinking too much, and asking him to make love to her, Seeing Molly's breast when she was in the bathtub after her fall at church, their passionate encounter after he had returned from Dartmoor, even last night when he had been "teaching her a lesson."

**Molly, Molly, Molly.** His mind palace had always been a safe haven in the past, where he could focus solely on the task at hand. Sherlock wondered if he would ever return to that single-mindedness. Perhaps after he and Molly were married and he didn't have to constantly rein in his desire for her to a manageable level? **Sexual frustration,** he decided. That was the insidious invader to his mind palace.

Finally giving up on further reverie, Sherlock opened his eyes. His stomach felt empty and he glanced at his watch. Twelve-thirty. Bloody hell, where did the time go? He'd best be off downstairs if he wanted those scones.

Having been thus excellently fed with scones, Sherlock returned to his flat and texted Molly.

"Going to swing by the hospital with a taxi at four. I'll have the driver wait to bring us home."

Her response was quick. "You don't need to do that."

"I know. See you then. Love you."

"Love you too. XX"

Until it was time to head for the hospital, Sherlock thought he'd do some more Bible reading. He didn't feel like ploughing through more Old Testament stuff, so he went to the next book in the
New Testament, 1 Corinthians. It was there he read again the verses that were to be read during the wedding ceremony, and he smiled.

At three-thirty Sherlock left the flat, hailed a taxi and headed to the hospital to meet up with Molly.

Chapter End Notes

What did you think about Sherlock's assertion about the differences between having sex and making love?

My daughter thinks the term "making love" is out-dated. What do you think? If you are from the younger generation, what do you think is typically used these days? Do you prefer seeing the term "making love" or "having sex?" To me at least, there is a world of difference, as Sherlock says.

Are you intrigued about the emails Sherlock has also received? Is it the same person who is sending them to Molly? Any guesses?
Molly smiled in satisfaction as she rode the Tube to work. She had the DJ’s number and could put her plan into action. Her only regret was that quick goodbye kiss because she had to rush for the train station. Getting the number and showing Sherlock that song had taken longer than expected.

When Molly got to work she looked immediately for Kaitlyn.

Her friend was already in the lab, setting up things for the day. Molly went over to help, and started the conversation after a quick greeting.

“Kaitlyn, I was wondering if your sister gives singing lessons?”

“Sure she does. The extra income is nice in between opera seasons, and the opera is on hiatus right now.”

“Does she teach in a studio?”

“Nah, it’s all low-key. She teaches from home with a keyboard.”

“Do you think I could schedule a lesson or two over the next couple weeks?”

Kaitlyn looked at Molly in surprise. “I’m sure you could. Why do you want lessons?”

“Well, I had this idea. I wanted this Shania Twain song called “From this Moment On” to be played for our first dance, but I’ve thought better of it.”

“I love that song, perfect for a wedding.”

“Well, the thing is...” Molly hesitated.

Kaitlyn raised her eyebrow questioningly.

“Well, I want to sing it for Sherlock at the reception, to surprise him!”

Kaitlyn opened her mouth in surprise, then gave a wide smile. “I love it, Molly! I’ve heard you sing in the lab before, and you have a really pretty singing voice. I think it would blow Sherlock away if you sang it to him.”

“That’s what I’m hoping.”

“What about your wedding dance song, if you’re going to sing the Shania Twain one?”

“Oh, I have the most romantic one ever in mind. Sherlock and I danced, well swayed to it the other
night. We really liked it - a lot.”

“What song? And are you saying you two were having a hard time not paying up on our bet?” asked Kaitlyn cheekily.

“Kaitlyn! Okay, in all fairness, that song was definitely one we could get swept up in. But sorry to disappoint you. We have not succumbed to passion yet.” Molly grinned.

“Well what the heck is this song then? If it’s that magical, I’ll play it for David next time I see him.”

Molly burst into laughter. “You are so incorrigible, my friend.”

Kaitlyn pouted. “I have no idea what that word means.”

“Unstoppable, without boundaries type of thing.”

“Oh, I AM incorrigible! So for the third time, Molly. What’s the name of the bloody song?”

“Keep your shirt on, my friend. It’s ‘A Thousand Years,’ by Christina Perry.”

“Oh, the one from that Twilight movie we went to see when Edward and Bella get married?”

“Yup.” Molly nodded.

“I can totally see you and Sherlock using that.”

“Well, I need to let the DJ know. I got his number. It’s a good thing I had an excuse to ask Sherlock for it, with that song you told me about.”

“Oh you did tell him about it then?”

“Yeah. He agreed it was very him,” Molly responded with a grin. “I mean really, I WAS in front of him all these years. Oh, by the way, if I’m a bit grumpy or out of it today, it’s because I got ‘Auntie Flo’ this morning, so that was a rather interesting discussion to have when I was getting cramps last night. Bit embarrassing at first.”

“Damn, not pregnant. I guess you really are telling the truth that you and Sherlock haven’t done it yet,” teased Kaitlyn.

“Oh my gosh, to quote John, when Sherlock says something inappropriate, that was a Bit Not Good.”

Kaitlyn snickered. “Well, getting back to my sister, you could go to her place straight after work sometime if she’s free. It’s only fifteen minutes by Tube. I’ll give you her number.”

“Thanks, I’ll call her at lunch time.”

Molly had a routine post-mortem to occupy her time. The routine ones were usually just confirming the cause of death, rather than trying to discover it. It had been awhile since she had had a murder autopsy, she reflected. That was probably a good thing. This time, Andriana, an assistant pathologist, was on hand to help, so the time went faster as the women chatted. Andriana and her husband Thomas would be coming to the wedding. She had a three year old daughter, Elizabeth, who would be staying with her grandparents on the day.

"Tom and I are really looking forward to your wedding," Andriana told Molly. "It's so hard to find
time to get out and just have fun as a couple once you have children."

It was funny hearing the name Tom. It always brought to mind her former fiancé.

At lunchtime, Molly called Madison, Kaitlyn’s sister, to ask about having a couple singing lessons. When Madison answered with a “Hello?” Molly began to speak.

“Hi Madison. Kaitlyn gave me your number. My name is Molly Hooper and I work at the hospital with her.”

“Oh my gosh! You’re the one marrying Sherlock Holmes, aren’t you? Kaitlyn told me about you. She also told me she gave you her tickets for the opera. Trust my sister to forget she already had plans.”

Molly could picture Madison rolling her eyes and immediately liked her. She sounded very much like her sister, open and friendly. “The opera was lovely. I found your name in the programme. It was Sherlock’s first opera too, and he had a really good time. It was really impressive, the set, the singers, everything. Anyway, the reason I’m calling is to see if I could get a couple of singing lessons from you.”

“Sure. My schedule is pretty open right now until I start rehearsal for the autumn operas. Have you had lessons before?”

“Yes. I took lessons at university from one of the teachers in the music department as a music elective. I know, completely not what you’d expect from a pathologist.”

Madison laughed. “Opera singers have all types of other professions. It isn’t easy to make a living from it, so most hold regular jobs and sing at night. Was there a specific reason you want lessons now?”

“Actually there is. There’s this really beautiful wedding song by Shania Twain…”

“You mean “From this Moment On?” interrupted the opera singer excitedly. “I’ve sung that at a few weddings.”

“Why yes, that’s the one,” Molly said, pleased that Madison was already familiar with it. “I’d like to sing it to Sherlock at our wedding reception.”

“Oh my gosh, that is so romantic! I want to sing that at my wedding someday too!”

It was funny, Molly reflected. Madison sounded just like her sister when she got excited. "I hope Sherlock thinks so. I’d just like a bit if coaching with it, to make sure it sounds okay. I have to buy the backing for it though.”

“I have it already, because I’ve sung it myself. Let's use mine for now.”

This was going even better than she’d anticipated. “That sounds wonderful! What do you charge for a half hour lesson? And are you possibly available on Friday evening? I work till six, but could take the Tube to your place. Kaitlyn gave me your address.”

“I charge £15. And Friday would work fine. I’m free this weekend. So I can expect you around six-thirty or a bit after?”

“Yes, that would be...as your sister likes to say ‘awesome!’”
“Great. I look forward to meeting you, Molly. I might just fangirl a bit about your fiancé too if you don’t mind. His hair is sooooo adorable. I’ve seen him on the telly. Not a fan of when he covers it up with that silly hat.”

Molly giggled. “I like you already Madison! I agree about the hat, and his hair is one of the things I love most about Sherlock. I’ll see you Friday.”

“See you then, bye Molly!”

Madison hung up, and Molly smiled. One thing down, one to go. She wasn’t going to have time for lunch probably.

She sent a text to Andrew.

“Hi Andrew, this is Molly Hooper, Sherlock Holmes’s fiancée.” Just writing the words “Sherlock Holmes’s fiancée” made her stomach flip-flop.

“I was hoping to add another song to our wedding list. It’s called ‘I Found,’ by the band Amber Run. Also I want “A Thousand Years” to be the one you play for our wedding dance. I’m going to sing ‘From this Moment On’ for Sherlock myself. I’ll buy the accompaniment track for it and get it to you somehow, before or on the day. I could probably have one of my bridesmaids keep it to give you. Would that all be okay?”

She sent the text, then hurried down to the canteen to grab some lunch. She would just have time for a sandwich.

After eating, on her way back upstairs, her phone chimed. It was Andrew, confirming he had the song “I Found” and could play her accompaniment track whenever she was ready.

Molly smiled to herself. This was turning out to be quite a productive day.

She was working her way through some lab results when she heard Sherlock’s text alert sound. No matter how many times she heard that sound, Molly’s heart skipped a beat. Knowing he was thinking about her was something she would never get tired of.

After their text conversation, Molly was so happy, she put on some Paramore and sang to it as she worked. Sherlock was stopping by just to pick her up.

As she continued to enter her results, the Paramore album finished. Molly did a quick search to find the Shania Twain song on YouTube and played it. Kaitlyn had gone to assist a colleague in another lab, so Molly was alone. She sang along with the song, thinking about the lyrics and how much it would mean to sing them to Sherlock on their wedding day.

“I give my hand to you with all my heart, can’t wait to live my life with you, can’t wait to start. You and I will never be apart. My dreams came true, because of you.”

Even as she sang, tears formed in her eyes and she had to blink them away.

Kaitlyn returned unexpectedly mid-song. “Already practicing, huh?” she commented and Molly stopped singing.

“Hey, don’t stop on my account. Not sure why you think you need lessons. Your voice sounds beautiful.”

“Aww, thanks Kaitlyn! I just want to make sure I do it well. I just hope I can get through it without
becoming a blubbering mess. If I can’t even practice it without tears coming to my eyes, how am I going to get through the whole song when I’m actually looking at Sherlock?”

“That’s probably why most brides don’t sing at their own wedding,” said her friend, with a grin.

“I suppose so. Well, I guess we’ll see how well I do when the time comes.”

“Did you lose track of time, Molly? It’s almost time to go.”

“Really? Guess I got carried away with singing. Sherlock’s coming to get me, so I’ll pack up now. He was going to have the taxi wait.”

“Such devotion,” Kaitlyn remarked with a grin. “He takes a taxi just to get you and take it back home.”

“What can I say? I’m a very lucky woman.”

Kaitlyn left the lab to get her things while Molly finished her task, then left as well. She hung up her lab coat and grabbed her handbag, then closed her locker.

When she turned around, there was Sherlock, standing nonchalantly against the doorframe, looking as if he belonged on the cover of a fashion magazine.

*Just perfect,* she thought as she ran into his waiting arms.

**Chapter End Notes**

So, Molly is going to sing at the wedding reception. If I could do it at mine, why not Molly, right?

Would you be game to sing at your own wedding?

Kaitlyn is really good at being like Sherlock with Bit Not Good comments - do you have any friends like that, who just have no filter?
Sherlock arrived at the hospital a few minutes before four. He instructed the cabbie to wait. Being Sherlock Holmes, and easily recognizable, the cabbie knew the detective wasn’t about to skip out on paying his fare, so the driver merely nodded and kept the meter running.

Sherlock took the lift to Molly’s floor. It was extraordinary how much he’d missed her, now that he had had a chance to actually do just that. When you were busy, it was a good distraction. Now that he wasn’t, he was anxious to see her beautiful face.

He found her in the locker room and leaned against the doorframe, waiting for her to notice him. As soon as she turned and saw him, she ran into his arms.

“I missed you, Sherlock,” she said, a little breathlessly.

“That was going to be my line,” he pouted, then leaned down to offer his fiancée a tender kiss that belied his pout. He extended his arm.

“Ready to go? Taxi’s waiting.”

Instead of taking his arm, Molly took his hand which was, he decided, eminently preferable anyway.

They walked to the lift, kissed until it cane, got in and kissed some more, because they were the only occupants, then made their way out the front of the hospital and into the taxi.

“Back to Baker Street,” instructed Sherlock, before settling into his seat. Molly sat right beside him, and he had to take her face in his hands and kiss her yet again. Always sweet, he reflected, strawberry scented lip balm this time. He could get lost in her, utterly and completely lost.

Molly finally broke the kiss to say, “Probably not the best place for this, honey.”

He sighed. “I know. I was trying to make up for that most inadequate goodbye this morning.”

Molly laughed and squeezed his hand.

At home, she immediately went to the fridge, saying, “I want to start getting things prepared for when my mum comes.”

“What can I do to help?” asked Sherlock.

Molly eyed him warily. “I’m not sure if I can trust you with a knife to chop the vegetables, and
definitely not the stove to cook. Can you handle grating some parmesan?”

“Um, yes?” He had never had occasion to grate anything, but surely it would not pose a problem. “So, yeah, where’s the grater then?”

Okay, so the kitchen was not his domain; he could admit that. To be honest, he could probably teach himself to cook, just as he had learned to do other things for cases, like waltzing. But was it really a necessary skill? He could happily live on chips and ginger nuts and Mrs. Hudson’s scones.

“You look lost in thought,” commented Molly, opening the cupboard to show him where the grater was kept. For the first time he noticed the neatly ordered shelves, stocked with items you’d expect to see in a kitchen that was used regularly, like his mother’s kitchen.

“Er, yes. I was just thinking what a rubbish cook I am. And when did you stock these shelves?”

Molly put her hands on her hips in exasperation. “I’ve been living here for three and a half weeks, and you haven’t even looked in the cupboards since we did some shopping after we picked up our wedding rings?”

“Well, now that I don’t use it for my experiments, I don’t have much use for the kitchen besides making tea, coffee and breakfast. And I did at least open the cupboard with the jam and honey,” he defended, feeling rather embarrassed. “The day we did our shopping, I put the stuff in the fridge and you took care of the cupboards,” he added.

Molly put her arms about his waist. “I’m not really cross, sweetheart. It’s just a surprise. But I should have expected that anyway, with how bare your cupboards were. In fact,” she admitted, “I kind of like being better than you at something.”

Sherlock put his arms around her as well. “To quote your own words, my love, ‘it’s not a competition.’”

“I know. It can be a bit daunting sometimes, being engaged to the famous Sherlock Holmes.”

“Sorry, but you’re stuck with me,” he told her as his arms tightened around her, “and I’m not letting you go.”

“I wouldn’t want you to,” said Molly, lifting her face for a quick kiss. “Now, let’s get to work. I set out a bowl for you to grate the cheese into.” She pulled the grater from the cupboard and handed it to him.

Sherlock dutifully grated the parmesan, while watching Molly expertly chop up green peppers, mushrooms and onions. Tears streamed down her face and she sniffled while doing the latter, and Sherlock had the urge to kiss her tears away, despite knowing they were onion induced.

He continued to watch as she chopped up bacon and put it into a waiting frying pan, then turned on the heat.

Molly glanced at him then and chuckled. “I guess I should have told you half a block would have been plenty.”

Sherlock stared down at the bowl. He had inadvertently grated the whole block. “Oops. Well, I guess we’ll be eating a lot of Italian in the near future,” he said with a grin.

“Yup, I already told you I make a good pasta sauce, even if I do say so myself. Do you mind if I put on some music? I like to listen as I cook.”
“I don’t mind. Do you need me to do anything else?”

“You can set the table. I think I have everything else in hand.”

Molly turned on her phone and put on the new Paramore album. “It was so sweet of you to get this for me,” she told him, kissing his cheek, before returning to her dinner preparations.

Very soon the kitchen was filled with the delicious aroma of frying bacon, peppers and onions.

Molly was singing along with some of the songs that she had obviously picked up the lyrics to. She really does have a lovely voice, Sherlock thought. His Molly was a woman of many talents. He thought back to a few days earlier, when they had been standing together, listening to “A Thousand Years.” The combination of the romantic music and her singing along had been very...well, it had been extremely hard to regain control of himself. Dammit, he thought now. He really needed to force his mind away from all things that led to the thought of forbidden pleasures.

Molly snapped her fingers in front of his face and he focussed on her again. “Sherlock? What on earth are you doing? You’ve been standing there for five minutes, just staring into space. Did you take a trip into your mind palace?”

“I didn’t mean to. I was just thinking about you, how beautiful you are, and how much I like hearing you sing. And then I started thinking about the other night...that song you played.”

Molly put her arms around his neck and drew his head down to give him a tender kiss. “I wish we could continue with some non-verbal communication, but we really don’t have time.”

“I know,” responded Sherlock mournfully.

Molly released her hold and resumed cooking. When had she put water on the stove? And when had she added milk, cream and parmesan to the ingredients she had been frying? The mushrooms were still on the chopping board, however.

“Did you forget the mushrooms?” he questioned.

“Nope, they soften very fast, so they go in last. I’m just about to add them.”

The aroma in the kitchen was so good that Sherlock’s stomach rumbled in anticipation. The water on the stove was boiling, and Molly added the fettuccine noodles to the water, then set the timer for twelve minutes. The mushrooms were added and lid put on the frying pan. Sherlock watched Molly in fascination. She was so organized. Of course, that made sense. She was the same way at the lab. He was naturally untidy, so her efficiency was a good counterpoint to his sloppiness.

Molly washed her hands and checked her watch. “Okay, everything is almost ready and mum should be here soon.”

“Does that mean I have you to myself for a few minutes?” Sherlock asked hopefully. Without waiting for an answer, he pulled her into himself for a lingering kiss. Her hair and skin smelled of the cooking aromas she had been surrounded by. He nuzzled her neck, kissing and licking it experimentally.

Molly giggled. “That tickles! What are you doing?”

“I’m experimenting,” he answered, moving his mouth upwards to nip at her earlobe and suck on that too. He felt her tremble at his ministrations.
“Tickles,” she gasped. He hadn’t realized just how ticklish she was. He filed away “ticklish” in his mind palace. He’d have to experiment with her, see what parts of her body were particularly sensitive.

“So, uh, what is this experiment?” she managed to get out, before he captured her lips with his once again. He didn’t answer until he had kissed her thoroughly and she was melting into his embrace. She was so yielding, it was such a heady feeling.

His mind registered that the timer was going off. Stupid timer. He drew back, allowing Molly to continue her preparations.

“You didn’t answer me about what experiment you were conducting,” she commented as she drained the noodles and added them to the alfredo mixture, stirring them in together.

Sherlock’s stomach growled again. “I was testing whether the cooking smells on your skin translated into taste.”

“And?” she questioned.

“Inconclusive. I think I’ll have to continue frequent experimentation.”

“Mmm, I can live with that,” she murmured, “even if it does tickle me unbearably.”

“Definitely experiment-worthy,” he said, ready to conduct some more, but the doorbell rang at that moment.

Molly immediately went to get the door. Mrs. Hudson was too fast, however. He could hear some murmuring from below, and the sound of footsteps ascending the stairs.

Molly already had the door open. “Mum!,” she greeted. “Come on in; dinner’s almost ready.”

“Your landlady is very nice,” commented Mrs. Hooper. “She said she has some post to bring up for you.”

Molly looked at Sherlock. “Do you ever actually remember to look for the post? I haven’t seen any on the table.”

“Ah, remembering to retrieve the post is not my forté,” Sherlock admitted guiltily. “Mrs. Hudson has usually been the one who sorts it and brings mine upstairs.” Recovering himself, he extended a hand to Molly’s mother. “Nice to see you again, Mrs. Hooper.”

She took his hand and shook it firmly. “You too, Sherlock. And please call me Ruth.”

Sherlock filed her name away for future reference. “Thank you, Ruth. That is a lovely name.”

Turning to Molly he commented, “When we chose that verse for our order of service for the wedding, you didn’t say anything about Ruth also being your mother’s name.”

Molly blushed. “I didn’t even think about the fact that you didn’t know it. It just never came up.”

Ha, thought Sherlock. I’m not the only forgetful one.

“Oh, speaking of invitations,” said Mrs. Hooper, “I brought my acceptance. Thought I’d save the stamp.” She rummaged in her bag and brought out the card indicating her acceptance, handing it to Molly.
“Oh Mum, you didn’t need to do that. It was only a formality, sending you one.”

“I know, but I wanted to officially respond. Your invitation is lovely, by the way.”

“Thanks Mum. I chose that, but Sherlock chose the cover for the order of service we'll be using. I bookmarked it on my phone. Let me show you.”

Molly took out her phone and showed her mother the cover Sherlock had chosen.

“That is such a lovely verse,” commented Ruth Hooper.

“It was Sherlock who insisted upon it, like I said.”

“I thought it fitting,” Sherlock told his future mother-in-law, “because it was your daughter’s influence that led me to faith. I liked the ‘Your God will be my God’ part. Without Molly, I may have continued in my foolish denial of the existence of God.”

“Even when you didn’t believe in Him, he was still God,” smiled Molly fondly. “He’s the God of the universe, after all.”

“That He is, my love,” responded Sherlock, smiling back at her tenderly.

“Mum, why don’t you take a seat,” invited Molly. “I’m sorry, it’s a bit cramped. We don’t have a dining table.”

Molly’s mother took a seat. "Oh, it's absolutely fine, dear."

“Can I get you a drink? Tea? Coffee? Something else?” asked Sherlock solicitously, while Molly prepared to dish out the food.

“Tea would be lovely.”

Sherlock put the kettle on and got the cups ready. He knew Molly would have tea. “Sugar and milk?” he asked Ruth Hooper.

“One sugar and just a little milk.”

By the time Molly had set the filled plates onto the table, the tea was ready, and Sherlock placed the cups by their plates.

“Let’s pray,” said Molly. Sherlock looked over at her in some surprise. This was something new.

As if in response to his unspoken question, she said, "I know. I’m really awful at remembering to pray before eating. But I do like to do it on special occasions."

She closed her eyes and folded her hands, as did her mother, so Sherlock followed suit, and Molly began to pray a blessing for their food as well as thanking God for giving them this time to spend with her mother. At the end, she said “Amen,” and Sherlock echoed it, along with Mrs. Hooper. Then he opened his eyes.

The three of them ate the meal, which Sherlock thought was absolutely delicious. "You're right," he commented to Molly. "This beats Angelo's any day."

Molly beamed at him.

“Lovely dinner,” commented her mother as well.
After dinner was finished, the three of them retired to the sitting room, after putting the dishes in the sink. “We can wash them later,” proclaimed Molly.

For the next two hours Sherlock plied his future mother-in-law with questions about what Molly had been like as a young girl. He did not want to waste the opportunity to learn more information about the woman he loved. He filed every bit of information into what he labelled as his “Young Molly” room. He tended to compartmentalize things that way. His regular “Molly room” already occupied a large domain in his mind palace. It was fast becoming a Molly mansion.

To Molly's acute embarrassment, her mother pulled out a miniature photo album from her handbag and handed it to Sherlock. "I thought you might like to see some photos of Molly in her younger days," she explained.

Sherlock looked through it with interest. There were pictures of Molly from a baby through to what had to be her uni days. Nothing afterwards, though.

Mrs. Hooper, noticing his disappointed expression when the photos ended abruptly, said sadly, "I'm afraid Molly and I were estranged after that, due to my own foolishness. I saw her graduate with her medical degree, but not after that."

Molly hugged her mother. "I'll have to give you photos from that time. Of course, you will soon have many more photos to add when the wedding comes."

"And hopefully pictures after that of you, Sherlock and a family of your own." Mrs. Hooper smiled.

"We will do our best," promised Sherlock, looking over at Molly with a wink, and was satisfied to see the blush that appeared on her cheeks.

Mrs. Hooper asked him about some of his cases, and about Molly’s work at the hospital. It really was a pleasant evening.

Ruth Hooper stood up to leave at nine o’clock. “I had best be going. I’m sure you two would like some time alone before bed.”

Molly gave her mum a hug. “Thanks for coming, Mum. I’m so glad you and Sherlock could get to know each other a bit better."

“I’m glad you came too. I can never learn too much about your wonderful daughter. Thank you for showing me those photos too. Molly has just grown more beautiful as the years have passed," Sherlock said, receiving a parting hug from his future mother-in-law.

They opened the flat door and found a pile of their post on the landing. “Apparently Mrs. Hudson did not want to disturb us,” he commented.

Molly scooped up the letters, while Sherlock went outside and hailed a taxi for her mother.

After seeing her safely situated in the taxi, he returned upstairs, to where Molly was busy using a letter opener on the envelopes.

“Wedding invitation responses are coming in,” she told him. “I’ll have to keep track of who is coming.” She pulled her notepad and pen from the drawer in the kitchen, then recorded the responses. “Seven responses, and only one ‘no,’ so far," she reported.

“Who declined?” asked Sherlock curiously.
“Just someone from work. Acceptances from three other people from church - my friend Sheila and her new man Jake - you haven't met them yet, or George and his wife Roxanne, Nancy Schmidt and her husband Ed. Then there is Anderson, your parents, and Meena.”

“Anderson is awfully eager,” commented the sleuth, is he bringing anyone?”

"Nope, he just put an acceptance for himself.”

“Meena,” Sherlock said slowly. “Didn’t she used to work with you? I didn’t see her on the wedding invitation list.”

“Last minute addition. Yeah, we were pretty good friends for awhile, but she took another job a few years ago. It will be nice to catch up with her again. I should see if we can get together before the wedding.” Then, as if she had just remembered something, Molly said, “By the way, I have to run an errand afterwork on Friday so I probably won’t be home until after eight.”

“Do you want me to come with you?”

“No, no,” she said hastily. “It’s something I have to do myself.” Sherlock wondered at her tone. *Was she keeping something from him?* He wasn’t really worried though. He trusted her. If she was keeping something from him, it was for a reason, and she would tell him in her own time.

He waited patiently for Molly to finish what she was doing and put her notepad away, then he slid his arms around her.

“I missed you.”

Molly put her arms around him as well and looked at him questioningly. “How could you miss me? I’ve been with you all night.”

“Yes, but having your mum around makes it rather difficult for me to do this.” He kissed her, infinitely sweetly, then with more pressure, inviting her to open her mouth for him. He could taste the lingering aftertaste from their dinner, which was not at all unpleasant. His mind palace noted that this aftertaste was much stronger than when he attempted to lick her neck to see whether smell equated to taste. He continued to kiss Molly, feeling her compliance. It was exhilarating, so very sweet in every way, his Molly, his pathologist. When he felt his lungs crying out for air, he drew away a little.

Molly rested her head against his chest. “I love the way you kiss me, Sherlock. I could go on kissing you all night.”

“My body responds to you too, you know,” she whispered. It’s just not so...obvious.”
He stroked her cheek. “I love you, Molly Hooper.” He kissed her forehead, then went into the bedroom to take off his clothes, save his boxers, selecting a fresh pair to put on after the shower. Then he got the washing basket. He thought a moment, then undressed and dropped his boxers in the basket, before wrapping a towel around his waist and taking the basket into the kitchen.

He saw Molly’s eyes widen at the sight of him in just a towel. **What would happen if I accidentally on purpose dropped it?** he thought a little wickedly. Of course he did no such thing, but returned to the bathroom for his shower and a nice clean shave. When he entered the bedroom, Molly was gathering her things for her shower. She stripped to her bra and knickers, then left for her shower.

Sherlock ruminated about the fact they were definitely getting more comfortable around each other. He recalled the time in her flat a few weeks earlier when she had entered her bedroom clad only in a towel, so she could get some clothes. He hadn’t seen her that way since, just in a towel. He really didn’t need her to throw any more temptation in his path. Probably just as well.

He needed to do some Bible reading and focus on non earthly pursuits. Sherlock climbed into bed and reached for his Bible. He had just finished 1 Corinthians, so started on the next book.

After Molly exited the bathroom from her shower, he heard her return to the kitchen, presumably to turn on the washing machine. Next thing, she was beside him in bed and picking up her devotional to read. Sherlock kept reading until Molly was done, then he closed his Bible as she put away her “Our Daily Bread.”

“How have your pains been today?” he asked. He hadn’t seen her take any tablets since they had come home.

“It’s a good month,” she responded. “No more pains.”

“That’s good.” He slid down under the duvet as Molly did the same. He reached for her and kissed her goodnight, then tucked her in front of him, keeping his arm protectively over her. He felt her fingers thread through his as she gave a contented sigh, and they both slept.

Chapter End Notes

If you are wondering about the fettuccine Alfredo, that is the way I actually make it, although I use asiago cheese.

Do you enjoy the way Sherlock likes to conduct his little taste experiments? I figure he would be fascinated with that kind of thing.

Did you enjoy the visit with Molly's mum, and the way she showed Sherlock photos of Molly from her younger years? Parents like to embarrass their kids that way! Poor Sherlock's mind palace is certainly being inundated with Molly things!
Serious Talk and a John Doe - Molly

Chapter Summary

Sherlock and Molly discuss possible concessions in the bedroom, and Molly later deals with a John Doe at the morgue.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Molly woke with a smile on her lips. She had been dreaming about Sherlock. Best of all though, she could feel his arm still covering her body.

She glanced over at her alarm clock. It was only eight, so she had plenty of time until she had to leave for her late morning shift. She shifted position, turning so she was facing her fiancé, her eyes drinking in the sight of his beautiful features. His dark eyelashes fluttered slightly and opened. Fathomless turquoise eyes stared at her and full lips curved upwards.

He was simply beautiful. Of its own volition, a hand reached up to tweak one of his wayward curls.

“I could get used to waking up beside you every day.” He leaned forward to touch noses with her. “Actually, I’m already used to it.” Then it was his lips that touched hers, gently at first. Molly’s hand reached around his neck to bring him closer, and at the unspoken invitation, he deepened the kiss.

Sherlock’s left arm, which had still been lying loosely over her body, tightened its grip, stroking her back in a circular motion.

Their kiss continued for several minutes, until it became hard to breathe. Molly couldn’t help the little sound of pleasure that escaped her lips, and it was that which caused Sherlock to draw away just enough to say, “We should probably get up and out of bed now. It is entirely too warm and comfortable when I’m here with you.”

“I know. And our own abstinence guidelines say to not do too much in the bedroom for that very reason. Not that we could get too carried away right now anyway.” She grinned a little.

“I’m not going to lie. I don’t think I will much enjoy THAT time of month once we’re married.”

“Well, if I get pregnant, I might very well have to contend with morning sickness, and you’ll be having to deal with that instead.”

Sherlock stroked her cheek. “That I can live with, because the end result will be our child.”

“Ha, easy for you to say. You won’t be the one dealing with things like morning sickness, frequent bladder urges, aching, swollen feet and the like.”

“Molly, I promise I will do my very best to take care of you if and when, God-willing, that time comes.”
“I know you will, sweetheart.” Molly pressed another gentle kiss to her soon-to-be husband’s lips and sat up. It was time to rise and get ready for the day.

She picked out her day’s clothes and proceeded to get dressed, knowing full well that Sherlock’s eyes were on her. It had made her shy at first, getting dressed in his presence, but she was starting to lose her shyness. She couldn’t pretend he hadn’t already had several views of her chest area. At this point, it was of more concern that things would get out of hand between them if he were to see too much of her body. So putting on her bra with her back turned was really not something for her to be shy about.

She turned towards the bed. Sherlock was still in bed looking at her with what she could only describe as a hungry look in his eyes. “Sherlock?”

He blinked, then focussed on her face. “I really shouldn’t watch you dress, should I?”

“I didn’t mean to make you uncomfortable.”

“It’s not that. It’s just, well, I’m still getting used to the thought of anyone getting dressed in front of me.”

Molly laughed. “It’s not like I gave you a full-frontal view. I’m not ready for that yet.”

“Yet?”

Molly perched on the edge of the bed and bit her lip nervously. Then she looked at him seriously. “I have to be honest.” She could feel the blood start to pound in her head, and wondered if she should really be saying this, but she pressed on. “Although I want us to wait for our wedding night to make love, I don’t know if that means my upper body is off-limits until then too. It isn’t like we haven’t slipped already.” She gave him a rueful grin. “I guess it depends on how far we can push things without falling off the edge.”

Sherlock took her hand and started drawing circles in the palm with his thumb. “I’ll admit too that I ache to see more of you. When I hold you at night, I want to rest my hand against your breast, just to be closer to you.”

She looked at him. “I don’t think I’d object to that. I love cuddling with you. As long as it stops there. No using it as an excuse to get handsy, if you know what I mean.”

Sherlock grinned at her. “I can’t promise I won’t be tempted, but I can promise I’ll try to behave.”

Molly leaned over and kissed him lightly. “I need to take care of some stuff in the bathroom. You should get dressed.”

“As you wish.”

Molly giggled. She always found it funny when Sherlock referenced “The Princess Bride.”

By the time Molly exited the bathroom a few minutes later, Sherlock was already in the kitchen, getting coffee for them both. “Crumpets or toast this morning?”

“Actually, seeing as there’s no great rush, I thought I’d make a hot breakfast. Do you want some bacon and scrambled eggs?”

“I never turn down a hot meal from the woman I love.”
Molly busied herself with preparing the breakfast, and ten minutes later the couple sat down to eat. While they were eating, Molly's phone pinged. Picking it up, she was surprised to see it was from Lestrade.

“Hey Molly, got a body for you to do a post-mortem on today. Pulled out of the Thames overnight. No identification. Caucasian male, probably early forties. Foul play or accident?”

“Who is it?” asked Sherlock curiously.

“It’s Greg.” Molly showed him the text.

“I wonder...” he said thoughtfully.

“Wonder what?”

“It’s probably nothing, but John and I are meeting with a woman today whose husband disappeared a few days ago. Not sure why she didn’t want to call the police, I guess we’ll find out when we talk to her.”

“You think it could be the man who disappeared?”

“Possibly. If it is, I’ll probably be seeing you if she has to identify the body. Once she gives me a description, I’ll text you. Even better, if she has a photo of her husband, I’ll take a snapshot on my phone and text it to you.”

“Better yet, I’ll send you photos of the body, and you can check for yourself. If it’s the same man, it really is strange she doesn’t want the police involved.”

“Well, no point in thinking about it now,” said Sherlock, with a shrug. “John and I will be seeing her at two o’clock.”

“If it is the same man, I should be done with the post-mortem by then, if I get onto it as soon as I start work.”

Their conversation had been punctuated by eating in between speaking. Molly took the empty plates and put them in the sink.

“I’ll take care of those,” offered Sherlock. “You have clothes to remove from the washing machine. Speaking of which, I really need to call to have my clothes picked up for dry cleaning.”

“Thanks, sweetheart.” She kissed Sherlock’s cheek as he stood to do the dishes, while she took the clothes out of the washing machine. The drying cycle left her jumpers damp as usual, and these she carried upstairs to lay over the airer. Then she neatly folded the other things and put them away.

“We’ve become so domesticated, haven’t we?” she commented, as Sherlock hung up the tea towel.

“I for one, would not have believed it possible a few months ago. But I actually like ‘playing house’ with you.” He put his arms around Molly as he spoke.

“Except for the fact we aren’t just playing at it at all. This is real, it’s the way things are going to be.”

“I have no objections to that.” His lips met her own in a tender kiss.

“Speaking of domestic things, there are plenty of leftovers in the fridge for you for dinner tonight -
Chinese from the other night, and fettuccine Alfredo too if you get hungry before I get home.”

“I’ll just wait to eat when you get here.”

“I know that means you don’t want to bother heating it up yourself.”

Sherlock grinned. “Possibly. But I also like it better when we eat together.”

“Smooth, Sherlock. You are very good at saying what I want to hear. Wanna watch some crap telly and cuddle until I have to leave for work?”

Unexpectedly, her fiancé asked, “Have you checked your email lately?”

“Not since I told you about that weird one.”

“Check it now, then we can watch some television.”

“Okay.” Molly wondered why Sherlock was concerned, but took out her phone and went to her inbox. She looked at the latest message, deleting everything.

“Just spam and ads.”

“Good.” Sherlock nodded and they went to the sofa. Molly contentedly snuggled into Sherlock as he flicked through the channels.

“Crap telly is right,” he said, leaving on some random talk show that didn’t interest either of them. They watched without paying close attention, exchanging occasional kisses until it was time for Molly to leave. After a sweet goodbye embrace, Molly headed for the hospital.

As soon as she got to work, Mike came in to let her know about the autopsy she had to do.

“I know already,” Molly told him. “Greg texted me about it earlier.”

She headed downstairs to the morgue.

The morgue was always rather cold and lonely. Molly didn’t mind it though. She was rarely disturbed. Sometimes someone would record the results as she spoke them, at other times she spoke into a voice recorder. This was one of the latter times.

The pathologist got to work. Before beginning the autopsy, she took several photos of the man from various angles. Then she examined the man’s body. The skin had distinct signs of bloating, which meant it had been in the water for upwards of three days.

“Hmm, no blood from the mouth or nose,” Molly said to the recorder. “State of body decomposition indicates between four and seven days in the water.”

Molly continued to examine the body thoroughly. There were no outward signs of foul play. There was evidence of extended intravenous drug use, judging by the track marks on the man’s distended forearms. Molly collected blood and tissue samples to examine after the post-mortem was finished.

After the post-mortem was completed, Molly examined the tissue and blood samples in the lab. As she suspected, the hair follicle test was positive for drug use within the past ninety days, but it wasn't possible to narrow the timeline any further.
“Interesting,” she murmured to herself, looking at her results from the blood sample. *Elevated potassium levels would indicate a heart attack. But how did he end up in the river?*

Then she remembered the needle marks on the man’s arm. If someone had injected him with a solution of potassium chloride, the effects could result in a fatal heart attack. Potassium levels were accelerated by a heart attack anyway. It was a stretch, but the potential was there for murder.

Greg Lestrade walked into the lab while Molly was recording her results. “Hey Molly, any word on our John Doe? Was it accidental?”

“No sure. He appears to have had a heart attack, judging by the elevated levels of potassium chloride. The problem I’m having is that he seems rather young to have suffered from one. Plus, there’s evidence of drug use. An intravenous dose of potassium chloride could have caused the heart attack.”

“More complicated than I thought,” commented the detective inspector.

“Sherlock has a missing person case today. We were thinking this morning that perhaps this might be the person who disappeared. He and John have an appointment with the wife at two.”

“That would certainly help matters along if we can identify the man.”

“Yes. Then Sherlock could look for evidence of foul play. I have to send him the photos of the body. He’ll see if he can obtain a photograph of the man. If they match, they’ll have to come here so the woman can identify him.”

“Great. Let me know,” Greg said.

“By the way, Greg, don’t feel you can’t ask for Sherlock’s help on any cases just because we’ve been busy planning our wedding. Almost everything is organized now, and I think he’ll need something to keep him busy.”

Lestrade laughed. “I’ll bear that in mind. I do have a couple of open cases I could use his assistance with, but you’re right. I’ve been trying to give you time.”

Molly smiled. “I appreciate that. You know Sherlock, though. He needs to be busy, he thrives on it.”

“That he does. I’ll check in with you later, Molly. Bye now.” He made as if to leave, then paused, looking hesitant.

“Was there something else?”

“Oh, yes. I was wondering if I could bring a friend to the wedding?”

Molly smiled warmly at him. “Of course you can. Sherlock and I did include ‘and guest’ on your invitation, as I recall. Is it someone from your work?”

“Oh, actually no. I uh, met her online, through a singles website.” He looked highly embarrassed.

Molly smiled encouragingly at him. “That’s not unusual these days, and it’s certainly not anything to be embarrassed about.”

“I know. It’s just, I don’t want people to think I was desperate for another relationship after my wife and all...”
“Greg, you’ve been divorced for quite some time. Why do you feel you don’t deserve some happiness? What’s her name? When did you meet her?”

“Her name is Lori. She’s from America originally, and we met about three weeks ago, shortly after I joined the singles website. She lives in London too, not that far from me actually.”

“That’s wonderful, Greg.” Molly went over to him and impulsively gave him a hug.

“Thanks. It’s still early days yet, but I am hopeful for long-term prospects.”

“She’s a lucky woman, Greg. I’ll look forward to meeting her at the wedding, if not before. Maybe Sherlock and I will have to have you around one evening.”

“I’d like that. I’ll send the invitation response card back with an acceptance for two guests. Thanks Molly.”

“You’re welcome.”

He left, and Molly smiled to herself. It was about time Greg found another woman. He’d been lonely for awhile. It would also mean Sherlock wouldn’t have to keep that silly thought in his mind that Greg had a crush on her.

Molly checked the time. It was almost two. She pulled out her phone and sent the photos of the dead man to her fiancé, adding a note.

“Signs of extended drug use. Elevated potassium chloride levels...possibly injected? Let me know if this is your man. Love you. XX”

A text came back almost immediately. “Perfect timing. Thanks love. I’ll let you know, we’re almost there.”

After the text, Molly busied herself with other work, keeping watch on her phone and waiting to hear back from Sherlock.

It wasn’t long before she got another text.

“We have a match. We’ll be bringing Barbara Baxter down to identify the body. See you soon, love.”

Molly smiled. Extra time spent with Sherlock was always a good thing.

Chapter End Notes

I researched the information for this case, body bloating and decomposition etc. It was rather interesting.

What do you think? Are you intrigued to see Sherlock and Molly working together?

What do you think about Greg getting a new girlfriend? Do you think he ever had a crush on Molly? I think he might have, and I could see Sherlock being a little jealous.

What do you think about Molly’s talk with Sherlock about allowing him to see her
topless before the wedding? I would be interested to hear your thoughts on this, I can see it being a rather controversial topic!
When Two Investigations Combine – Sherlock

Chapter Summary

Sherlock makes a mental progression list. Later, his latest investigation yields some interesting results.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

As soon as Molly left for work, Sherlock called the dry-cleaning service he used for his suits and shirts. Sometimes he had to schedule an appointment for pick-up, but on this occasion the receptionist said someone would be right over to collect the garments. The owners of the service were usually quite accommodating, because it was rather prestigious for them to claim him as one of their clients.

As he waited for someone from the dry-cleaning service to arrive, Sherlock thought about his earlier conversation with Molly. He had been quite shocked by her admission, that she might be okay with him seeing her topless. He knew a decision like that could not be taken lightly.

They would have to really consider the ramifications. It was true he had already seen her breasts, but it became more an issue of self-control in seeing them on a regular basis. He knew it was something he desperately wanted. After all, he loved the feel of her body against his, and the thought of them being chest-to-chest with no fabric separating them was an intoxicating thought.

Sherlock was wise enough to realize they would need to move slowly, though. They still had five and a half weeks to go before the wedding. Perhaps they could just stick to him holding her close at night, the way he had told her he wanted to do, just to feel her softness. That could be enough for now.

He filed away some progression steps into his mind palace, with the intent of sticking to each one for at least a few days, before moving to the next.

1. Hold Molly close at night, hand on breast over chemise.

2. Hold Molly close at night, hand on breast under chemise, or sans chemise, but no peeking, nor getting "handsy" as Molly has warned.

3. Touch Molly's chest through jumper when kissing.

4. Touch Molly's chest under jumper but over bra when kissing.

5. See Molly's bare chest?

6. Take off Molly's blouse and bra while kissing and hold her against me, skin to skin.

He tried not to think of the time, a few weeks earlier, when he and Molly had progressed to step 6. He wanted to add another bullet point to his mental list to kiss Molly's breasts, but felt that was something that should wait for the wedding night. If he started to do that, he was almost certain they would not make it to their wedding night pure.
If they stuck to a strict schedule, allowing a few days for each step, they might reach the extra step 7 on their wedding night.

He would have to tell Molly his plan of action. It seemed eminently sensible to him. He was thinking with satisfaction how clever he had been, when the dry-cleaning service person arrived, and he handed over the garments. They would be returned on Friday.

At lunch time, Sherlock quickly prepared a sandwich, and took a couple of ginger nuts from the container, then waited for John's arrival.

John arrived a few minutes after one. Mrs. Hudson had let him and Rosie in, and they came upstairs.

"Hi, John," he greeted. "Hi, Rosie."

Rosie reached out her little arms for Sherlock, and he obligingly took her from his friend. Having spent the whole weekend with Molly and himself, the little girl seemed to view him as part of the family. He swung her around, while asking John, "Is Mrs. Hudson going to watch Rosie while we are gone?"

"Well, I'm hardly going to take her with us," remarked his friend dryly. "Yes, I called her to make sure it would be okay."

Sherlock tickled the infant's belly and she squealed with glee. Then he blew raspberries into her tummy and she giggled delightedly.

"Well, Sherlock, I have to admit this now. I can actually see you as a father these days. I never would have thought it possible a few months ago, but you aren't a man-child anymore."

Sherlock snorted, then lifted Rosie to eye level. "Did you hear that? Your daddy thinks I could actually have a child of my own. If I do, I hope I have a little girl as sweet as you are."

Taking advantage of her position, Rosie tweaked one of Sherlock's curls and the men laughed.

"I had better take her downstairs now so we can go. Do you have the address?" asked John.

"Sure do. Barbara Baxter is expecting us."

Once Rosie was safely situated in Mrs. Hudson's flat, Sherlock having thoughtfully brought her the feeding chair and play mat from his own flat, the men were off.

On the way, Sherlock explained to John his theory that the missing man might be the corpse fished out of the River Thames that morning, and that Molly was performing a post-mortem on him, as per Lestrade's instructions. Just before they arrived at their destination, Sherlock heard his text tone from Molly go off, and he pulled out his phone.

He looked at her text and the photos of the dead man, showing them to John after he responded with his own text.

"John, we must look for family photographs as soon as we get there. If we can find a picture of Carl Baxter and it looks like the body, we will be in good shape."

John nodded, and the men exited the taxi, which had just arrived at the Baxter house.

After paying the driver, Sherlock walked to the front door of the house and rang the bell.
It was opened immediately by a woman who looked to be around forty. She had shoulder length, dark curly hair, and she looked very glad to see him.

"Thank you so much for coming!" she exclaimed, ushering the two men into the house and to a sitting room which was comfortably furnished and had a fireplace.

"Hello, Mrs. Baxter. As you know, I am Sherlock Holmes and this," he indicated the man standing beside him, "is my colleague, John Watson."

As the woman greeted John, Sherlock cast a quick glance around the room. His eyes immediately alighted on several photos on the mantel. The largest was obviously a wedding photo, taken several years earlier. There was also a best man and bridesmaid in the photo. The girl looked similar to Barbara, and he assumed it was a younger sister.

The other photos were of Barbara and presumably Carl, taken during various holidays. There were no pictures of any children, so Sherlock surmised that the couple was childless, whether by choice or not, he couldn't tell, and that was probably unimportant.

He wanted to take a closer look at the large photo on the mantel, but first, he needed to ask a question.

"Mrs. Baxter," he began.

"Barbara, please," she interrupted.

"Very well. Barbara, I must ask this question. Your husband has been missing for several days now, and presumably has not contacted you in any way."

The woman nodded.

"Why did you choose to contact me, instead of the police?"

The woman flushed. "Well, my husband has disappeared before. He...I'm afraid he has struggled with an opium habit for several years."

Sherlock started at her words. They unsettled him, bringing back to mind his own struggles with addiction.

"Anyway, he has never been gone for more than two days. I contacted you after three days passed and it is now almost a week. I didn't want to call the police in, because I am afraid he would be arrested if he was found in possession of drugs. I...I was hoping you could help me find him."

"Understandable," said Sherlock with a nod, walking over to the fireplace. "Your husband, of course?" he questioned. The man definitely looked as if he could be the corpse currently residing in the morgue, although the bloating had distorted the man's features.

"Yes, that's Carl."

Sherlock hesitated. The old Sherlock would have just blurted out that the man was most likely dead, and his body was in the morgue, but the new, more sensitive Sherlock was trying to think of how to form the right words.

John came to his rescue, giving Sherlock a questioning look, to which Sherlock nodded.

"I'm afraid we may have some bad news. An unidentified man was pulled out of the Thanes this
morning, and we believe it may be your husband."

The woman's face went white. "No, no, it couldn't be Carl. He does enjoy quiet walks along the river, but he'd never be stupid enough to fall in...unless...unless he was high..."

"Mrs. Baxter, I mean Barbara, I need to show you some photos," said Sherlock patting her arm sympathetically. "If you think they are of your husband, we will need to head to St. Bart's so you can provide a positive ID." Pulling out his phone as he spoke, Sherlock pulled up the photos from Molly and showed the woman.

She took one look at them and said, "Oh God, I think I'm going to be sick! It's him, it's my Carl." Tears formed in her eyes as she spoke, and she rushed from the room, presumably to go to the toilet.

Sherlock immediately used the opportunity to text his fiancée. "We have a match. We'll be bringing Barbara Baxter down to identify the body. See you soon, love."

As the men waited for Barbara's return, they heard the sound of the front door being opened.

"Barb? I got off work early. I remembered to pick up your prescription before I left."

A woman entered the sitting room. She looked similar to Barbara, with her curly dark hair, and there was no question that she was the bridesmaid from the photograph on the mantel. She was also very obviously pregnant. Sherlock glanced at her hand. No ring; picked up a prescription "before" she left work, obviously worked at a chemist.

"Who are you?" she questioned, a little fearfully.

"My name is Sherlock Holmes, this is my colleague John Watson, and we are investigating your brother-in-law's disappearance."

"How did you know he's my...?" She stopped, then said slowly, "I suppose you noticed the family resemblance. Where's my sister?"

"She had to run to the loo," supplied John.

As the sister looked at him questioningly, Barbara Baxter returned to the room. "I'm so sorry," she apologized. It was just a shock...and on top of it, I'm sick all the time lately anyway - morning sickness." She burst into tears. "And now my baby is going to grow up without a father."

"Barbara, what do you mean? What's happened? I thought Carl was just off again in one of his drug-induced walkabouts."

"No, he was found in the river this morning," sobbed the distraught woman.

"He did like to walk along the Thames. Could he have fallen in?"

"We really need to leave now, so you can positively identify the body," said Sherlock as gently as he could.

Barbara sniffled. "Can my sister come too?" She looked imploringly at her sister. "Alex? You will come won't you?"

"Of course," replied Sherlock as Alex nodded. "I'm sure you will be glad of the moral support."

John went out to hail a taxi for the foursome. While they were waiting, Sherlock decided to ask a
few questions. "You live with your sister I presume?" He questioned Alex in a friendly, conversational tone.

"Uh, yeah. I had a bit of...trouble and my sister took me in."

A taxi cab arrived and everyone got in. Sherlock gave instructions that they were going to St. Bart's. He was seated next to Alex. Sherlock suddenly took in the fact that she was wearing long sleeves, even though the temperature warranted short sleeves. A dark thought struck his mind. **Was she wearing long sleeves to cover up signs of drug use?** Being pregnant, she was probably clean, but intravenous use left scars, he still had his own, faint as they were, a constant reminder of his troubled past.

**Who was the father of her baby?** He tried another question, keeping his tone casual. "I see congratulations are in order. I'm sure you and your," he hesitated - boyfriend? Partner? Friend? Finally settling on, "uh...the father must be excited about the impending blessed event."

Barbara Baxter chimed in with, "The father of her baby isn't around. It was an accident."

"Oh, my apologies," said Sherlock, filing away the information in his mind palace.

John, always the diplomat said, "I'm a single father myself. My wife passed a few months ago."

Sherlock suddenly wondered if his friend had talked to Kayla yet. Obviously this wasn't the time though.

"So, Alex, you must be happy that your child will have a cousin to play with."

He noticed a dark look come into the younger woman's eyes, but she only said, in what he was sure was a false sense of cheerfulness, "Yes, of course. Carl and Barbara were trying for a baby for years. I think they had pretty much given up on it happening."

**Carl and Barbara, not Barbara and Carl,** he mused. Strange that she would put the husband's name before her sister's when discussing them.

"Yes, it was rather a surprise, but a very good one," said Barbara. She was obviously trying to keep up a brave front.

"Ah," Sherlock said suddenly to Alex, "the prescription you brought for your sister, did that happen to be ante-natal vitamins? You work at a chemist?"

"As a matter of fact yes to both, said the younger woman, "although I'm not sure what business that is of yours." There was a suspicious note in her voice, and Sherlock decided it was time to stop asking questions.

"Just an observation," he said easily. "Merely a little game I like to play."

"Yes, Sherlock is always playing games, it's one if his fun little quirks," John said.

Sherlock knew his friend was trying to ease the tension. He shot off a text to Molly. "We'll be there in a few minutes. Can I bring Barbara straight to the morgue?"

Molly's reply was almost immediate. She had obviously been expecting his text. "On my way to the morgue now. I'll meet you there and have the body ready XX"

When they arrived at the hospital, Sherlock suggested to John, "Why don't you take Alex to the
waiting room? She doesn't need to identify the body. I'll take Barbara to the morgue. Molly will be meeting us there."

"No worries, mate," answered John, as they parted ways.

As Sherlock led the distraught woman to the morgue, he asked, "Your sister will certainly be a comfort to you. How long has she been staying with you?"

"Almost a year. She...well she had a bit if trouble, lost her job and we took her in when she couldn't pay the rent on her flat."

"Was it drugs?" asked Sherlock. "I've had trouble with it in the past myself. Addiction is not an easy thing to overcome." Sherlock felt that being honest about his own past would be helpful, it would make him more relatable. He idly thought about the way Molly always said people went through things for a reason. Perhaps this was an opportunity to help solve a case because he could relate to the issues of drug addiction.

"Yes," she admitted sadly. "Actually Alex met Carl at rehab years ago. She was the one who introduced me to him. Both of them have had relapses, but Alex has been clean since she got pregnant from a one-night stand. Carl on the other hand..." She sighed. "It's been a constant struggle for him. He has never truly been able to kick the habit. I...I was hoping the baby would give him the incentive to keep away from the drugs, once and for all." She began to cry again. "Now he won't even get a chance to meet his baby."

Sherlock awkwardly patted her shoulder. "I'm so sorry." They had reached the morgue doors. "Here we are."

Sherlock pushed the doors open and immediately saw Molly. She was standing next to a slab, and there was a body bag on it with the dead man inside. He couldn't help thinking how beautiful she looked.

"Hi," Molly greeted the woman. "You must be Barbara Baxter. I'm going to unzip the bag and let you have a look. Take your time."

She unzipped the bag halfway down the man's chest and moved away as the woman approached the slab slowly.

Molly walked over to Sherlock and squeezed his hand. "Hi," she whispered.

"Hi, yourself," he responded, leaning down to give her a gentle kiss on the lips while the other woman was occupied with her examination of the body. "I missed you."

His fiancée's smile was so sweet he had to catch his breath. "Missed you too."

They stood, side-by-side and waited for the woman to turn her attention on them.

Finally, Barbara Baxter turned around and said, in a voice that was fraught with grief. "It's definitely him. It's my husband." As tears started to run unchecked down her face she asked, "How...how did he die? Did he drown? He liked to walk near the Thanes at night, but still...was he, was he high?"

"I did a hair follicle test. The evidence suggests he had been using drugs in the last ninety days, but it's impossible to tell when the last time was that he used, because the drugs pass through the system quite quickly, and your husband has been in the water for several days. There are fairly recent track marks on his arm, which suggest use within the past ten days. There was something
"Potassium chloride? But Carl uses...used that to counteract his low potassium levels. We...we were trying to get pregnant for a long time, and he was prescribed it to help with the deficiency because the specialist thought the low potassium might be causing our infertility...you know...on his side."

Molly nodded. "Yes, a lack of potassium can cause male infertility. Look, Mrs. Baxter, I know this must be difficult for you. Why don't you go to the waiting room and have a cup of tea. I need to call the detective inspector in charge of this case. He will probably want to talk with you."

"Molly," said Sherlock urgently. "Can you take her to the waiting room? I need to go into my mind palace and think for a bit. John's in the waiting room with Barbara's sister. You can leave her with them."

"Alright. I'll call Greg on my way back. Are you going to stay in here?"

"Yes. I'll sit on the floor."

"Okay then." Molly re-zipped the body bag and left the morgue with the distraught woman.

Sherlock sank to the floor and crossed his legs, closing his eyes and steepling his fingers.

He sorted through the various conversations he had had with Barbara and Alex, the evidence in the case and started to piece things together.

Alex...pregnant...former junkie...knew Carl first...worked at a chemist. Barbara...newly pregnant...clearly distraught...not a suspect. Carl...junkie, past and present...took potassium chloride to aid with low potassium levels and increase fertility...knew Alex first. He went back to Alex...pregnant by unknown man, presumably a one-night stand...not really happy that her sister was pregnant. Why? She said "Carl and Barbara" rather than "Barbara and Carl." She knew him first...she knew him first...met at rehab...drug problems...

And suddenly the pieces fell into place. A lonely woman, struggling with addiction. A man, struggling with addiction and infertility. An affair. Alex gets pregnant. They keep it a secret. Then Barbara gets pregnant and Alex is jealous. He is still on the drugs, goes for a late night walk with her. Somehow she injects him with the potassium chloride to bring on a heart attack. He falls into the Thames and drowns. But why kill him? Was he going to confess all to his wife, and Alex got scared?

Sherlock exited his mind palace. He needed to ask Barbara Baxter another question.

He stood and stretched his legs. Then he noticed Molly was back. "How long have I been here?" he asked.

"About a half hour. Did you find any answers? Was it a murder?"

"I'm almost certain of it. I think it was the sister, but I need to ask Barbara a question, and then I have to confront Alex, to get her to confess. Your discovery of the elevated potassium chloride levels was a big clue in this. Thank you, darling."

"Just doing my job," she shrugged.

"And doing it very well, as usual." He leaned into her and kissed her softly. "Let's go and see the
women. Did you call Greg?"

"He's on his way."

"Good. I hope he has his handcuffs."

Chapter End Notes

As well as researching effects of drowning, I did research about potassium chloride and its possible uses. I have tried to make sure this mystery is plausible.

Are you finding it interesting?

What do you think of Sherlock's "progression list?"
Molly walked beside Sherlock to the waiting room. As they walked, she thought about how good it was to see her fiancé during the day, and doing the work he loved. She did not want his career to suffer as a result of them being together.

After Molly had escorted the distraught woman to the waiting room, she had dashed to the canteen for a quick sandwich and returned to the morgue. It was fascinating, watching Sherlock when he was in his mind palace. At times he used his arms, moving imaginary pieces of evidence around. She was glad he seemed to have come up with a theory about what had happened.

In the waiting room, Sherlock asked to have a private moment with Barbara. He nodded to Molly, indicating that she should join him, and they moved to a corner. Fortunately the waiting room was almost empty.

"Barbara," said Sherlock gently, "I have a question to ask you. What was the last conversation you had with your husband?"

The woman thought for a moment. "He called me at work. He told me he was sorry, and that he had a confession to make when I got home. I was working late that evening, on a client's case; I'm a lawyer. I didn't think much of it, because I figured he just wanted to admit he was using again. I had seen the signs already, and to be honest, I wasn't too anxious to get into an argument, not with being pregnant and all."

"How long was your husband taking potassium chloride?"

"Let me see." The woman thought for a few moments. "Eight months I guess. I suppose we might have gotten pregnant sooner, but I was so busy with work and all, well, we didn't have a lot of time to be together, just the two of us."

Molly laid a comforting hand on Barbara's arm. "I know this is a shock, but you will get through it, and you have a baby on the way."

"I just wish Alex were happier about it. I don't understand it," wept the woman. "I've supported her throughout her pregnancy, but she just acts like the world revolves around her and doesn't care about me, not really. I think...I think sometimes she's a little jealous about Carl and me, because she knew him first."

At that moment, Detective Inspector Lestrade came into the room and walked to the trio.

"I'm so sorry for your loss," he told Barbara Baxter.

"Thank you," sniffled the widow.
They all walked back to where John sat with Alex, who was sipping a cup of coffee.

And then Molly watched in awe as Sherlock exposed a deceitful sister.

"So Alex, how did you manage to kill your brother-in-law? Did you lure him away from the house? Were you scared he was going to tell your sister about you and him?"

The coffee cup dropped from the girl's nerveless fingers as Barbara in turn gasped in horror.

Molly knew what Sherlock was doing. Even though it was clear in his own mind that Alex was responsible for the crime, the evidence was circumstantial. He needed a confession in order to make sure justice was done.

"I...I don't know what you are talking about," said Alex. Molly could see the fear evident in her eyes.

"Oh, it was very clever of you to inject him with the potassium chloride. I suppose you thought, if his body was found, that it would be assumed he had died of a heart attack?"

"No...I didn't...I wasn't..."

Sherlock continued as if she had not spoken. "I suppose it would be natural for you to be upset, when you found out your sister was pregnant. What did Carl tell you? Did he say he was going to leave her for you, and then he changed his mind when his wife got pregnant?"

Sherlock spoke so confidently, so knowingly, and the words had the desired effect.

As if a dam had burst, the younger woman turned to her sister in a rage. "Why did you have to spoil it all for me, Barbara? He was supposed to leave you when our baby was born. But oh, no, you had to go and get pregnant!" she hissed.

She continued. "God knows how it happened. He told me you weren't even sleeping together anymore. He betrayed me. And he was going to tell you that night, confess everything and beg for your forgiveness."

Barbara's face was very pale. "How could you, Alex? We took you in, provided for you, and you stole my husband?" Suddenly her hand shot out and she slapped her younger sister's face.

"I saw him first," Alex said scornfully. "He was just afraid to be with me because it made him weak."

People were starting to notice the commotion, and Lestrade stepped in to say, "I think we had better take this to the police station now." He pulled out a pair of handcuffs and snapped them on the woman's wrist. "In fact, we had better all head there now, except you, Molly."

He started walking to the exit, with John and Barbara following. Sherlock hung back just a moment to tell Molly, "I'll text you later. See you tonight," before offering her a swift kiss.

Molly put her fingers to her mouth as Sherlock exited. She was incredibly proud of him.

She returned to work, but her mind was buzzing with everything that had happened. It was quite remarkable how things had turned out, but then, Sherlock was a truly remarkable man.

There was a brief text from Sherlock in the late afternoon. "She made a full confession. I'll tell you all about it when you get home. Love you."
"Okay," she texted back. "Love you too XX"

Molly completed her autopsy report on Carl Baxter, whose body was now tagged with his name, rather than John Doe. The rest of her work day flew by and soon it was time to go home.

When she arrived, Sherlock opened the door to the flat before she reached it. She went inside and put her arms around his neck. "You were magnificent today, my love," she said sincerely. "Masterful, in fact."

Sherlock cocked an eyebrow at her. "Masterful? That's a new one."

"Oh, but you were. You just took control of the whole situation. She didn't stand a chance after you confronted her." She pressed her lips against his.

"Mmmm," he murmured, when the kiss ended, "if that's the kind if reaction I get for solving a case, I'm going to have to keep a full workload from now on."

Molly swatted his arm. "I don't mind you taking cases, but I'd like you to save a little room for me." She suddenly noticed the smell of food coming from the kitchen. "What's that smell?"

"I wanted to prove to you that I was up to the task of using the microwave for actual food, rather than conducting experiments. I heated up the Chinese for us."

"Wow," commented Molly, "this day just keeps getting better and better."

"I'd do anything for you to show you how much you mean to me."

"Sherlock, you've proved it to me so many times I could never doubt it." She gave him a loving smile. "Now, let's go eat that food before it gets cold, and you can fill me in on what happened at the police station."

As they ate, Sherlock explained that Alex had apparently been having an affair with Carl Baxter almost from the moment she had begun living with her sister. When she had gotten pregnant, the man had said he would leave his wife for her, but he kept procrastinating. He had said he was no longer intimate with his wife, so Alex had been prepared to wait. When Barbara had announced her pregnancy, Alex had known he was lying to her about not sleeping with his wife.

She had overheard his last phone call with Barbara, and had been certain he was going to confess the affair to his wife, then throw himself on her mercy. Alex had feared she would be tossed out of the house as a result. She had asked him to go for a walk that fateful night, had injected him with the potassium chloride, then stood by as he died from the apparent heart attack, after which she had dragged his body into the river.

"Hang on, how on earth was she able to inject him? Surely he would have struggled to prevent it."

"Ah, therein lies the genius of her pan - or her perception of it," responded Sherlock. "They were both using drugs again before she quit because she was pregnant. Until then, they would share needles. Several times he had asked her to help him, because he was too unsteady. That night was one of them."

"But how did she know he'd want a fix?" persisted Molly.

"She'd removed his stash, telling him she'd return it after they'd had 'a chat.' She simply took a syringe full of the potassium chloride along, instead of the drugs, then offered it to him."
"I suppose she got the potassium chloride because of his prescription."

"Correct. A team of police officers went to the house and found several vials of the stuff in Alex's room. It seems she was collecting his prescription, even though he was no longer taking it. Working at a chemist she was, of course, aware of the dangers of an overdose."

"She was obviously mentally unstable, if she kept the vials on hand."

"Correct again. Barbara confirmed that her sister had a history of mental illness." His eyes clouded for a moment, and Molly knew instinctively that he was thinking about Eurus.

In order to distract Sherlock from dwelling on his own troubled history, she asked quickly, "How did she manage to keep his body in the river for days? There were no signs of it being weighted down."

"That's a simple enough answer, it wasn't intentional. His body, as Greg told me, was actually found under a bridge, hung up on one of the pylons. Some fishermen found the body face-down in the water."

"I feel sorry for poor Barbara. Now she has to deal with raising a baby alone and a murderous sister." She caught sight of Sherlock's pained expression. "Oh darling, I'm so sorry. I should not have said it that way."

Sherlock sighed heavily. "Well, it's true. She has a mentally unstable sister who is a murderer, just as I have."

Molly knelt on the kitchen floor beside Sherlock's chair, sliding her arms around his waist. "You know I'm here for you, if you ever need to talk any more about Eurus."

"Thank you. I know you are." He kissed her forehead, then stood, pulling her up with him. "Let's take care of these dishes, so we can have some quality cuddle time later."

Molly stood also and grinned. "Sounds good to me."

As they did the dishes, Molly asked, "Did you happen to talk to John about Kayla?"

"I tried, when we were on our way back here, after we left the police station. He shut me down - said he didn't want to talk about it."

Molly sighed. "I really hope they work things out."

When the dishes were done, Sherlock asked, "Can I take a sheet of paper from your notepad?"

"Of course. It's in the drawer, you know where. Why?"

"I want to show you something."

"Okay, well I need to go to the bathroom and take care of my, ahem woman's issues. I'll be back in a few minutes."

When Molly left the bathroom, she saw that Sherlock had gone to sit in his chair, so she joined him, settling herself in his lap at his invitation. He had the sheet of paper in his hands, but held it out of her reach.

"What is it?" she asked curiously.
"Remember our conversation this morning?"

Molly thought back. She and Sherlock had talked about... "Oh," she said. "Is this about our
discussion on allowing you access to uh, certain parts of my anatomy?"

"Your breasts, yes," supplied Sherlock helpfully, and she blushed.

"Okay, so what do my breasts have to do with this piece of paper?"

"Well, I made a list."

"What of?"

"Of what you might permit before the wedding. A step by step, graduated list, allowing a little
more freedom as our wedding gets closer. A progression list, I call it."

"Only you, Sherlock," Molly said, shaking her head. "Let me see."

He handed it over and she perused it. "You seem to have this all laid out quite carefully."

"I do," he answered smugly. "If we allow approximately a week for each step, we will make it to
our wedding night without temptation to go any further."

"If anyone else did this, I would think it utterly ridiculous, but strangely, with you it makes sense.
Are you planning on keeping a copy of this list in the bedroom?"

"You can do whatever you want with the hard copy. I have it right here." He tapped the side of his
head. "We can begin whenever you are ready."

Molly blushed again. Talking about it was one thing. Implementing it quite another. "I...I guess
so." Step one isn't too bad, she reasoned. **Allowing him to put his hand on my breast over my
chemise when we sleep is pretty tame.**

"Turn the paper over," instructed Sherlock.

She turned the paper over and her eyes opened wide when she read the words - 7. Kiss Molly all
over on wedding night and blow her mind with awesome lovemaking aka SEX. Her breath hitched
at the thought.

"I, uh...yeah, that sounds good," she stammered, feeling her heart race.

"I may lack the practical experience," said Sherlock in a deep voice that sent thrills racing through
her, "but I assure you, in my younger years I did conduct some research from a purely clinical point
of view. I look forward to gaining that experience."

Molly heaved a breath and tried to force her voice not to betray how his words were creating a
maelstrom of emotions within her - excitement, desire, anticipation, tempered by a little fear that
she would be unable to please HIM. "This is probably not the best conversation to have when I'm
sitting on your lap."

"Moly, I haven't even tried to kiss you yet...but I want to, very much."

And his arms came around her, pulling her closer to him. His kiss was possessive as well as
passionate, demanding a response. She willingly gave herself over to it, allowing herself to enjoy
the feel of his lips, as he kissed her until they were both gasping for air.
"Sherlock, at this rate we're gonna skip steps one through six and go straight to seven."

Sherlock shifted uncomfortably. "No. I am determined, my love. I just have to remember to access my mind palace each day and update it as we progress through the steps."

Molly giggled. "You sound like a walking hard drive."

"My mind is a hard drive. That's just the way it works."

"And it's one of the things I love about you. Although making a clinical analysis related to our love life is a bit disconcerting."

Sherlock shifted again restlessly. "This is the best way for me to deal with things. If I allow myself to have no structure I am probably not going to be able to restrain myself around you. Would you mind hopping off my lap now? I feel the need for another damned cold shower."

Molly got up and said, a little wickedly, "At least you know your, er, parts are in working order."

"Bit Not Good, Molly," was his only comment as he left the room.

Molly heaved a sigh. He was right. She really ought to restrain herself from the flirtatious talk. It could only lead to a breakdown of their resolve.

While Sherlock was in the shower, Molly gathered her things together for her own. As soon as he exited the bathroom, clean shaven and smelling of the crisp, clean soap he used, and looking totally gorgeous with damp hair, Molly entered and took her own shower.

How was it this man had such a capacity to fuel her desire for him, yet at the same time, to be caring and considerate to the point where he would do anything to make her happy? Once we're married, she told herself, I'm going to make sure the waiting was worthwhile.

After she had completed her evening ablutions in the bathroom, Molly headed to the bedroom. He was propped up on his pillow, with his eyes closed and hands behind his head.

"What are you thinking about?" she asked, climbing into bed beside him.

He opened his eyes. "Just waiting for you. I have something for you." He reached his hands under the covers and pulled out a large iPad.

"Oh my gosh!" exclaimed Molly. "I completely forgot that was coming today! Did you see Mrs. Hudson then to get the post?"

"Briefly, when John went to get Rosie. There are a couple of wedding acceptances on the table too - Pastor Briggs and his wife, also Mike Stamford and his wife."

"Oh, I'm so glad he will be at our wedding. It was a shame he had to miss John's. Speaking of wedding invitations, Greg asked me today if he could bring someone."

Sherlock furrowed his brow. "Didn't we say 'and guest' on his invite?"

"Yes, he was just making sure. It seems he has a new girlfriend, someone by the name of Lori. She's apparently from America originally."

"That's good," replied Sherlock, smirking. "Maybe now he'll stop having designs on you."

"Sherlock," Molly said in exasperation, "Greg and I have always just been friends. He has never
even flirted with me."

Sherlock shrugged. "We were just friends who never flirted, and look at us now."

"Big difference. I was in love with you from the start."

"Nevertheless, I'm glad he has someone else to concentrate on," replied Sherlock pragmatically. "Anyway, your iPad. I would have set it up, but you need to add your Apple ID and email, and I don't know them."

Molly leaned over and kissed his cheek. "Thank you. It was so sweet of you to not just try and deduce my passwords."

"Well, hurry up and put it somewhere so you can thank me properly," he groused.

"Fine." Molly took the new iPad, got out of bed and took it to the dressing table, laying it carefully on the top. "I'll take a look at it tomorrow," she said, turning back towards the bed. Sherlock was watching her as she got back under the duvet.

"What were you staring at?" she asked.

"You.." He pulled her into his embrace, kissing her hungrily, in a way that was definitely not the best way to be kissing when they were in bed. Her heart started to pound, but she pushed him away. "Remember our agreement, no getting too carried away in the bedroom."

He rested his forehead against hers. "I know. It's just, well it's hard to think straight when you walk around in that skimpy chemise."

"I always wear a chemise to bed," she pointed out. "Why is today any different?"

"It's different if we proceed to step one."

Molly tried to recall exactly what step one was. **Oh. Hold Molly close at night, hand on breast over chemise.**

"Well, I'm ready to go to sleep, if you want to try it," she said a little shyly. She set her alarm, switched off the bedroom lamp and turned away from Sherlock, allowing him to tuck her against his body, feeling the touch of his lips against her neck.

Then he slid his right arm over her head and settled his left over her body, moving his hand so it just touched her breast. It felt so good, having him hold her this way and she gave a deep sigh of contentment.

"Feels really good, Sherlock," she said, and felt his hand cupping her breast a little more firmly.

"I love you Molly," he whispered into the darkness.

"Love you too," she responded, falling asleep shortly thereafter, feeling completely cherished.

Chapter End Notes

I hope the resolution of the mystery was satisfying for you!
So Molly knows about Sherlock's list. Are you interested to see how well they keep to it?
Sherlock was kissing Molly. As he kissed her, with slow, sensual kisses, his hand moved away from where it was cupping her breast through her chemise. Downward it travelled, until he reached the bottom, so he could slide his hand underneath and upward again, cupping her, feeling her softness. Everything felt so...right with her. He wanted more though. He wanted all of her. Desire shot through him as he continued to kiss his fiancée passionately, expressing his love. Slowly his hand slid back down until they reached her knickers, and he started to move them downwards...

The alarm went off. "Sherlock!" gasped Molly, but it wasn't a gasp of pleasure, it was a gasp of shock.

Sherlock opened his eyes. Molly was still cuddled against him, but somehow he had managed to reach under her chemise and his hand was on her breast, enveloping it completely.

Oh God, he thought, realizing his body was on fire. I must have been having an erotic dream. Thank God my hand didn't actually stray to her knickers.

Molly twisted in his embrace and his hand fell clumsily away.

"What are you doing?" she hissed. "I thought we were going to spend a few days until we moved to step two of your list!"

Sherlock felt his face flush scarlet, matching the heat that was surging in the rest of his body. "Oh God, Molly, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to. I was dreaming about you and well, I guess my body reacted to it."

"Clearly," she said, with a strained note in her voice. "I can tell."

Sherlock inched his body away so it was not touching hers any more as his embarrassment continued. "I'm sorry," he said again. "Apparently my conscious mind does not have control over my unconscious body." He suddenly realized the alarm was still buzzing and apparently, so did Molly, because she turned around and snapped it off.

The silence that filled the air was almost deafening, as he waited for Molly's response.

After awhile, as if she'd been getting her thoughts in order, she spoke. He could see her eyes were filling with tears, even before she spoke, and he knew what was coming. "I think, Sherlock...I think I had better sleep upstairs for awhile."

He closed his eyes, hating what she was saying, but knowing she was right. It's all your damn fault, treacherous body, he berated himself silently before responding. "How...how long?" he could
feel tears forming in his own eyes, but kept them closed.

"I don't know," she said in a strangled voice, and he could tell she was trying not to sob. "This isn't your fault, sweetheart. In fact, I really liked your list, but at this rate, we won't be able to stick to it."

He opened his eyes and could see the agony in hers, which he knew matched his own. Tears were falling unashamedly down her cheeks, and his began to fall as well, as she continued.

"The problem is being in bed together like this. I know it is. Just now, when the alarm went off and I felt your hand on my breast, I told you off, but my heart wanted it, wanted more. It felt so right, so natural." This time, it was her face that changed to a rosy hue.

As she spoke, Sherlock felt the raging fire within him subside and a calmness settle over him, despite the tears sliding down his cheeks. He held out his arms to Molly and she slid into his embrace, arms wrapping tightly about his waist, as he held her also, rubbing her back soothingly.

"You're right, sweetheart. We need to do this. I hope it won't be for long, because, God knows, I'm going to miss waking up next to you, but it will give us a few days respite from this...ache. And I do ache for you, Molly. Let's go back to reading the Bible some more, maybe do it together. It will help us stay strong."

"I'd like that," she said, her voice slightly muffled by his chest.

"It won't be forever," he said comfortingly. "If we can get a better handle on things, we can go back to sleeping in the sane bed, okay?"

He felt her nod. "What about...what about your list?"

"It's not going anywhere, we'll just put it on hold for now."

She sniffled. "Okay. I'm acting like such a baby." She released her death grip on Sherlock's waist and he dropped his arms, while she reached over to grab a couple tissues from the tissue box. She handed one to Sherlock, then wiped her tears and blew her nose, while he did the same.

Trying to lighten the brevity of their conversation, he said, "Your nose is red," before kissing the tip of it.

"Yours is too," she responded kissing his nose in turn, and then suddenly, they were laughing. "They say a good cry can be cathartic," said Molly.

"Indeed," he replied, feeling much better himself, relieved that he would not be needing a cold shower after all.

After getting dressed, they ate breakfast together. "Don't forget, Eileen, the caterer will be here tonight at seven-thirty," Molly reminded Sherlock.

"Oh, that's right! Apparently my mind palace is still out to lunch. I blame you, you know, Molly," he said teasingly. It was the truth though. He was finding it harder and harder to concentrate, at least when it came to more innocuous and trivial things. It was like everything Molly-related was flagged at the top, everything else was below, somewhere.

"Then delete some of your files on me," she teased back.

Teasing was good, less intense. "Never!" he declared.
"So, are you up to anything today?" she asked.

"I might look for a case or two I can solve without leaving the flat. By the way, I meant to mention, Barbara Baxter will be receiving a fairly large life insurance payout from her husband's death, eventually. She was very grateful for my help. Of course you helped too, so this also belongs to you."

He pulled a cheque from his wallet and tossed it casually on the table.

Molly looked at it and gasped. "Two thousand pounds? Wow!"

"It's rather more than my usual hourly fee, even if case took most of the day, but it's a little extra for us to have."

"You should take it to the bank today then," Molly said.

"I suppose I could do that. Should I pick up some takeaway for dinner tonight, seeing as you only get off work at six? Do you want me to come to the hospital?"

"Best not come. You're too distracting. Takeaway sounds good, though."

He was a little disappointed. It felt like they were taking a step backwards in their relationship, but he knew they needed to re-evaluate things. They were only halfway through their engagement and it seemed like a lifetime they still needed to wait to be intimate. He sighed.

"Okay then." He stood and took their breakfast dishes to the sink.

"I guess..." she said, "I guess I'll be off then. I'll see you tonight."

Not even a farewell kiss, or a promise to text? he wondered as he watched her exit the kitchen. Then he saw the hunch to her shoulders and he couldn't take it anymore. She was suffering as much as he was.

He strode towards her, reaching her just as she had grabbed her jacket, wrapping his arms around her from behind. "Aren't you forgetting something?" he whispered in her ear.

"I...well..." she stammered and he spun her around, then put his hands on either side of her face, kissing her, trying to show her he understood, that he loved her, that everything would work out. He felt her relax finally, the tension easing from her body, and he stopped kissing her, pressing his forehead to hers.

"That's better," he murmured.

"I thought you might not want to kiss me for awhile," she said softly.

His hands were still at the sides of her face, and he held her gaze. "Why on earth would you think that?"

"Because I'm making this so difficult for you. Asking you to wait for me, for our wedding night."

"I agreed to it, and I know it is what God wants for us. Maybe it isn't something too many people actually undertake, but this is us. Yes, my hormones are raging like a teenage boy's would be. Yes, I want you so badly I can hardly stand it. But I will wait for you, not because I have to, but because I want to. I meant what I said on that paper last night. I am going to do my best to blow your mind on our wedding night, okay?"
"Okay."

He kissed her again gently and let her go. "Text me later, okay? I'll miss you."

"I'll miss you too, Sherlock."

And then she was out the door, off to work. Sherlock watched her go, then went to look out the sitting room window to watch her hurry down the street to the train station.

Afterwards, Sherlock settled down to work. He opened up his laptop and perused his emails, deleting all the non-relevant ones. There was no email from that mystery person. He wondered when the next would come. He shot off a couple of emails to potential clients, noting one that could take him out of town. With recent events in mind, he seriously considered it. Maybe a few days away from Molly would cool him off. Then he remembered when he had come back from Dartmoor, and how their separation had made their reunion all the more intense, well, after the Mary business had been sorted out. He sent his regrets, recommending the man consult with the local police.

Sherlock went to the bank, and as he was on his way home he got a text. He was surprised to see it was from Lestrade, requesting immediate help with a case. It was the first time in weeks that Greg had asked for his help.

With nothing better to do for the afternoon, and knowing it would be a good distraction from thoughts of Molly, he headed to the police station.

At New Scotland Yard, Sherlock discovered that the case was easily within his purview, and he solved it in under two hours. After that was done, he had a chance to talk a little with Greg.

"I hear you have a new lady friend," he remarked, as the detective inspector was completing his report on the case.

"I suppose Molly told you. Did she tell you she suggested we get together sometime socially?"

"No, but that would be acceptable." A good way to have another distraction from Molly, he thought. "I think we are free this Saturday evening, if you would like to perhaps go out for dinner. Angelo's is always good."

Almost providentially, his text alert sounded at that moment from Molly.

"Quiet day here. How's your day going?"

Greg said, "That sounds good. Let me text Lori and see if it's okay with her. She's a clinical psychologist, you know," he added proudly.

Sherlock smiled slightly, then tapped out a response to Molly. "Went to the bank, turned down a case that would have taken me out of London. Lestrade called me in, and I solved a case for him in two hours. It was only a five. I suggested we go out to Angelo's on Saturday night, hope that's okay. He's texting his lady friend now."

He waited for Molly's response. Greg was still occupied with his texting too.

Molly's next text read, "That was very thoughtful of you, sweetheart. Hope they can make it."

Sherlock didn't respond immediately, waiting patiently for Greg to get a response.
Anderson popped his head in. "Hey Sherlock. Heard you were here. Thanks for the wedding invite, though I was a bit surprised to get one."

Sherlock shrugged. "I know you have always wanted me and Molly to get together. You even told me that ridiculous theory you had about me using a bungee cord to fake my death and then crashing into the window where Molly was, and 'snogging her' as I recall. Such a preposterous notion, the whole thing."

"Well, I wasn't entirely off the mark. Molly did help you, and you've obviously been snogging her a lot lately," Anderson remarked flippantly.

"Don't make me regret inviting you, Anderson," growled Sherlock.

"Sorry, sorry, just saying. You and Molly are a match made in heaven. Nobody else would put up with you, and nobody else could put up with what she does for a living."

Sherlock clenched his fists. "I'm warning you, Phillip," he stressed the name to show he was not kidding, "another word and the invitation is rescinded. Plus I'll give you a black eye."

Anderson lifted up his hands in surrender and shuffled off meekly.

"That was bloody brilliant," said Greg, who had obviously caught the whole exchange. "He's always rubbing people the wrong way."

"Yeah, I should have thought twice about inviting him to the wedding. I just hope he behaves himself."

"If he causes trouble, I'll use my handcuffs on him. By the way, Lori says yes. Seven o'clock at Angelo's good?"

"Works for me. I'll book a table for the four of us. Talk to you later."

"Thanks for the help today, Sherlock. I know it was easy for you, but it had me stumped."

"That's what friends are for," responded Sherlock, and for the first time he realized it. They really were friends. Yes, he suspected Greg might have nurtured some false hope in regards to Molly, but apparently he was finally moving on with this Lori woman.

Lestrade's broad grin showed him he had made the man's day. Funny how acknowledging a friend could brighten someone's day.

He hailed a cab to take him back to Baker Street, then texted Molly once he was settled in his seat. "Date night confirmed, seven o'clock at Angelo's on Saturday. Had a revelation too. Greg is my friend."

The text came back quickly. "You didn't know that before?" He could almost read the surprise in her words.

"Never thought of it before. I always said I didn't have friends. Now I realize I do. They are the people I would miss if they weren't around."

"Proud of you, honey. Gotta get back to work. See you tonight. Love you XX"

"Love you too," he responded and pocketed his phone. He really needed to carry his reading glasses around. Texting was getting harder without them.
Sherlock realized he had completely forgotten to eat since breakfast, but he didn't want to eat until Molly came home. Instead, back at home he took his Bible from the bedroom and read 2 Corinthians.

Shortly before six, Sherlock went to Joe's Fish Shop to grab some takeaway. Instead of just chips, he bought two pieces of battered fish as well. Then he returned home and waited for his Molly.

Chapter End Notes

Well, a little bit of trouble in paradise. Were you fooled at the beginning of the chapter or did you guess it was a dream? Did you anticipate this happening? Do you think it is wise that Sherlock and Molly have decided to spend a few nights apart?

Did you enjoy the chat with Anderson? I just had to show that Anderson had made Sherlock aware of that theory including what I think is the hottest kiss to ever be seen if television. Don't y9u agree? How about Sherlock realizing that Greg was his friend?

Post your comment and make my day!
Planning the Menu – Molly (Thursday)

Chapter Summary

Sherlock and Molly discuss the reception menu with their caterer.

Chapter Notes

Some of you are aware that I have been having symptoms of carpal tunnel, which has made it difficult for me to keep up with publishing my various stories. This one has been an exception because it is so long and I want to get it finished, especially if I have readers who want to finish this story before progressing to my other ones which take place after the wedding.

Due to my legal blindness, I have to sit with my hands in an awkward position in order to type on my iPad. The pain has been progressively getting worse over the past couple of months. I have an appointment next Wednesday with a hand surgeon and expect I will probably need surgery on both. Your prayers would be appreciated, thank you.

After Molly left Sherlock and was on her way to work, she thought about the morning's events. Things had certainly taken an unexpected turn. It had been the hardest thing for her to say they needed to sleep apart, but she knew it had to be done. Things were just too intense and her resolve was weakening. She'd had a whole lifetime of instruction about staying pure until marriage. She had always followed it, never feeling the desire to take any of her relationships further than kissing. Admittedly, even the amount of relationships that had progressed to kissing, she could count on one hand. With Sherlock it was different though. She loved him passionately, and she hungered for him. She really wished they had set an earlier date for the wedding, but the die was cast.

At work she performed her duties on auto-pilot. She was grateful to Kathy, one of the lab assistants who helped out when Kaitlyn was busy with other work. Kathy was always cheerful and willing to lend an ear if needed.

"You look a bit stressed today, Molly," Kathy commented. "Is everything okay?" Kathy was a fellow Christian, and they had spoken in the past about their faith together. She was also one of the invited guests for the wedding.

"Everything's fine. Sherlock and I have made some choices that perhaps are not so good in retrospect. We've been sharing a bed together."

At Kathy's raised eyebrow, she added hastily. "Just sharing, Kathy. We decided we wanted to be close to each other. Most of the time it's fine, but occasionally, well, things get a little bit..." she flushed.
"Tempting?" suggested Kathy.

"Exactly."

"I'm no expert, as you know, but I can guess that sharing a bed with the man you love would certainly open up a world of temptation. I don't even plan on living with the man God intends for me, until after we are married. I understand though you kind of didn't have a choice, when that nasty man was pursuing you. Sherlock wanted to protect you in the best way he knew how, by having you stay with him."

Molly gave a dry laugh. "Yeah. Too bad it didn't actually prevent me from being kidnapped. Thank God, Sherlock found me so quickly." She shuddered involuntarily, recalling once again that awful night. "Of course, that was also the night Sherlock gave his life to the Lord, so I can't really complain."

"It was a traumatic experience for you though. I'm glad Sherlock was able to help you through it, and that he became a Christian too. I hope one day I can find someone like him."

"I'm sure you will," Molly said warmly. "But yeah, definitely keep out of the path if temptation and don't live with a man before the wedding if you can help it."

"I know how strong your faith is, Molly. You'll get through this, and I'm sure the waiting to be together will be worth it."

"Thanks, Kathy," Molly said gratefully to her friend. "I appreciate your support." Much as Molly cared for her best friend, Kaitlyn, it was refreshing to speak with another person at work who understood and shared her faith, and who also encouraged her to uphold her values.

There were no post-mortems to do thankfully, so it was mainly analysis of blood and tissue samples from living patients, and compiling reports. People always assumed she did nothing but autopsies all day, but that simply wasn't true. Kathy was an able assistant, getting the various slides she requested that needed to be examined, and replacing them in the drawer when she was finished with them.

She thought about texting Kayla to see how she was doing, but decided against it. According to Sherlock, John had not reconciled with her friend. She would speak to her on Sunday and hope John would have plucked up the courage to speak with Kayla before then.

When Molly texted Sherlock later, she was pleased to discover Greg had followed through on her request to throw some cases his way. When Sherlock had said he had invited Greg and his new girlfriend to go out to dinner with them on Saturday, Molly was even more pleased. The Sherlock of a couple months ago would never have even considered inviting another couple to dinner. His growth in that regard was spectacular. No wonder she fell more in love with him each day.

Finally her work was done for the day and Molly went home. She was a little anxious about whether Sherlock would restrain himself more around her but no, he was as affectionate as always, taking her in his arms and kissing her thoroughly.

When he released her from his embrace, Sherlock said, "I bought chips, and a couple of pieces of fish. Do you even eat fish?"

Molly chuckled. "I guess we do have things to learn about each other still, even after seven years. I like a good battered fish. I don't like any fish with bones in it, especially the ones where they keep the heads on, and that eye just stares at you." She shuddered. "Oh, and don't ever ask me about
caviar. Nasty, salty, fishy taste. One try of that was enough."

"More information for my Molly's food and beverage preferences room," said Sherlock, tapping the side of his head. At Molly's questioning look he added. "I've had to add more rooms just for you. My Molly room was getting too cluttered."

She laughed. "I wish I could order my mind as well as you can. My mind is more like a game of hide and seek when I'm trying to recall something."

"Well, when it comes to recalling something with me or us at least, you can come straight to the source."

"I'll keep that in mind. Now where's the food? I'm starving!"

"On the kitchen table. I got out plates but I didn't unwrap it or it would have gone cold."

In the kitchen, they sat at their usual places and ate their fish and chips. The fish was almost as good as the chips.

"What do you think of the fish?" asked Sherlock, almost as if he was reading her thoughts.

"I really like it. It has been years since I've had fish from a fish and chip shop, but this ranks up there with the best of them."

Once they had finished eating, Sherlock picked up their plates and put them in the sink, then checked his watch. "We have fifteen minutes until," Molly could see him accessing his mind palace for the information, "Eileen gets here. Just enough time."

Molly stood. "For what?"

"For me to do a quick experiment on whether you taste like fish."

"That is so gross," she expostulated, backing away.

But Sherlock was not to be dissuaded. He caught her up in his arms and kissed her, urging her mouth open with his tongue until she had no choice but to part her lips as he conducted his "experiment."

After he was satisfied, they resumed kissing a minute or so longer at the end of which Molly asked, "So, what were your results, oh mighty detective?"

"No fish residue. A lot of salt flavour, but I will probably need to do more experiments in future to corroborate my results."

"You're not planning to publish these results, are you?" Molly asked, quirking her eyebrow.

'Hmmm, I hadn't thought of that, but maybe..." he teased. "I could call it 'The science of tasting while kissing."

Molly giggled. "Only you would even consider anything like that seriously. I love all your unique little traits."

"Anderson told me today that we are a perfect match because you are the only person who could put up with me."

Molly frowned. "That was rather rude."
"He also cast aspersions on your line of work. He seems to think most people would be intimidated by it."

"Well on that, he's correct. Telling people you do post-mortems for a living can be a real conversation killer."

"To me it denotes a woman of high intelligence and practicality," responded Sherlock.

Their conversation was interrupted by the doorbell.

"Remind me to tell you sometime about Anderson's ridiculous theory for me surviving my fall years ago. It includes you," he murmured.

Their door lady, ahem landlady had done the honours of opening the outer door and a knock sounded at 221B.

Molly opened the door and ushered the woman in, then shook her hand.

"Thanks for coming, Eileen. I think I've seen you at church before, but we haven't spoken. I'm Molly, and this is my fiancé, Sherlock."

"Very nice to meet you both," said the older woman. "I've heard about your fiancé of course. I would never have expected our little church would be catering for his wedding reception. It's rather exciting."

"Should we sit at the kitchen table," Molly asked, "and can I get you a cup of coffee or tea?"

"Kitchen is fine, and I'd love a coffee. It's been a long day."

At Molly's questioning look, Sherlock nodded and Molly prepared three cups of coffee while her fiancé and Eileen got situated at the table. *It was remarkable how they could communicate without words,* she thought.

Once the coffee was ready, Molly placed some ginger nuts on a plate as well for them to snack on, and Eileen began to speak.

"The first thing you need to decide is whether you want to have a buffet or sit down meal at your wedding reception."

Molly glanced over at Sherlock, who nodded again, indicating she could take the lead. "Sherlock and I would like to take the buffet option. That way people can choose what they want to eat."

"Great," said Eileen. "Personally I think that makes things easier. I have a list here of all the different options you can choose from, from the kind of vegetables you want, to potatoes or pasta or both. There are several meat options as well."

She put the list on the table and Molly and Sherlock perused it. Sherlock absently grabbed a biscuit and munched on it. They finally decided on ham, sliced roast beef, chicken drumsticks and various salads, with new potatoes and mixed vegetables as well. There would be vol au vents, crudités with dips and mini quiches available when people arrived. There would also be a dessert table with macarons, profiteroles, chocolate covered strawberries, and other sweet treats.

"Do you have an estimate for how many guests? We don't need a final number until two weeks in advance."
"Probably under fifty people, including the six of us in the wedding party," Molly said.

"Lovely. I do love the smaller, more intimate weddings," smiled the caterer.

Sherlock and Molly were very pleased with Eileen's reasonable per person cost. Of course, they would not know the final cost until the final numbers came in.

"We do require a non-refundable deposit of £500."

Sherlock produced a cheque book and wrote out a cheque, then handed it to the caterer.

The only thing you need to do, once you have your RSVP's, is to give me the number and figure out which table your guests are to be seated at. The church has round tables that can seat up to 10 people, although we recommend keeping it at eight if possible, just to allow the guests a little more room. Of course, the bridal table will be at the end. You'll only need two rectangular tables due to the small size of your wedding party."

"Thanks so much, Eileen. When do you need the numbers by?"

"No less than two weeks before the wedding, although three would be better, if you can manage it." 

"We'll try to get the numbers to you as soon as we know them ourselves and can get the seating list done," promised Molly.

"Well, I think that's it," said Eileen, preparing to leave. "I look forward to seeing you on your wedding day. I am always on hand to supervise things. Or perhaps I'll see you at church." She shook hands with the couple, and left.

"That's another thing to check off the list," Molly said brightly.

"Did you end up contacting the DJ to add that song?" inquired Sherlock.

"Yup. Everything's set." **Including the change of plan for the wedding dance**, she thought.

"Do you want to finish setting up your iPad now?"

"Good idea," replied Molly. She went to the bedroom and brought out her lovely new iPad. She got everything set up, downloaded her Holy Bible and Our Daily Bread apps and the FaceTime one as well as her favourite sudoku one.

"Interesting," observed Sherlock. "I was not aware you played sudoku."

"I usually just play it on the Tube ride to work. It passes the time. Do you ever play?"

"On occasion. They are ridiculously easy," he stated with a shrug.

"Coming from anyone else that would sound completely arrogant. With you though, I'm not surprised," she replied with a grin.

"Your iPad really needs a cover to protect it, I should have thought of it when I ordered it. Why don't you go take a shower now while I do that."

"Okay." Molly went off to shower and get ready for bed. Afterwards, she put the dressing gown over her chemise. It was strange to know she would be sleeping upstairs again. She wasn't really enthused about that. She would miss Sherlock's warmth, and the way he always held her at night.
While he was taking his shower, Molly brought her devotional and Bible back to the sitting room to read. She had a couple days to catch up on, and she did so.

When Sherlock reappeared in the sitting room, looking incredibly handsome with his damp hair curlier than usual, he was also wearing his dressing gown and carrying his Bible. "Would you like to read to each other?" He suggested.

"I'd like that. Where would you like to start?"

"If you don't mind, I would like to continue where I left off. I am now in Galatians."

"Wow, you're doing wonderfully well," Molly enthused. "Why don't you read the first chapter, and I'll do the second?"

Sherlock nodded. He took his reading glasses from where they had been laying on the desk and put them on.

Molly felt her heart skip a beat. He was just too adorable with them on. It was very distracting.

Sherlock began to read. Molly was mesmerized by the sound of his voice. He was actually a wonderful reader, he didn't just read the words, he spoke them with feeling; another thing she had never known about the man she loved. The timbre of his voice was so thrilling that she found it hard to concentrate on the words, despite the expression he used when reading aloud.

"Your turn," he said, after the chapter ended.

"Oh, right," she said. She was a little embarrassed. She had missed the last part of the chapter entirely, just looking at him enunciating the words, and the way his lips moved.

Molly read the second chapter. At the end of it she commented, "I like verse 16 where it talks about not being justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. It's comforting to know that however many times we fail, we are still saved because of our faith."

"Paul certainly imparted a lot of wisdom," agreed Sherlock. "You read beautifully, Molly."

She blushed. "I was thinking the same about you."

"We should probably leave it there for tonight. It's getting late, and I'd like to at least have a few minutes to kiss you before you head upstairs. I'll miss you."

"I'll miss you too, Sherlock."

He took her in his arms and kissed her, gently at first, then more deeply. She knew he was holding himself back, restraining himself from allowing their embrace to get too passionate.

After a few minutes, Sherlock broke the kiss. "Take the alarm clock with you, sweetheart, so you get up on time in the morning."

Molly nodded, and they walked to the bedroom together. Sherlock unplugged the alarm clock and handed it to her. "Sleep well, my darling. I'll see you in the morning."

He kissed her once more, lightly, then Molly headed upstairs to the lonely, small bedroom at the top of the stairs.

She set up the alarm clock before getting into the narrow bed. Idly she noted the jumpers still hanging over the airer which needed to be put away, and the cot over at the side. With both cot and
bed in the room, it felt a little claustrophobic, but that couldn't be helped. She had brought her iPad upstairs with her and was just putting it on the small dressing table when she heard the FaceTime chime. *What in the world?*

She picked up the device and saw the call was coming from Sherlock. She hit the accept button and smiled when his image appeared on the huge screen. Much better than the phone screen.

"I thought I'd make sure this worked," he said, smiling at her from the screen. She could see he was sitting in bed, because of the headboard behind.

"Thank you. I miss you already," she said with a sigh, staring at the image of the man she loved, so close, yet so far away.

"Me too. It's not forever though and hey, we can do this each night until we feel ready to sleep in the same bed again, okay?"

"Okay." It did indeed make her feel better. Sleeping apart from him was not going to be easy after already sleeping in the same bed for a month, but FaceTiming was better than nothing.

"I love you, Molly Hooper. Now get some rest," Sherlock ordered.

"I will. I love you too, Sherlock. Goodnight, my love." She blew him a kiss, and he reciprocated. Then she ended the call and decided to put the iPad on the little nightstand, by the clock.

She settled under the covers and, after about ten minutes, slept.

Chapter End Notes

What do you think of the wedding reception menu? Thanks to tboy1971 for her input on menu suggestions.

Do you like the way Sherlock FaceTimed Molly before bed? Isn't it good she got her iPad when she did?

What did you think about Molly's comment about the Galatians passage? Did you like the way she was a little distracted by the sound of Sherlock's voice? I think I would be distracted by it too, because it is very lovely to listen to.

Any support and feedback you can provide is greatly appreciated, as always.
Sherlock opened his eyes. Something felt different. Then he remembered. He was alone in the bed. There was no indentation on the pillow next to him. He sighed. For a month Molly had been sharing the bed with him, and he desperately missed her presence, her warmth. He liked waking up with her in his arms, kissing her good morning.

He could hear vague sounds coming from the kitchen, so apparently his fiancée was already up. He reached over to get his phone from the nightstand and peered at the time. Almost eight.

He got out of bed and put on his dressing gown, then headed for the kitchen.

Sherlock could smell bacon frying, and his stomach rumbled.

“Hi!” Molly came over to him and kissed him on the cheek. “I was just about to wake you. I woke before the alarm, so I thought I’d make us a hot breakfast. You can set the table if you like. It’s almost ready.”

He saw coffee already waiting on the table for them. Molly was so organized. It was something he both admired and appreciated. Her influence was a good one as well. He had made a conscious effort to keep things more tidy because he loved her.

Molly set their plates down, perfect fried eggs and bacon with just the right amount of crispness. He was spoiled by her excellent cooking skills.

“Really good as usual, love,” Sherlock praised, and she rewarded him with her lovely smile.

“You know I like taking care of you.”

“You do it so well, and in so many ways.” He took their plates to the sink, saying, “I’ll take care of these so you can finish getting ready for work.”

He did the dishes while Molly went into the bathroom.

When she came out, Sherlock checked his phone for the time. Good, still enough time. As soon as Molly entered the kitchen he swooped on her and held her tightly. “I’m waiting for my good morning kiss.”

He was satisfied when she put her hands behind his head and pulled it down to her level, pressing her lips against his. So soft, so sweet and always so kissable.

They stayed locked in their embrace until Molly finally pulled away. “Much as I’d like to stand
here kissing you all day, duty calls. Remember, I’ll be home later than usual tonight because I have that errand to run.”

“Okay, darling. I’ll text you, or you can text me when it’s quiet.” He kissed her again and let her go. She looked so pretty with her hair in a side braid today.

Sherlock watched her leave through the front window again. He had an idea. Taking his laptop from the desk, he suddenly realized his desk chair should have arrived. Mrs. Hudson was probably holding onto it.

Setting the laptop back down, he headed downstairs to 221A and knocked.

Mrs. Hudson answered almost immediately. “I was wondering if you were going to pick up your post and the box sometime,” she said. “I would have brought it upstairs, but it’s a bit heavy.”

“Sorry, I’ve been a little distracted lately. I’ll take the box now and the post too.”

The landlady showed him the box, where the delivery man had put it. He picked it up easily. The box was not big enough for an assembled chair, so he would have to put it together.

“Can you put the post on top of the box?” he asked, and Mrs. Hudson did so. “By the way, I’ll book a taxi tomorrow for you and Molly to go to your spa day,” he told her, before he returned upstairs.

Once he set the envelopes on the coffee table, which looked mostly like more wedding responses, he set to work opening the box and pulling out its contents.

The chair wasn’t too hard to put together. It was mainly a case of attaching the base with the rollers to the rest of the chair. Using his reading glasses, Sherlock was able to follow the instructions more easily. Reading glasses were a great idea, he thought. How silly and vain of me to have not gotten them earlier.

Sherlock looked in satisfaction at the assembled chair sat in it and gave it a test spin. All seemed to be in order. He took the chair to the desk and opened his laptop again. Then he went to YouTube to do what he had planned on doing earlier.

Seeing Molly’s braid that morning, he had thought it might be nice to learn how to braid her hair. It would be something he could do to show her he loved her, and to reassure her he wasn’t in any way cross at her for their new sleeping arrangements.

He found a video explaining how to do a regular braid, a French braid and a Dutch braid. Sherlock paid close attention to it, then catalogued it into his mind palace under Molly - miscellaneous. He felt sure he could do her hair. Perhaps he’d try it tonight when she got home.

Sherlock contemplated opening the wedding responses, but decided it would be best if he and Molly did it together, so she could notate the acceptances and regrets on her note pad.

At lunch time, Sherlock took a short walk. He was in the mood for something sweet. There was a Dunkin’ Donuts just a little way down the street, so he bought half a dozen doughnuts. The sign in the window said £3.99 for 6 donuts, but only on Monday. He’d have to remember that in future. That funny, shortened spelling of doughnuts, so American, he reflected.

He ate two of the doughnuts, a glazed and caramel one. He had also bought another glazed, a double caramel, a chocolate with sprinkles and a chocolate lovers one, unsure of Molly’s preference. They could have one tonight after dinner, and another at breakfast time.
Just after his sweet lunch, a text came in from Molly. He had just been about to text her and ask how her day was going too. He read the text.

“Just did a post-mortem on a thirty year old man. Heroin overdose. I hate these post-mortems. They make me think about what might have happened to you…”

“I’m so sorry, love. You don’t have to ever worry about me in that regard. I do not miss the drugs at all. That artificial high was replaced by the real one I get, being with you,” he texted back.

“I’m so glad about that. I forgot to tell you this morning, there’s still some fettuccine left if you want it for dinner. Don’t wait for me, because it might be past eight when I get home.”

“That’s fine, love. I’ll miss you. Hope the rest of your day is less stressful.”

“Thanks, Sherlock. I love you XX”

“Love you too,” he texted back, realizing that seemed to be the way their text conversations always ended. Next time he’d have to get in the “I love you” first.

Sherlock opened his laptop again to check his email. Nothing new from the mysterious person who thought Molly was too good for him. Perhaps the person had given up. There was nothing that caught his eye, as far as doing a case was concerned.

Feeling restless to do something productive, Sherlock decided to take a taxi to T K Maxx and buy another pair of reading glasses. That way he could keep one in the sitting room and one in the bedroom. After that, he decided he’d pop into Bart’s to surprise Molly.

His mission accomplished at the big department store - an identical pair of reading glasses, Sherlock headed for the hospital.

Once there, he took the lift upstairs and headed for the lab. He assumed Molly would be there, as she hadn’t mentioned doing any other post-mortems today. Sure enough, he spotted a brown ponytail.

Sherlock ducked out of sight and put on his new reading glasses. It would mean he couldn’t see Molly clearly, but she did seem to like him in the glasses.

Returning to the doorway, he said in his deepest baritone to Molly who he could vaguely see was now facing his way, “Hey, beautiful. Do you like what you see?”

“What the hell?” he heard from behind him at the same time as a shriek came from the woman inside the lab.

Sherlock flamed with embarrassment. Damn idiot he was. Molly was behind him, so who was the woman in the lab? He took off the reading glasses and blinked a couple times. On closer inspection, with his regular vision, the woman looked nothing like Molly. She was the same height and her hair was the same colour, but that was about it. She was wearing a lab coat like Molly’s, though.

You bloody fool, he berated himself. Molly isn’t even wearing a ponytail today. “Oh my God, I am so sorry,” he apologized, looking from Molly to the other woman. He was mortified. He’d just tried to flirt with a stranger.

Then, unexpectedly, Molly began to laugh. Between giggles she told the woman, “Stacy, this is my fiancé, Sherlock Holmes.” Then to Sherlock, “Sweetheart, this is Stacy. She’s a new intern at
Bart’s.”

“Uh, pleased to meet you, Stacy,” he mumbled, still feeling the flush on his face.

“Oh my God. Of course you are!” exclaimed the woman. “Don’t you usually wear a deerstalker?”

“Only when I have to,” he responded. He had a feeling Molly was never going to let him live this down.

She walked over to where he was still uncomfortably standing in the doorway and kissed his cheek.

“What are you doing here?”

He couldn’t tell her he had been missing her terribly, not in front of the strange woman, so he attempted a nonchalant shrug.

“I was in the vicinity, buying another pair of reading glasses to keep in the bedroom.”

“Well, I think I’ll take my lunch now,” said Stacy diplomatically. She left the room and Molly smiled up at him.

“This really is a nice surprise, although I’m a little disappointed you could mistake me so easily for Stacy.”

“I just saw the ponytail, then I put on the reading glasses. You know how they blur my distance vision.”

Molly chuckled. “I’m sorry I didn’t get to answer your question, seeing as it wasn’t directed to me.”

Sherlock pouted. “It was meant for you, and you know it.”

“Alright then, my love. I definitely like what I see, with or without glasses.”

He bent his head and gave her a lingering kiss, before saying, “I didn’t want to say it in front of your intern, but I’ve been missing you terribly.”

“I’ve only been gone a few hours.”

“I know, but I was thinking about not seeing you again until later tonight. I just needed to see you for a bit - to keep me going.”

“That is the sweetest thing,” breathed Molly and she reached to put her arms around his neck and draw him closer. “I love you so much,” she whispered, before their lips met again.

He put his arms around her waist, pulling her close, drowning in the feel of her lips. The woman knew how to kiss him in just the right way. He felt that ache spread through him, the ache to be with her, and pulled away.

“I should really let you get on with your work,” he said huskily.

Molly sighed, “I guess so. I’m glad you came in though. Do you think the taxi fare was worth a few minutes of my time?”

“I wouldn’t have stopped by if I hadn’t thought so. Every minute with you is priceless.”

She gave him one of those smiles that made his stomach do somersaults. “Sherlock, you really do have the heart of a romantic, don’t you? I’ll see you tonight, my love.” She offered her lips for a
farewell kiss, which he gave her, and he left the hospital, reflecting that the embarrassment he had endured was well worth the exceptional kissing that followed. At least that little adventure had shaved off a couple hours.

Back at Baker Street, Sherlock sent off a text to Mycroft. “Are you busy tomorrow? Thought we could visit a tailor for the wedding.”

He sent the same text to John, hoping they’d be available. Tomorrow would be the perfect opportunity, because Molly and Mrs. Hudson had their spa day from nine until two o’clock. That would actually work out well with the dinner date in the evening at Angelo’s.

Oh, he had to book that yet. Sherlock phoned the restaurant and made a reservation for four people for the following day at seven o’clock.

John responded first in the affirmative, providing he could get a babysitter for Rosie.

“Unfortunately, Mrs. Hudson won’t be available. She and Molly are having a spa day.”

“That sounds nice. Let me call Harry and I’ll let you know.”

A few minutes later, Sherlock got a response from Mycroft. “What time?”

“Ten, here,” he responded.

His brother responded with a “Fine. We can take the town car. See you then.”

Another ten minutes passed and a text came through from John. “Good news. Harry will babysit. What time should I be there?”

“Ten. Thanks, John. See you in the morning.”

**Good,** reflected Sherlock. **Yet another thing I’ll be able to check off the list tomorrow.**

He heated up the leftover fettuccine Alfredo and ate it in front of the telly, idly watching a re-run of “Big Bang Theory.”

When the show was finished, Sherlock took his plate to the kitchen and put it in the sink. Then he sat back down in his chair and waited impatiently for Molly to arrive home. He considered fetching his Bible to read, but decided he was feeling too lazy to get off his chair. He finally dozed off, because nothing on the television interested him.

Chapter End Notes

Did you like the idea of Sherlock learning to braid Molly's hair? How did you find his accidental flirtation with the new intern? I hope you enjoyed it! Have you ever had an embarrassing "mistaken identity" moment? Being legally blind, I've had several, including following the wrong person out of Sam's Club, thinking it was my husband.
As Molly rode the Tube to have her singing lesson with Kaitlyn's sister Madison, she thought back on her day.

Waking up in the small bed upstairs had been strange. She had not slept particularly well, and had felt cold and lonely without Sherlock's presence beside her. She had drifted in and out of sleep all night, but finally gave up at six.

With time on her hands, Molly dressed, then went into the sitting room to read her Bible for awhile. She was pleased to finish the second book of Samuel. By that time, it was ten minutes until her alarm would have awoken her, so she decided to make a hot breakfast for Sherlock and herself.

The kiss he had given her before she left for work was eminently satisfying, as always.

Doing that autopsy had been difficult in the morning. Her thoughts had kept drifting towards Sherlock, and his brush with death. It could so easily have been him on the slab a few months earlier.

Sherlock's visit had made her feel a lot better. She had to stifle a giggle when she remembered how he had inadvertently flirted with the new intern, Stacy. Molly didn't think she'd ever seen him look more embarrassed. When she had gotten over the shock of hearing him use his super sexy voice on another woman, it had been hilarious. Then those kisses in the middle of the day had been a welcome surprise.

The rest of the day had been uneventful. Molly had texted Madison to confirm her lesson, and the opera singer had responded with, "Looking forward to it."

Molly arrived at the location and knocked on the front door. It was opened immediately by a woman a little younger than Kaitlyn with the same hair and eyes. They could almost have been twins, except that Madison had a prominent dimple in her right cheek when she smiled.

"Come in, Molly," she greeted, ushering the Molly into the modest flat. "We'll get started right away."

The blonde walked over to a keyboard set up against a wall and sat on a chair in front of it. "Let's start off with some scales to warm you up, and so I can hear your vocal range."

Molly did as she was asked, easily ascending the scale to a high A, and going down to a low F.

"That's great," praised Madison. "It's obvious you've had training. I see you are using your diaphragm correctly. So many people lift their shoulders when they breathe. Let's take a look at the
song and we'll have a run through first, then we'll go over it again slowly." She popped her karaoke version of "From this Moment On" into a cd player and pressed play.

Molly felt shy at first, but Madison gave her an encouraging smile, and she gained confidence as the song went along.

At the conclusion of the song, Madison remarked. "You sing it beautifully, Molly. I'm sure you are going to make your husband tear up at it."

"I'm not certain if I'll get through it myself without crying," confessed Molly.

"I'm sure he'll appreciate it, whether you get through the whole song or not. Let's go through the song again and we'll pause it in certain places."

As the music began again, Madison said, "Make sure your breath is prepared before you are about to sing. There are so many singers out there these days who have simply awful breath control. They breathe just before they sing and it is audible and distracting. If you breathe in slowly and early, you can be ready to sing without an explosion coming out of your mouth along with the note."

Molly nodded her head. She sang through the song a couple more times, Madison giving instructions on when to prepare her breath for a phrase, making sure she put the endings on the words, like "apart," and didn't swallow them the way one would in normal speech.

"In singing it is so important to watch your enunciation, and to make sure you breathe in logical places. One of my pet peeves is when people sing a song and breathe between syllables in the middle of a word!"

"I totally agree," said Molly.

Madison made a few more comments on changing her dynamic level at certain times, building up the long notes and also not bringing in her vibrato too early.

All these things were adjustments easily made. Molly had learned them at university a long time ago, but had forgotten them because she had discontinued her lessons years earlier.

At the conclusion of the lesson, Madison said, "I have to be honest with you Molly. If you just wanted to brush up on your technique for the song, I don't think you need any more coaching from me. Just remember the little bits of advice I gave you and you'll do perfectly fine. Kaitlyn has been rhapsodizing to me about your fiancé and what a sweetheart he is."

"He certainly is," beamed Molly, pulling out a 20 note and offering it to the opera singer. "Please keep the change. I'm just so thrilled I was able to get some instruction on the song. I want it to be perfect for Sherlock."

"I'm sure it will be!" Madison held out the karaoke cd to Molly. "Look, why don't you use this on your wedding day, that way you don't have to buy your own. I don't have any need for it right now, and you can just give it to Kaitlyn afterwards."

"Oh, thank you," Molly said gratefully. "That will certainly make things easier. I was wondering how I could buy it without Sherlock somehow finding out." She took the cd and put it into her handbag.

Molly left soon afterwards. She had spied a Christian bookshop a short distance from Madison's flat and decided on impulse to go inside. She thought it might be nice to buy a couple books for Sherlock.
Scanning the shelves, her gaze caught on C. S. Lewis's "Mere Christianity." She had heard a lot of good things about it. Then she also spied the book series of "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe." Molly had read it years earlier and loved the Christian themes. On impulse, she purchased the non-fiction book and the first book in the fiction series, as well as its prequel, "The Magician's Nephew," which was published later.

After this, Molly took the Tube back home to Baker street. When she opened the flat door she immediately took note of Sherlock dozing in his chair with the television on.

Molly set down her handbag and the bag of books and slid onto his lap.

He opened his eyes and smiled at her. "I guess I dozed off. I should do it more often if it means waking up to having you sitting on my lap." He pulled her close, kissing her tenderly, before saying, "I missed you."

"I missed you too, Sherlock." Molly rested her head against his chest, enjoying the warmth of his embrace. She liked to listen to the thumping of his heart, especially when it accelerated because of her.

He kissed her hair and asked, "Have you eaten anything?"

"Not since lunch. I'm not really hungry. Can't I just cuddle with you?"

"I'd like nothing more, sweetheart, but you should eat. I bought some doughnuts today from Dunkin' Donuts if you want any."

"Mm, a doughnut does sound good. Haven't had one of those in awhile."

"I suggest you eat a doughnut or two, then have a shower and get into your nightie. I learned something today and I'd like to practice on you."

Molly was immediately intrigued. "What did you learn?"

"You'll find out after your shower." He brushed his lips against hers, then lifted her off his lap.

"Awww, I was just comfy!" she protested, pouting.

"Do as you're told and we can cuddle later."

"Oh, alright," she huffed, going into the kitchen and seeing the doughnut box on the counter. "Mmmm, caramel, my favourite," she pronounced, picking up a doughnut from the box and taking a big bite. "I bought something for you," she mumbled through a mouthful of doughnut, indicating the bag with books.

Sherlock looked into the bag and drew out the books. "What are these?"

Molly swallowed her mouthful of doughnut, then explained. "C. S. Lewis was a Christian author. He wrote "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," a book series about Narnia, with talking animals and some children who go into Narnia through a wardrobe. It has Christian themes throughout."

"Wasn't there a movie by the same name?"

"Yes, there were three, but I only saw the first two. The book series is great. I just thought, well, if you are interested in some light reading, you might like it. The other one is a very well known non-
fiction book. I've heard a lot of good things about it, though I haven't read it. It's nice to have Christian resources other than the Bible." She took another bite of her sweet treat. She hadn't bothered to sit down, and Sherlock came up to her, sliding his arm around her waist.

"Thank you, Molly. That was very sweet of you, but then, everything you do is sweet." He kissed her cheek. "Perhaps we can read the mon-fiction one together."

"I'd like that." She polished off the doughnut, then started to walk through the kitchen, so she could take her shower, however, Sherlock had a firm grasp on her waist.

"Didn't you want me to take a shower?" she questioned, quirking an eyebrow at him.

"I do, but I'd like to try an experiment first." He bent his head to kiss her again, moving his lips against hers so she parted them willingly. His tongue made a foray into her mouth, seeking, she knew, the taste of caramel. Obviously satisfied with his conclusion, Sherlock withdrew his tongue and returned to their usual kissing. She was unable to help the sigh of pleasure that escaped her lips. He was such a wonderful kisser, every time.

Sherlock drew his head back and remarked, "You know, I'm really looking forward to hearing what other noises you make when we no longer have to confine ourselves to kissing."

Molly blushed. "I guess we'll find out in just over five weeks."

"So, we are finally past the halfway point in our engagement. I still regret such a long one."

Molly grinned. "Two and a half months really isn't a long engagement."

"It is, when you are waiting for the wedding night to make love."

"We've made it this far, we can do it. So, could you taste the doughnut?"

"A little, I think it was more the sweetness of your breath from eating it though. I'm seriously considering compiling a list and publishing my results now that you put the thought in my mind yesterday."

Molly laughed. "I'm sure it would be more exciting than those 243 types of ash you published."

He gave her bum a little tap. "Be off with you, Molly Hooper."

As Molly gathered her nightwear, Sherlock called, "Bring me your hairbrush and your hair band when you come out."

That was rather intriguing, she reflected, as she took her shower.

Afterwards, dressed in her chemise and his blue dressing gown, she went into the sitting room. Sherlock was in his chair. He took the proffered brush and slid the hair band around his wrist, then tapped his knees, indicating she should sit on his lap.

She did so, remarking, "That hair band is a bit tight on your wrist. It might cut off your circulation."

"Fine." He took it off his wrist. "Put it on yours and I'll ask for it when I need it."

"Okay," said the bemused Molly. Was he planning on putting her hair in a ponytail?

Sherlock began to brush through Molly's damp hair. It was remarkable. He was so gentle with it,
holding her hair near the roots and brushing out the tangles. Molly had never thought how nice it could be to have her hair brushed by someone else. She vaguely remembered her mother brushing her hair as a child, and whimpering with the pain from her long hair being pulled.

Once her hair was completely smooth, he started to do something with it. Was he..braiding it? She felt him doing something with it, then stopping and grumbling, "She made it look so simple on YouTube."

"Are you trying to braid my hair, Sherlock?" asked Molly.

"Trying, but unsuccessfully, I might add."

Molly was touched. Once again he was trying to please her. "If it would make it easier, I can be a third hand for you. You can have me hold the piece you are not currently working with."

Sherlock huffed a little but did as she suggested and it seemed to be much more successful. As he worked his way down her hair, he improved, and by the time he got to below her scalp, he could easily twist the three strands without her aid.

"Hair band," he requested, so Molly took it off her wrist and handed it to him. He twisted the band over and over around the little piece of hair that was left and then leaned back in triumph. "Not bad, if I do say so myself."

Molly put her hands behind her head and felt the braid. It was nice and tight, he had done a wonderful job. "You're a man of many talents, honey," she said, swishing the braid from side to side.

"Maybe someday I'll be able to do it without your assistance."

Molly shifted her position, pulled her braid around to the front and tickled Sherlock's nose with the tip. "You plan on doing this often for me?"

Sherlock rubbed his nose, "Not if you tickle my nose that way."

"Thank you sweetheart, it's simply lovely." She leaned over and kissed the tip of his nose.

His hands came around her head, preventing her from pulling away. "Now I shall claim my reward," he drawled and proceeded to kiss her thoroughly. Molly lost herself in the kiss, feeling the tingling that had becomes so familiar, the heat that intensified until she was gasping for air and Sherlock's chest was heaving as well. He had not attempted to do anything untoward with his hands, and she knew instinctively he was holding himself in check, trying to prove to her he could keep his control. They sighed in unison and Molly laid her head against his chest, feeling Sherlock's rapid breathing tickle her bare neck.

They sat for some time, feeling each other's warmth. Finally Sherlock linked a hand with hers and said. "Buying those books for me got me thinking. Tell me what it was like growing up in a Christian household. How did you know your childhood faith was still true as you grew older?"

"I was fortunate to have very good Biblical grounding right from the start. I participated in a movement called the Girls Brigade. Its mission is to 'help girls become followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and through self control, reverence and a sense of responsibility to find true enrichment of life.' That's where I learned the values I hold dear. There's a Boys Brigade too, whose mission statement is 'the advancement of Christ's kingdom among Boys and the promotion of habits of Obedience, Reverence, Discipline, Self-respect and all that tends towards a true Christian manliness.'"
"It sounds like a fine organization. Does our church participate in the Girls and Boys Brigade?"

"Yes, Sherlock," she nodded. "In fact, there's a service incorporating them once a month, and it is this Sunday."

"Good. When we have children, I would like them to receive the same Biblical background. After all, look how you turned out." He squeezed her hand, and she squeezed his back.

"Thank you, sweetheart. I would like that too. While we're on the subject of church things - I was thinking of making a Sunday roast and inviting Kayla to come over after church. I was wondering if you wanted to invite John and Rosie, not saying anything about Kayla, of course?"

Sherlock released her hand to stroke her cheek. "My fiancée, the matchmaker."

"They need to talk, Sherlock. I thought maybe we could find some excuse to leave them alone together after lunch, kind of force their hand."

Sherlock shook his head. "Very devious of you, my love." As if to show her he was only kidding, he made a suggestion. "We could say Mrs Hudson wanted to see Rosie, and then we could 'accidentally' stay with her for awhile."

"Hmmm, I like that idea. I'll text Kayla now, before it gets too late, and see if she's available. If she is, you can go ahead and invite John."

Molly sent off a text to Kayla. "Sherlock and I were wondering if you'd come over to our place after church for Sunday roast. Are you free?"

The answer came back almost immediately. "Thanks Molly. It would be good to do something nice this weekend. I have no life, after all. What time?"

"Can you just com with us after church?"

"That would be fine. Thanks for inviting me. I'll see you Sunday."

"Great! See you then."

"All good?" questioned Sherlock.

"Yup," nodded Molly. "You can text John now, perhaps say one o'clock on Sunday? That way we will be already home."

"I'll just tell him tomorrow. He, Mycroft and I are going out to see a tailor. They will be here at ten."

"Oh good. You have something to do while I'm relaxing and getting pampered," said Molly with a grin.

"Yep. I will book a taxi for you and Mrs. Hudson in the morning, for ten past nine. It's a bit of a drive to the spa centre, I'm afraid. Then you'll just need to get a taxi home at one, when you are done."

"I won't mind the ride. I'm sure Mrs. Hudson will have plenty of questions for me about how our wedding planning is going. Speaking of wedding, I'm guessing we got a few RsVP's today."

"I didn't want to open them without you. I know you are keeping a list."
Molly hopped off Sherlock's lap. It had been so comfortable sitting there too, she reflected.

She slit open the envelopes. "Three acceptances and one regret."

"Anyone I know?"

"You remember Caleb and Abigail from church? They're coming. The others are people you haven't met."

She saw Sherlock glance at his watch. "It's getting late. Why don't you head up to bed. I still need to take my shower."

That made Molly remember where she was sleeping and she couldn't help the disappointed expression on her face.

"Let's give it till Sunday night, love. Then we'll re-evaluate, okay?" Sherlock suggested.

"Okay. I'll see you in the morning then." She turned to leave, but he restrained her, giving her a smouldering goodnight kiss.

She walked upstairs, still feeling the electricity of that kiss, got into bed and surprisingly, fell asleep immediately.

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Chapter End Notes

Lots of stuff in this chapter.

First, thank you to Ashblood for explaining to me about the Girls and Boys Brigade. It sounds like a wonderful organization.

At Molly's singing/coaching session, the comments made by Madison are the kind of things I tell my own students.

Did you enjoy the hair braiding scene? I can just picture him thinking it will be so simple, and then being frustrated when it isn't.

Did you grow up in a Christian household? I did, and I feel blessed that I had that background.
Chapter Summary

Sherlock, John and Mycroft head to a tailor, and Sherlock has to endure a lot of teasing about his lack of sexual experience and decision to wait for the wedding night to be intimate with Molly.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Sherlock’s alarm woke him at eight, and he turned it off.

After his shower the previous night, he had considered going upstairs to say goodnight to Molly, but had decided against it. He was really making an effort to show her he could be trusted if and when they returned to sleeping in the same bed. He missed her warmth terribly. He had a feeling that it would be like this for the rest of his life, every time he needed to be absent for a case, or she was on nightshift. It was like a piece of him was missing when she wasn’t there.

Everything was quiet in the flat so apparently Molly was not yet up. Sherlock dressed, then headed for the kitchen and turned on the kettle. He took two crumpets and put them into the toaster. Seeing Molly was still not up, he decided he had best go upstairs to awaken her, She would need to leave soon after nine for her spa day.

Sherlock entered the small bedroom and saw Molly's silhouette. He sat on the bed and leaned over to gently kiss her awake.

Her eyes opened and she smiled. “Seems like old times, you kissing me awake.”

“I’m glad of the opportunity to do so, my love,” he responded. “It has only been two nights, though.”

“I know. Seems like longer.”

Sherlock smiled at the woman he loved. “You suggested this, sweetheart, and you were right. Every now and then we need to take that step back and re-evaluate. Now come on, it’s time to get up.”

“Oh, spa day! I can’t wait to be pampered.”

Sherlock grinned at Molly's excitement. “Just think, you’ll be all relaxed for our dinner tonight with Greg and whatshernme.”

“Sherlock. It’s Lori. Don’t pretend you don’t remember.”

“How would you know?”

“Because people mean more to you now than they used to. Your mind palace doesn’t dismiss them as trivial.”
Sherlock was astounded. He really had been teasing about not knowing Lori’s name, but he was surprised at Molly’s insight into his recall. He hadn’t really thought about it before, but he was remembering people’s names these days - Kaitlyn, Kayla, Caleb and Abigail from church, secretary Nancy, Pastor Briggs. “Sometimes I think you know me better than I know myself. Now come down and get dressed. I have the kettle on and am making breakfast, just crumpets, but, well, you know my skills when it comes to cooking.”

Molly giggled, and Sherlock returned to the kitchen to make coffee and put in another two crumpets. He put in a quick call to have a taxi at the flat for ten past nine.

Molly had headed into their (his again? No, still their) bedroom to dress for the day. He had her crumpets and coffee waiting already when she reappeared. “Thanks, sweetheart,” she said, kissing his cheek before sitting beside him.

“I booked your taxi for ten past nine,” he commented, as they ate.

“Thanks. As soon as I’m done here, I’ll go downstairs and make sure Mrs. Hudson is ready to go.”

She did so as Sherlock collected their plates and coffee cups, then started to do the dishes.

Molly returned to the flat, picked up a tea towel to dry the few dishes and they were soon done.

“Is Hudders all set, then?”

“She will be by the time the taxi comes.”

“I’ll miss you,” he said, sliding his arms around her waist before offering her a sweet kiss.

“I’ll miss you too. I’ll text you once we are on our way home. Don’t forget to ask John over for one o’clock tomorrow.”

“I won’t forget,” he promised her.

When it was time for Molly to leave, he kissed her once more, his lips lingering a little longer on hers. “Have fun, sweetheart.”

“You too.” She gave him a wave and went downstairs to knock on the landlady’s door. Soon the women were off on their adventure and Sherlock closed the door to the flat.

He spent some time tidying up, taking the wedding R.S.V.P’s and putting them together on the kitchen table. The paper with his list was still lying on the coffee table. He definitely did not want Mycroft or John seeing that. He would be teased endlessly. Bad enough that they knew he was a forty year old virgin.

He folded the paper and put it into the drawer of Molly’s bedside table. Then he returned to the sitting room and turned on his laptop to check his emails.

Still nothing new from the mysterious emailer. Just the usual requests for help, along with spam and an email from the place where he had bought Molly’s lingerie. That one he opened, looking at the various sale offerings. There were several he thought would look very nice on her. He was tempted to purchase a couple items, then decided it was probably not a good idea to be thinking of Molly in lingerie right now. Sherlock x’ed out of the email and closed his laptop.

Heaving a sigh, he turned on the television, but turned it off again almost immediately. (Thank goodness I have something to do today. This flat is driving me stir crazy.) He took up his violin to
practice the composition he had written for Molly. Sherlock didn’t refer to the music he had
written, instead picturing the notes in his head and translating them into the sound from his violin.
The music flowed through him, expressing his love, his joy and his hope for the future. It was his
best piece yet, he felt.

Sherlock segued into other classical violin pieces, feeling the music flow through him as he played.
By the time he put the instrument down, it was almost time for John and Mycroft to arrive.

When the doorbell rang, he walked downstairs to open it, knowing of course that Mrs. Hudson was
absent.

John stood there, and Sherlock ushered him inside. “Mycroft should be here momentarily,” he told
his friend. “You might as well just stay down here for now. I’m going to get my phone and lock
up. Then we can leave as soon as my brother arrives.”

“That’s fine.”

As Sherlock headed back upstairs, he thought how haggard John looked, as if he had not slept well
in days. He wondered if Kayla was the cause.

Having retrieved his phone, and locked the flat, Sherlock returned to the entrance hall where John
was patiently standing.

“Are you alright, John?” he asked in a tone of concern.

“I’m fine, Sherlock,” responded John tersely.

Definitely Kayla, thought Sherlock. “Hey, Molly’s making a Sunday roast tomorrow. Would you
and Rosie like to come over? She doesn’t want to make a whole roast for two people apparently.”

“Uh, yeah, I guess. I don’t have any plans. What time?”

“Molly suggests one o’clock. We have churchh in the morning, so she will need to get some things
ready after we come home.”

“That sounds fine. Tell her thanks for thinking of me.”

“You’re our friend, John. We’re both thinking about you.”

Sherlock had left the outer door open and at that moment, Mycroft’s town car pulled up. “Looks
like our ride’s here,” commented Sherlock.

The two men clambered into the car and greeted Mycroft.

“Well, brother mine, do you have a particular tailor in mind?”

Sherlock gave a rueful smile. “No. I was hoping you might have one.”

Mycroft rolled his eyes. “Of course.” He gave instructions to the driver, and they set off.

As the car carried them to their destination, Mycroft said, “Sherlock, I have some news for you.”
Sherlock raised his eyebrow. “And what might that be?”

“The gravestone has been laid on Victor’s grave.”
“Oh. That’s good news. Maybe Molly and I can head up to North Yorkshire next weekend, unless she’s working. I’d like to pay my respects, and I’d like to show her Musgrave Hall.”

“Is that wise, Sherlock? I don’t mean about visiting the grave, of course, I mean visiting Musgrave.”

“I’ll be with Molly, Mycroft. I won’t be alone.”

“Well, my future sister-in-law is a clever woman. If I can trust anyone with you, it’s her.”

Sherlock smiled. “Thank you. I get the distinct impression you approve of her.”

“Didn’t I already make that plain, brother mine? I don’t think you could have found a better woman. She’s highly intelligent, and for some odd reason, she’s devoted to you, and you, her.”

“Your brother has made a lot of progress over the last few weeks, Mycroft,” commented John. “He’s even learned to change a dirty nappy. With any luck he’ll provide you with a niece or nephew approximately nine months after the wedding. But don’t hold any hopes for it to be sooner.”

Mycroft gave a condescending smile. “I’m sure my brother is very anxious for his wedding night to arrive.”

“What I’d give to be a fly on the wall,” John said and chuckled.

Sherlock folded his arms and frowned. “Rather immature of you to be discussing my sex life while I’m in the car with you.”

“Or lack of one,” ribbed his brother.

Sherlock was even more mortified when John decided to tease him further by revealing a certain bet.

“I’m starting to get a bit worried about losing fifty quid,” confided his friend to the older Holmes brother.

Sherlock squeezed his eyes shut. Was nothing sacred these days?

“Do tell, Doctor Watson,” urged Mycroft.

“I was so sure he and Molly would give in to temptation before their wedding night. But he’s halfway through his engagement and has presumably kept his virtue intact so far.”

“Would you two stop talking about me as if I wasn’t here?” griped Sherlock, now highly embarrassed.

“I’m sorry,” apologized John. “To be honest, I really admire you for waiting. I really won’t mind losing the bet, if it comes to that. It gives me some hope that a man could control himself for an extended period of time.”

“Why do I get the feeling you are not talking about Molly and me anymore?” asked Sherlock with a flash of insight.

This time it was John’s turn to be embarrassed. “You know I broke it off with her.”

“What? Who?” asked Mycroft curiously. “You’ve been seeing someone since Mary?”
John crossed his arms and refused to answer.

“It’s Molly’s friend. She's the second bridesmaid, after Kaitlyn, who is Molly's best friend from work,” supplied Sherlock.

“Sherlock, shut up! It’s none of Mycroft’s, or your business for that matter,” grated John.


Mycroft peered out the window. “Almost.”

A few minutes later, the car pulled over by a neat, classy-looking establishment.

The chauffeur opened the door and the three men stepped out.

Upon entering, a middle-aged man bustled up to them and shook Mycroft’s hand. “Mr. Holmes, I’ve been expecting you!”

Sherlock looked at his brother. “You knew I had no idea where to go, didn’t you?”

“I’ve always been the smart one, remember?” teased his brother, and Sherlock had to grin.

“Thanks, Mycroft.”

“My name is Peter, and I’ll be taking your measurements today, as well as those of your friend. Of course, I already know your brother’s as he is my best customer,” the man told Sherlock.

Sherlock was subjected to ten minutes of careful measuring, from the breadth of his shoulders, to his trouser inseam, biceps, calves and every other measurement possible. He certainly hoped he wouldn’t gain weight before the wedding with such detailed measurements.

“I had better make sure Molly doesn’t feed me too well, or keep supplying me with ginger nuts,” he commented dryly to Peter.

“Oh, do not worry about that. We make our suits with enough room for alterations if need be, and you will come back a week before your wedding for last minute adjustments, of course.”

“Er, of course,” said Sherlock, a little bemused. Sure, he had had suits tailored for him before, through Mycroft, but never had his own tailor. Most of his suits were expensive, off-the-rack ones.

“By the way, I will be paying for the suits,” remarked Mycroft.

“That isn’t necessary,” stated Sherlock.

“I can pay for my own,” insisted John.

“No,” replied Mycroft firmly. “I can afford it. Besides, you could have just hired a suit, which would have been cheaper. This is my contribution. John has a best man speech and stag night to think about.”

“Oh, God,” muttered John. “I haven’t even thought about that.”

Mycroft raised his eyebrow condescendingly to John. “You had best get a move on, then.”

“I don’t want a stag night,” said Sherlock hastily. “I still don’t know how Molly’s calculations
could have been incorrect on how much alcohol I could consume without getting too inebriated.”

Peter was busy taking John’s measurements. “Er, I might have, uh, given you the wrong beer. I kinda got a couple extra shots for myself and put the second into what I thought was my beer.”

“You spiked my drink?”

“Not on purpose, Sherlock. It was supposed to be mine.”

“Oh. My. God. I need to apologize to Molly. All this time I thought she had miscalculated the amount of alcohol I could consume. Come to think of it, that one beer did taste rather strange. I just thought it must have been a bad brand.”

“Poor Molly,” remarked Mycroft. “All this time you have held your poor fiancée accountable for your drunken state that night.”

“Oh, for God’s sake, Mycroft. I haven’t thought about that night in months. It’s not like I’ve been secretly harbouring a grudge!” Sherlock looked with disdain at his brother. Mycroft could be such an idiot at times. But he was still possibly the best, most generous brother a man could ask for, he then conceded to himself, as his expression relaxed.

“Well, perhaps not. In regards to your stag night though, you should have a last hurrah. After all, you are leaving the single life behind.”

Sherlock huffed a little, then capitulated. “Fine, but I will be very careful about my alcohol intake. I wouldn’t want my fiancée to take advantage of me in my inebriated state.”

The other two men laughed, as he intended them to. (Wow, I made a joke,) he thought in astonishment to himself.

Once John’s measurements were completed, Sherlock selected the material and colour for the suits. After some consideration, he chose a charcoal grey single-breasted, single button tail coat and trousers, and a cream coloured waistcoat over a white shirt. He decided on a light grey tie for himself, then peach coloured ones for John and Mycroft.

“Really, Sherlock? Why don’t you have the peach tie while John and I have the grey ones?”

“Nope,” Sherlock said, popping his “p.” “My wedding, my choice. You will be having the peach rose boutonnières, so it will look better.”

Mycroft rolled his eyes.

“Will you be requiring top hats?” inquired the tailor.


John looked at his best friend curiously. “Oh, come on, Sherlock. You can’t keep us hanging like that. What is this ‘besides’ stuff?”

Sherlock flushed. “Well, Molly seems to have a slight obsession with my curly hair. I don’t think she would like it to be covered.”

Mycroft snorted, while John guffawed with laughter. “He’s a pretty boy, our Sherlock is,” quipped John to Mycroft when he could catch his breath.
Sherlock crossed his arms. “Very mature. I am really looking forward to getting home, and away from your company right now.”

Peter looked at Mycroft. “I assume the three of you will be needing tuxedos for the post 6PM activities?”

“Of course,” responded the older Holmes. He looked at Sherlock. “Classic black tuxedos, black satin waistcoats with matching bow ties and white shirts?”

“Why? John didn’t bother having us change.”

“Well, it is customary for those in the upper class, however,” responded Mycroft rather pompously.

John huffed. “Forgive me if I am not upper class enough to have required evening dress.”

“Well, brother mine. It is your decision. You know I am footing the bill.”

“Fine,” sighed Sherlock. “Tuxedos as well. So, are we done for now?”

“Well, we can leave as soon as I’ve paid.” Turning to Peter, Mycroft asked, “What time should we be here for a fitting?”

Peter checked an appointment book. I can fit you in at eleven on Saturday, July 29th.”

“Perfect,” Mycroft answered for the three men.

Sherlock pulled out his phone and made a note of it in his calendar. He saw the other men doing the same.

Then they headed back to Baker Street. As soon as they entered the vehicle, Mycroft spoke again.

"Sherlock, I would like to book a larger church for your wedding, perhaps a cathedral. I would cover the expense, of course.”

Sherlock gave his brother a shocked look. "What on earth for?"

"Well, I had thought it might be nice to invite some of my government colleagues to the wedding. A larger venue would be more appropriate.”

"Mycroft, this is my wedding, not yours. I have no intention of inviting anyone but close family and friends. Besides, it's too late now, the invitations have already been sent and acceptances have been coming in. Even if it were not too late, I would hate a big wedding. If you want a huge spectacle, go and marry Lady Smallwood. I'm sure she is used to that kind of attention. I am quite content with being married in my own church, where Molly has been a member for years.”

Mycroft huffed. "It was just a thought, but seeing as you are so adamant, I will say no more about it.”

"Thank you," said Sherlock, relieved. The last thing he needed was for his brother to get a bee in his bonnet about Sherlock having a big, fancy wedding. That was something neither he nor Molly wanted. They just wanted to be together.

Sherlock sent off a text to Molly, just to say his wedding attire was now organized. He didn’t tell her what he would be wearing, wanting it to be a surprise.
Mycroft was also on his phone, most likely doing work - (or cancelling his plans for booking a cathedral,) thought Sherlock wryly. John just stared out of the window.

When Sherlock’s text alert from Molly sounded, he was rather surprised. He hadn’t expected a response.

“Hi, honey. We are having such a blast. Mrs. Hudson and I had lovely facials and an exfoliation treatment. We are just finishing our early lunch. Then it’s off to get a massage.”

“Enjoy, love. See you when you get home. I love you.” (Ha, he got the “I love you” in first that time,) Sherlock thought complacently.

Of course, not to be outdone, his fiancée had to come back with “I love you more XX.”

“The same,” he texted back.

There was no response, so presumably she had none, or had gone off for her massage.

As they neared Baker Street, Mycroft said, “I’ll take you home if you like, John.”

“Thanks, Mycroft. I appreciate it.”

As the car pulled up in front of the flat, Sherlock said, “Please send me the details of the cemetery where Victor is buried and where I can find his grave.”

“Will do, brother mine.”

“Thanks. See you tomorrow John.” Sherlock climbed out of the town car and went into Speedy’s, ordered a sandwich, then took it with him upstairs to eat while he waited for Molly to get home.

He suddenly realized he hadn't checked the post. Molly's iPad cover should have arrived. He went downstairs and found an envelope from Amazon. Taking it upstairs he opened the envelope, took out the iPad cover and went upstairs to the small bedroom. He put the cover onto Molly's iPad, then returned to the sitting room.

With time to spare, before Molly was due to arrive home, he decided to start reading the fiction book of “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.” He was still absorbed in the book when he heard the sound of footsteps climbing the stairs and his heart leapt. Molly was home.

Author's note: Okay, I had a blast with this chapter. I really enjoyed writing the scene in the car between Mycroft John and Sherlock and the teasing that ensued. Also the conversation at the tailor. Poor Sherlock - he is getting teased unbearably, isn't he? Did you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it? Could you just see the expression on Sherlock's face as they made fun of him being a virgin?

Do you like the sound of the suits? How about the tuxedos? Don't you think Sherlock would look dreamy in a tux?

Special thanks to reader simwhitbourn for his idea about a bigger church venue, which led to me writing the cathedral conversation initiated by Mycroft

Sherlock's alarm woke him at eight, and he turned it off.

After his shower the previous night, he had considered going upstairs to say goodnight to Molly, but had decided against it. He was really making an effort to show her he could be trusted if and
when they returned to sleeping in the same bed. He missed her warmth terribly. He had a feeling
that it would be like this for the rest of his life, every time he needed to be absent for a case, or she
was on nightshift. It was like a piece of him was missing when she wasn't there.

Everything was quiet in the flat so apparently Molly was not yet up. Sherlock dressed, then headed
for the kitchen and turned on the kettle. He took two crumpets and put them into the toaster.
Seeing Molly was still not up, he decided he had best go upstairs to awaken her, She would need to
leave soon after nine for her spa day.

Sherlock entered the small bedroom and saw Molly's silhouette. He sat on the bed and leaned over
to gently kiss her awake.

Her eyes opened and she smiled. "Seems like old times, you kissing me awake."

"I'm glad of the opportunity to do so, my love," he responded. "It has only been two nights,
though."

"I know. Seems like longer."

Sherlock smiled at the woman he loved. "You suggested this, sweetheart, and you were right.
Every now and then we need to take that step back and re-evaluate. Now come on, it's time to get
up."

"Oh, spa day! I can't wait to be pampered."

Sherlock grinned at Molly's excitement. "Just think, you'll be all relaxed for our dinner tonight with
Greg and whatshername."

"Sherlock. It's Lori. Don't pretend you don't remember."

"How would you know?"

"Because people mean more to you now than they used to. Your mind palace doesn't dismiss them
as trivial."

Sherlock was astounded. He really had been teasing about not knowing Lori's name, but he was
surprised at Molly's insight into his recall. He hadn't really thought about it before, but he was
remembering people's names these days - Kaitlyn, Kayla, Caleb and Abigail from church, secretary
Nancy, Pastor Briggs. "Sometimes I think you know me better than I know myself. Now come
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Molly giggled, and Sherlock returned to the kitchen to make coffee and put in another two

Molly had headed into their, his again? No, still their, bedroom to dress for the day. He had her

"I booked your taxi for ten past nine," he commented, as they ate.

"Thanks. As soon as I'm done here, I'll go downstairs and make sure Mrs. Hudson is ready to go."

She did so as Sherlock collected their plates and coffee cups, then started to do the dishes.
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"Is Hudders all set, then?"

"She will be by the time the taxi comes."

"I'll miss you," he said, sliding his arms around her waist before offering her a sweet kiss.

"I'll miss you too. I'll text you once we are on our way home. Don't forget to ask John over for one o'clock tomorrow."

"I won't forget," he promised her.

When it was time for Molly to leave, he kissed her once more, his lips lingering a little longer on hers. "Have fun, sweetheart."

"You too." She gave him a wave and went downstairs to knock on the landlady's door. Soon the women were off on their adventure and Sherlock closed the door to the flat.

He spent some time tidying up, taking the wedding R.S.V.P's and putting them together on the kitchen table. The paper with his list was still lying on the coffee table. He definitely did not want Mycroft or John seeing that. He would be teased endlessly. Bad enough that they knew he was a forty year old virgin.

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Sherlock segued into other classical violin pieces, feeling the music flow through him as he played. By the time he put the instrument down, it was almost time for John and Mycroft to arrive.

When the doorbell rang, he walked downstairs to open it, knowing of course that Mrs. Hudson was absent.

John stood there, and Sherlock ushered him inside. "Mycroft should be here momentarily," he told his friend. "You might as well just stay down here for now. I'm going to get my phone and lock up. Then we can leave as soon as my brother arrives."

"That's fine."

As Sherlock headed back upstairs, he thought how haggard John looked, as if he had not slept well in days. He wondered if Kayla was the cause.
Having retrieved his phone, and locked the flat, Sherlock returned to the entrance hall where John was patiently standing.

"Are you alright, John?" he asked in a tone of concern.

"I'm fine, Sherlock," responded John tersely.

*Definitely Kayla*, thought Sherlock. "Hey, Molly's making a Sunday roast tomorrow. Would you and Rosie like to come over? She doesn't want to make a whole roast for two people apparently."

"Uh, yeah, I guess. I don't have any plans. What time?"

"Molly suggests one o'clock. We have church in the morning, so she will need to get some things ready after we come home."

"That sounds fine. Tell her thanks for thinking of me."

"You're our friend, John. We're both thinking about you."

Sherlock had left the outer door open and at that moment, Mycroft's town car pulled up. "Looks like our ride's here," commented Sherlock.

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"Well, brother mine, do you have a particular tailor in mind?"

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Mycroft rolled his eyes. "Of course." He gave instructions to the driver, and they set off.

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Sherlock raised his eyebrow. "And what might that be?"

"The gravestone has been laid on Victor's grave."

"Oh. That's good news. Maybe Molly and I can head up to North Yorkshire next weekend, unless she's working. I'd like to pay my respects, and I'd like to show her Musgrave Hall."

"Is that wise, Sherlock? I don't mean about visiting the grave, of course, I mean visiting Musgrave."

"I'll be with Molly, Mycroft. I won't be alone."

"Well, my future sister-in-law is a clever woman. If I can trust anyone with you, it's her."

Sherlock smiled. "Thank you. I get the distinct impression you approve of her."

"Didn't I already make that plain, brother mine? I don't think you could have found a better woman. She's highly intelligent, and for some odd reason, she's devoted to you, and you, her."

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"What I'd give to be a fly on the wall," John said and chuckled.

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"Or lack of one," ribbed his brother.

Sherlock was even more mortified when John decided to tease him further by revealing a certain bet.

"I'm starting to get a bit worried about losing fifty quid," confided his friend to the older Holmes brother.

Sherlock squeezed his eyes shut. Was nothing sacred these days?

"Do tell, Doctor Watson," urged Mycroft.

"I was so sure he and Molly would give in to temptation before their wedding night. But he's halfway through his engagement and has presumably kept his virtue intact so far."

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"I'm sorry," apologized John. "To be honest, I really admire you for waiting. I really won't mind losing the bet, if it comes to that. It gives me some hope that a man could control himself for an extended period of time."

"Why do I get the feeling you are not talking about Molly and me anymore?" asked Sherlock with a flash of insight.

This time it was John's turn to be embarrassed. "You know I broke it off with her."

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John crossed his arms and refused to answer.

"It's Molly's friend. She's the second bridesmaid, after Kaitlyn, who is Molly's best friend from work," supplied Sherlock.

"Sherlock, shut up! It's none of Mycroft's, or your business for that matter," grated John.

"Okay, okay. Calm down," Sherlock told his tense friend. "Are we almost there?" he inquired of his brother.

Mycroft peered out the window. "Almost."

A few minutes later, the car pulled over by a neat, classy-looking establishment.

The chauffeur opened the door and the three men stepped out.

Upon entering, a middle-aged man bustled up to them and shook Mycroft's hand. "Mr. Holmes, I've been expecting you!"

Sherlock looked at his brother. "You knew I had no idea where to go, didn't you?"
"I've always been the smart one, remember?" teased his brother, and Sherlock had to grin.

"Thanks, Mycroft."

"My name is Peter, and I'll be taking your measurements today, as well as those of your friend. Of course, I already know your brother's as he is my best customer," the man told Sherlock.

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"Oh, do not worry about that. We make our suits with enough room for alterations if need be, and you will come back a week before your wedding for last minute adjustments, of course."

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"I can pay for my own," insisted John.

"No," replied Mycroft firmly. "I can afford it. Besides, you could have just hired a suit, which would have been cheaper. This is my contribution. John has a best man speech and stag night to think about."

"Oh, God," muttered John. "I haven't even thought about that."

Mycroft raised his eyebrow condescendingly to John. "You had best get a move on, then."

"I don't want a stag night," said Sherlock hastily. "I still don't know how Molly's calculations could have been incorrect on how much alcohol I could consume without getting too inebriated."

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"Really, Sherlock? Why don't you have the peach tie while John and I have the grey ones?"

"Nope," Sherloc said, popping his "p." "My wedding, my choice. You will be having the peach rose boutonnières, so it will look better."

Mycroft rolled his eyes.

"Will you be requiring top hats?" inquired the tailor.

"Definitely not," answered Sherlock. "I'm already about nine inches taller than my fiancée. Besides..." he stopped, a little embarrassed. "Never mind."

John looked at his best friend curiously. "Oh, come on, Sherlock. You can't keep us hanging like that. What is this 'besides' stuff?"

Sherlock flushed. "Well, Molly seems to have a slight obsession with my curly hair. I don't think she would like it to be covered."

Mycroft snorted, while John guffawed with laughter. "He's a pretty boy, our Sherlock is," quipped John to Mycroft when he could catch his breath.

Sherlock crossed his arms. "Very mature. I am really looking forward to getting home, and away from your company right now."

Peter looked at Mycroft. "I assume the three of you will be needing tuxedos for the post 6PM activities?"

"Of course," responded the older Holmes. He looked at Sherlock. "Classic black tuxedos, black satin waistcoats with matching bow ties and white shirts?"

"Why? John didn't bother having us change."

"Well, it is customary for those in the upper class, however," responded Mycroft rather pompously.

John huffed. "Forgive me if I am not upper class enough to have required evening dress."

"Well, brother mine. It is your decision. You know I am footing the bill."

"Fine," sighed Sherlock. "Tuxedos as well. So, are we done for now?"

"Well, we can leave as soon as I've paid." Turning to Peter, Mycroft asked, "What time should we be here for a fitting?"
Peter checked an appointment book. I can fit you in at eleven on Saturday, July 29th."

"Perfect," Mycroft answered for the three men.

Sherlock pulled out his phone and made a note of it in his calendar. He saw the other men doing the same.

Then they headed back to Baker Street. As soon as they entered the vehicle, Mycroft spoke again.

"Sherlock, I would like to book a larger church for your wedding, perhaps a cathedral. I would cover the expense, of course."

Sherlock gave his brother a shocked look. "What on earth for?"

"Well, I had thought it might be nice to invite some of my government colleagues to the wedding. A larger venue would be more appropriate."

"Mycroft, this is my wedding, not yours. I have no intention of inviting anyone but close family and friends. Besides, it's too late now, the invitations have already been sent and acceptances have been coming in. Even if it were not too late, I would hate a big wedding. If you want a huge spectacle, go and marry Lady Smallwood. I'm sure she is used to that kind of attention. I am quite content with being married in my own church, where Molly has been a member for years."

Mycroft huffed. "It was just a thought, but seeing as you are so adamant, I will say no more about it."

"Thank you," said Sherlock, relieved. The last thing he needed was for his brother to get a bee in his bonnet about Sherlock having a big, fancy wedding. That was something neither he nor Molly wanted. They just wanted to be together.

Sherlock sent off a text to Molly, just to say his wedding attire was now organized. He didn't tell her what he would be wearing, wanting it to be a surprise.

Mycroft was also on his phone, most likely doing work - or cancelling his plans for booking a cathedral, thought Sherlock wryly. John just stared out of the window.

When Sherlock's text alert from Molly sounded, he was rather surprised. He hadn't expected a response.

"Hi, honey. We are having such a blast. Mrs. Hudson and I had lovely facials and an exfoliation treatment. We are just finishing our early lunch. Then it's off to get a massage."

"Enjoy, love. See you when you get home. I love you."  

Ha, I got the "I love you" in first that time, Sherlock thought complacently.

Of course, not to be outdone, his fiancée had to come back with "I love you more XX."

"The same," he texted back.

There was no response, so presumably she had none, or had gone off for her massage.

As they neared Baker Street, Mycroft said, "I'll take you home if you like, John."

"Thanks, Mycroft. I appreciate it."
As the car pulled up in front of the flat, Sherlock said, "Please send me the details of the cemetery where Victor is buried and where I can find his grave."

"Will do, brother mine."

"Thanks. See you tomorrow John." Sherlock climbed out of the town car and went into Speedy's, ordered a sandwich, then took it with him upstairs to eat while he waited for Molly to get home.

He suddenly realized he hadn't checked the post. Molly's iPad cover should have arrived. He went downstairs and found an envelope from Amazon. Taking it upstairs he opened the envelope, took out the iPad cover and went upstairs to the small bedroom. He put the cover onto Molly's iPad, then returned to the sitting room.

With time to spare, before Molly was due to arrive home, he decided to start reading the fiction book of "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe." He was still absorbed in the book when he heard the sound of footsteps climbing the stairs and his heart leapt. Molly was home.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, I had a blast with this chapter. I really enjoyed writing the scene in the car between Mycroft John and Sherlock and the teasing that ensued. Also the conversation at the tailor. Poor Sherlock - he is getting teased unbearably, isn't he? Did you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it? Could you just see the expression on Sherlock's face as they made fun of him being a virgin?

Do you like the sound of the suits? How about the tuxedos? Don't you think Sherlock would look dreamy in a tux?
Mrs. Hudson was ready and raring to go when Molly knocked on her door for the second time that morning. She locked it and headed outside to the waiting taxi with Molly.

The elderly woman settled in comfortably for the forty-five minute journey. She did not remember the last time she had had a chance to have a fun day of pampering. She was also quite excited at the opportunity to talk to Molly for awhile uninterrupted. Mrs. Hudson had always liked Molly very much, and had harboured a secret hope that Sherlock might one day acknowledge his feelings for her. It had been a long time coming, but her "boy" had finally grown up. When he had unexpectedly turned up at her flat door to announce his engagement to Molly, she had been delighted.

She had been so glad he had dumped that nasty Janine, sure that the other girl had told lies about him. After all, if they had truly been shagging several times a night, as the tabloids reported, she would certainly have heard it wouldn't she? Besides, Sherlock had not acted like a man in love. No, she had been certain that his heart was in no way engaged when it came to Janine, and she had been right.

With Molly however, she had seen the clear look of love in Sherlock's eyes when he told the landlady that he and Molly were engaged.

It was rather funny, over the years Mrs. Hudson had often asked Sherlock how his pathologist was doing. He had never corrected her to say she was not "his" pathologist. After all, Molly was the only female he could tolerate at St. Bart's. In fact, Mrs. Hudson had determined she was directly responsible for getting Sherlock and his pathologist together in the first place, so she decided to explain why. After all, they had a long journey ahead of them.

"Molly dear, your braid looks very lovely today."

"Thank you." Molly beamed. "Believe it or not, Sherlock did it. He spent some time on YouTube learning how to braid, and tried it on me last night."

*It is astounding*, thought the elderly woman, *how my dear boy has grown up recently. Such a romantic these days.* "How perfectly sweet of him! And how are things going with your wedding preparations?"

"Really well, thanks for asking. We don't have much left to do, besides wait on the RSVP's and do final preparations. Sherlock is off to a tailor today for a suit fitting with John and Mycroft."

"How lovely. Did Sherlock ever tell you how I was the one who persuaded him to invite you to
that Christmas Eve party a few years ago? I'm convinced that was the start of something for you.”

Molly gave her an interested look. "Really? When Sherlock invited me for Christmas drinks, I figured he was just feeling sorry for me because he knew I didn't have plans. He was working a case at the hospital and complaining about John to me. I said that at least John had something to do for Christmas. So he told me to stop by for a drink on Christmas Eve, that John and his girlfriend were coming over, and that you would be there. Of course, I was a bit surprised to see Greg as well."

"Oh yes, poor Greg. He was still trying to fix things with his wife at that point."

"Well, he's seeing someone new now. In fact, Sherlock and I are meeting them for dinner tonight. Her name is Lori, and Greg met her on an online dating site. She's originally from America."

"I do hope that man will finally have some luck with a decent woman."

"Me too. But you were saying you were instrumental in getting me invited to that party. How so?"

Mrs Hudson smiled slyly. "I told him he needed to be more sociable. He was always going on to me about how he couldn't stand the people at the hospital, and that you were the only one who let him do his thing without butting in, and you were kind enough to get things for him to experiment on. So I suggested he should ask you over, practice his social skills outside of the workplace."

Molly was staring at the woman in open-mouthed astonishment. "He talked to you about me?"

"Women know these things, dear. He was just so rude. And then, after he looked at that card, he was so ashamed of himself. I've never heard him apologize to anyone but you, not without being told. If that disgusting moan text hadn't come in, maybe things might have been different for you."

"To be honest, Mrs. Hudson, I don't think Sherlock would have had the maturity for a proper relationship at that time. He was not one for expressing emotion. I, on the other hand am so emotional that it probably would have scared him off."

"Perhaps you're right, dear. I have to say, he was different when he came back though, after we thought he had been dead for two years."

"I agree," mused Molly. "That one day, when I worked as his assistant, he was really sweet. But then he found out I was engaged, and he basically wished me well and said goodbye."

Mrs Hudson thought back to a memory from awhile ago. "You know what? I recall Sherlock telling me about you being engaged. I remember letting you up the stairs that day, when you said he wanted to see you. He came home with some chips later that day and seemed to be in a rather bad mood. I asked him how the day went and he blurted out, 'Did you know that Molly Hooper is engaged?' Of course I had to tell him I had no idea. I mean, I hadn't even seen you since he had died, well since he had supposedly died. Why would I? He might have said more, but the doorbell rang and I answered it. It was Mary, telling Sherlock something about John being kidnapped, so off he went to save the day again."

"I remember, that was when John was almost killed in a bonfire. Mary told me about it. By the
way, I'm sorry I never visited you after Sherlock jumped off the roof of the hospital, Mrs. Hudson. I had to cut ties with both you and John. It would have been too hard to see you grieve, when I knew he wasn't really dead."

Molly looked stricken and Mrs. Hudson patted her hand. "I understand, dear. Besides, it was Sherlock whom we had in common. I never blamed you for not being in contact. I just thought you were grieving, as we all were."

Molly brightened then and said, "So Sherlock really wasn't too happy I was engaged to someone else? I mean, he has told me that himself now, but it is interesting to get the perspective of a different pair of eyes."

"Yes indeed. I can't believe you didn't notice the look he gave that young man when he met him. Quite the once over, assessing look. That Tom, he was younger and taller, but if I do say so myself, definitely not as handsome."

Molly blushed. "Nobody compares to Sherlock. I know now that I was trying to forget him with a substitute, even though I didn't realize it at the time."

"All is well that ends well. I knew you and that Tom were not going to make it to the altar after I saw the way you looked at Sherlock at John's wedding. I saw you snap that photo of him when he wasn't looking too."

Molly put her hand to her mouth. "Oh my gosh, was I so transparent?"

"Not unless a person was looking for it, and I was. I always believed you were the only woman who could turn his head. That Janine thing was a bit of a conundrum for me, but it makes sense, now that I know he was just using her for a case. It still makes me cross the way she tried to make him seem like some sort of sex addict. That's not the way my Sherlock is at all."

Molly had to giggle at that. "Your Sherlock?"

"Well, I sort of think of him that way, as the son I never had."

"I guess that means, when the time comes, if it does," said Molly rather shyly, "that you will be another grandmother to our children."

The elderly lady beamed. "I would be delighted to have more little ones around. It's lovely watching Rosie, but I don't get to see her all that often. With you and Sherlock living in the same building, I can be your built-in babysitter."

To her surprise, Molly leaned over and kissed her cheek. "That means a lot to me Mrs. Hudson. And thank you for telling me some more about Sherlock, and what he was like. It makes me feel good to know that he truly was having feelings for me, even if he wasn't acknowledging them."

They lapsed into silence. Molly was staring out the window with a slight smile on her face, obviously thinking about what Mrs. Hudson had said. The elderly woman was herself content to sit there quietly. She was used to solitude.

The women alighted from the cab when they arrived at the spa centre. They signed in and were soon taken to have their facials and exfoliating scrubs.

Mrs. Hudson greatly enjoyed the pampering session. She was truly grateful to Sherlock and Molly for doing something so thoughtful for her. The soft music playing was not really conducive to conversation, but it was still nice to have someone to share the experience with.
After their treatments, they were shown to a small café style restaurant to enjoy the two course lunch for which Sherlock had paid. Mrs. Hudson and Molly were talking about how lovely their skin felt when Molly's phone pinged with a text.

"Let me guess," said the elderly woman, "Sherlock?"

Molly giggled. "Who else?"

She read the text, then told her landlady, "They've had their fitting, so the suits for the wedding are all organized."

The women finished their lunch and Molly texted her fiancé back. At his answering text, she responded, then turned off her phone, because it was time to head off for their massage treatments.

Mrs Hudson especially enjoyed the almost one hour long massage. The oils that were used were very soothing and smelled that way. By the end of the treatment, the elderly woman was half asleep.

Molly turned her phone back on and it pinged. She smiled at the text, presumably from Sherlock earlier, and called for a taxi, and soon afterwards, the women were on their way home.

"Thank you Molly, and tell Sherlock thank you as well," said the landlady, as they travelled back towards Baker Street.

"You're most welcome," smiled the younger woman. "You do so much for us, and you've looked after Sherlock so well over the years, we wanted to do something special for you. On another note, I wanted to ask you something."

"What is it dear?"

"Well, you know your basement flat, 221C - do you ever think you would let it out to anyone?"

"Oh, I don't think so. It needs too many renovations, and there is a problem with damp and mildew."

"Well," said Molly cautiously, "I was wondering, if Sherlock and I worked on it, if we could sort of...turn it into a lab for his experiments? Of course, we'd pay you for the use of it." She hesitated, then added, "Well actually, Sherlock has no idea I'm asking you. It's just, well, he promised not to do experiments in the flat anymore, and I'd like him to have somewhere other than Bart's to do them."

"What a lovely idea. I don't need the rent money. If you want to fix up the place and use it, go ahead. I'd rather see it being used than vacant. Besides," she added softly, "once I'm gone it will be yours anyway."

Molly stared at her in astonishment. "Are you going somewhere?"

"No, no dear," assured the landlady. "I mean once I'm gone - dead."

"Oh, Mrs. Hudson, you have many years ahead, and besides, you can't be thinking of leaving the building to us!"

"I most certainly can," stated Mrs. Hudson firmly. "I decided on that years ago and changed my Will to reflect it. I must update it to include you now, of course."
"But...don't you have a sister?"

"Ha, she'll be dead before me, and I have no other family. Sherlock is the closest thing to family I have."

She saw that Molly's eyes were filling with tears. "There, there. Don't cry, dear. I'm not quite ready to kick the bucket. I'd like to take care of a few surrogate grandchildren first."

"I don't know what to say," sniffled Molly, blinking back tears.

"You don't need to say anything. Just get started on making babies as soon as possible."

Molly smiled. "We'll try."

Upon arrival back at Baker Street, Mrs. Hudson asked Molly to wait a moment before going upstairs.

"I have Sherlock's dry-cleaning here. It arrived yesterday while he was out."

Molly took the pile of garments and thanked the landlady and headed upstairs.

She was in such a good mood, relaxed after being pampered so well. *Actually, I feel so relaxed, I think I'll take a nap,* she decided.

The elderly woman went to her bedroom and slept for several hours. When she awoke, it was already past her usual dinner hour. Feeling motivated, Mrs. Hudson decided to make a big batch of her famous scones. She knew that Sherlock and Molly were going out for dinner, but thought she'd take some up to them later, after they arrived home. It would be her little way of saying thanks for the lovely day.

After the scones were made, Mrs. Hudson ate some for dinner, then placed several on a plate along with a little pot of jam, and one of home made whipped cream. She would take them upstairs to the couple later.

She was dozing in her chair in front of the television when she heard the outer door open and the sound of footsteps ascending the stairs. She glanced at the clock. It was after nine o'clock. Mrs. Hudson decided she'd give the couple ten minutes to get settled, then take the scones upstairs.

Once the ten minutes had elapsed, she took the plate of scones with the jam and cream and walked up the stairs. She was just about to knock and poke her head in the door when she heard Sherlock's voice.

"Well, my love, how do you like that?"

"Oh, Sherlock, that feels so good," followed by a moan.

"Mmm, you like that do you?" came the husky voiced reply.

Mrs. Hudson blinked in surprise.

Molly moaned again and the landlady heard her say, "Mmm, honey, for a novice you really have magic fingers."

Mrs. Hudson hastily set down the plate of scones and hurried down the stairs, back into the safety of her flat. She felt a little embarrassed at having heard the couple in what was obviously intimate
conversation. Apparently Molly had taken her words about getting started on making babies to heart.

Mrs. Hudson smiled slyly to herself. *So much for them waiting until the wedding night. Well, good for them. They've waited seven years to be together.* She didn't understand what possible reason they would have to deny their natural urges until their wedding night anyway.

With a feeling of contentment, the landlady headed off to bed.

Chapter End Notes

What did you think about reading this chapter from Mrs. Hudson's perspective? I thought it would be nice to see an outsiders view on Sherlock and his past, and who better than Mrs. Hudson to know what he was like. Did you find it interesting? Did you like the idea of Molly asking about 221C?

So, Mrs. Hudson thought she heard something she shouldn't have. What do you think Sherlock and Molly were up to? Were they getting a bit up close and personal? I honestly think Mrs. Hudson would be thrilled to see them together in a more intimate way.
Dinner with Greg and Lori - Sherlock (Saturday)

Chapter Summary

Romance followed by interesting dinner conversation

Chapter Notes

For those of you praying for me due to suspected carpal tunnel, I just saw a hand surgeon and have to schedule a nerve study next. Tests ugh! Hopefully I can get that done soon!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sherlock opened the door to admit his fiancée, ready to sweep her into his arms and kiss her. Unfortunately this was rather impossible, due to the enormous amount of dry-cleaning she held in her arms. Oops, he'd completely forgotten about that. He really needed to mark that kind of thing in his calendar. Thank goodness, Mrs. Hudson was so good at collecting things on his behalf.

Sherlock took the garments from Molly and hung them in his closet, then returned to the sitting room. She had just set down her handbag. Good.

"Thank you for getting those clothes, love," he said, taking her hand and leading her to the sofa.

"Oh, it's no problem, Mrs. Hudson asked me to bring them up for you. So, how did everything go at your appointment?"

"I'll tell you, but first, I really need to kiss you. It has been days."

Molly chuckled. "It does seem like it, doesn't it?" she managed to say, just before his lips met hers. He took his time with it, savouring her sweetness, inhaling the scent of the message oil that had been used on her body, lavender, he thought, mixed with the scent of whatever it was that had been used on her face. The combination of scent and sweetness was truly delicious, and he lost himself in the embrace for several minutes, feeling his chest begin to rise and fall more rapidly, the longer they kissed, knowing it was affecting her as much as himself. Finally he pulled away slightly and rested his forehead against hers, trying to catch his breath.

For some minutes they didn't speak, but just sat there, until finally Sherlock inquired, "Is that lavender I can smell on you? You smell so good, baby." The endearment slipped out, one he didn't use very often. He could tell by the uptilt to Molly's lips that she liked the term.

"Yes, it's lavender. We had a simply lovely time. And the stories Mrs. Hudson told me about you..."

"Oh dear, what little secrets has Hudders been revealing to you?"

"Just little observations she made about you, things she thought about the two of us before we were
together. She told me she was certain you had feelings for me, even before you knew it yourself."

Sherlock gave a wry smile. "I don't doubt that for a minute. She's smarter than she looks. After all, she managed to keep her husband's ill-gotten drug-cartel money even after he was executed for his crimes."

Molly laughed. "I guess she really isn't lacking for money, with that lovely Aston Martin of hers."

Sherlock groaned. "I don't even want to think about that car. The ignominious way she loaded me into the boot, and handcuffed me as well..."

"I suppose she thought you'd put up a fuss, being high and all at the time."

"Don't remind me," he huffed. "There are certain events I would rather not dwell on, and that particular time period is one of them. Tell me more about what Mrs. Hudson told you."

"I agree about preferring not to remember certain things. Anyway, Mrs. Hudson also told me she was the one who suggested you invite me for Christmas Eve drinks. She said you had told her I was the only woman you could stand to work with at Bart's."

"That's true enough. That's another night burned in my memory I'd prefer to forget, except for the fact that you looked unbelievably sexy."

Molly blushed. "You sure didn't act like it at the time."

"I didn't? Cast your mind back, my love. I mentioned that you were all dressed up, and that very sexy shade of red lipstick you were wearing. I noticed everything about you that night."

"You didn't say my lipstick was sexy. And you thought my mouth and breasts were small."

"I might not have said it was sexy lipstick, but I thought it, and I was not happy that you were wearing it for that phantom boyfriend. I also did not specifically say your mouth and breasts were small."

"You alluded to the fact."

"I was being hurtful because I felt hurt, Molly, even if I didn't consciously know it then. You know I think everything about you is perfect. Besides," he dropped his voice, "the other night when I touched your breast through your chemise, it felt the perfect size for my hand." Even as he said the words, he felt a rush of heat spread through his body and closed his eyes, trying to not think about how much he longed to touch her again. He heard Molly's breath hitch, and knew she was thinking it too. He had to get back on track, onto a different topic, anything. Casting his mind about furiously for a safer topic, he remembered Molly's earlier question about his appointment.

"You asked about my appointment. It went very well, actually. Mycroft took us to his own tailor and had John and myself fitted for our morning suits, and tuxedos, but I'll leave that as a surprise, he thought.

"Mycroft took you to his tailor? I thought you had one in mind already."

Sherlock gave her an embarrassed smile. "Er, actually, I hadn't thought that far ahead."

Molly shook her head, smiling at him. "For a man with a mind palace you sure are having trouble with it, first you forget your dry-cleaning, then you don't even make an appointment with a tailor."
"In case you hadn't noticed, Molly Hooper, I've been a bit distracted lately, as in for the past five and a half weeks. A certain pathologist continues to consume my thoughts."

Said pathologist squeezed his hand.

"Anyway, Mycroft insisted on paying for everything. We have to go back for a final fitting the week before the wedding at eleven on Saturday."

"That's the same time I have my final fitting too. Oh Sherlock. It's getting closer isn't it? The wedding, I mean."

He kissed her lightly, before saying, "35 days still sounds like a long time, but it is a hell of a lot better than the 74 we started with."

Molly rested her head against his shoulder. "I think the last week will fly by because we will be busy, but in the meantime we still need to get through another month. By the way, did you ask John about tomorrow, or did your mind palace let you down again?"

"Molly, I don't forget EVERYTHING!" he huffed indignantly. "He said he'll be here at one, like you suggested."

"Great," enthused Molly, reaching a hand up to stroke his curls. "Sorry about the mind palace thing."

"How sorry?"

Instead of answering, she pulled his head down to hers, and kissed him, sucking on his lower lip, before she drew away. His insides were churning. **God, how he loved this woman. He'd wasted so much time.** Taking her face in his hands he kissed her again, thoroughly, moving his mouth against hers in desperation, wanting so much more, wanting to convey to this beautiful woman just how much he adored her, what a gift from God she was to him. **Oh how he ached for her.** He kissed her until they were both breathless and panting with need. The blood pounded in his ears and he felt that familiar sensation of losing himself in her. His body was crying out for her.

He pulled away finally and muttered, "Time for another one of those bloody cold showers." He rose from the sofa, went to the bedroom and grabbed a change of clothes, then slammed the door to the bathroom, turning on the cold water.

He winced when the cold spray hit his skin, but it did its purpose, cooling his skin, settling down his inflamed senses back to a more tolerable level once again. When he got out of the bathroom, Sherlock kept his gaze averted from Molly. He wondered briefly just how many more cold showers he was going to have to take. He dared not look at her again right then, so instead, he took up the discarded book and read some more.

Molly went off for her own shower, then returned, slipping her hand in his. "I'm sorry, Sherlock. We seem to be doing fine, and then it's like everything just explodes and we get back on that emotional roller coaster."

He looked up then, gazing into her eyes searchingly. "Molly, is it wrong for me to be constantly having these thoughts, for wanting you so badly? Shouldn't my mind be focussed on God, rather than things of the flesh? I feel so ashamed."

She raised her hand and stroked his cheek gently, tenderly. "I don't think God wants you to be ashamed of your feelings, and I don't think it's' wrong that we desire each other. If we didn't, it
wouldn't be much of a relationship, would it? I'm sure God wants us to experience the joy of being together, but that His true blessing will come once we're legally husband and wife. I'm pretty proud that we've come this far, to be honest. And we are going to make it the rest of the way, sweetheart, because we both want to do God's will."

She continued, "Come to think of it, didn't we have this same conversation a couple weeks ago, when you were telling me the same thing?" She gave him a wry grin. "It's like one of us is always reassuring the other. We just have to stay strong a bit longer."

"Tell that to my body," he grumbled.

"Well, we have a distraction tonight anyway. One day at a time." She kissed his cheek.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you earlier. You will think this funny."

"Think what funny?"

"Mycroft offered to pay for a bigger church, even a cathedral, for our wedding."

Molly's mouth dropped open. "I hope you declined the offer."

"Of course I did. Even if it were not way too late to change things now, I don't want a big wedding. I just want to concentrate on you."

"Me too."

"I did say that if he wants a big wedding, he should just marry Lady Smallwood. That shut him up fast." He chuckled.

Molly laughed as well. "I think it will be interesting to see how they interact at our wedding reception. Is he serious about her, do you think?"

Sherlock shrugged. "No idea. And I don't see myself paying any attention to them then either. My focus will be solely on you."

He held her, kissing her occasionally, just enjoying her nearness, until it was time to head to Angelo's to meet with Greg and his new girlfriend for dinner.

The other couple had already arrived and were seated, when Sherlock and Molly were shown to their table. Introductions were made and they settled down to a delicious Italian meal and good conversation.

"Greg has been telling me about some of the cases you've worked on together," said Lori with a slight southern American drawl. "That one with the man who was poisoning people, that cabbie, was quite the story."

"It most certainly was," agreed Sherlock. "That was quite a few years ago."

"Six and a half or so," supplied Molly, looking at him. "That was around the time I finally worked up the nerve to ask you out and you rejected me."

"Oh, I love a good story," said Lori enthusiastically.

Much to Sherlock's embarrassment, Molly told Lori about the coffee incident, and his obliviousness.
"I was a different man then, Molly," he pouted. "I was a self-important high-functioning sociopath."

"A what?" asked Lori, giggling.

"Oh, it's just the way he used to refer to himself," Greg told his girlfriend. "He's changed a lot over the last few years, finally learned my name, even."

Sherlock cringed. "I don't know why I found it so hard to learn your name, Geoff...just kidding, Greg," he said, and grinned.

"You're lucky," Molly said, "I was just about to tell you, 'Bit Not Good.'"

Greg laughed. "Ironically, that case with the pink suitcase and the cabbie poisoner, was where you made that comment about the woman that earned you that 'Bit Not Good' comment from John."

"Yeah, and now everyone uses it to remind me when I'm behaving badly," groused Sherlock.

"Well, you seem like a perfectly lovely man to me," said Lori.

Sherlock brightened. "I do? It's always nice to have validation from someone other than my fiancée."

Molly squeezed his hand. "Plenty of people have seen how you've changed, Sherlock."

"Guess it's lucky for me then," said Lori, "because this nice guy is the only Sherlock I know."

Sherlock felt very good about that and flashed her a grin.

"Oh, Lori, now you've done it. He's gonna start acting self-important all over again," remarked Lestrade.

That deflated Sherlock's little pride bubble. "No, it really won't. Molly would never let that happen to me." He flicked her a teasing glance.

"You've got that right, mister." She grinned at him.

The playful banter between the four of them continued throughout the meal. Sherlock found it was quite pleasant, spending time with another couple, and Molly was right, It was a good distraction as well.

Yes, it was all going well until Greg decided to ask him about Irene Adler.

"So, Sherlock, you never did tell me about the circumstances of your meeting Irene Adler, and how she happened to be naked at the time. I mean, I took you home from her place that day after John called me for help, but I had no idea why you were so out of it."

Lori gasped as Sherlock flushed. "Is this really the time, Greg?" he muttered. "My fiancée is sitting right here."

"Oh, I don't mind," Molly assured him, and he saw the devilish gleam in her eyes. "I'd quite like the whole story myself."

So, he was forced to explain how he had met Irene when doing a case with John. Of course, he did not elaborate on the details of the case. By the end though, Greg was openly laughing at his discomfiture, Lori was sympathetic, and Molly simply smiled. He was relieved she wasn't jealous.
At the end of the meal, after they had paid - the men splitting the bill, Sherlock said, "Well, we shall have to do this again, but perhaps next time with a little less talk of naked women, right, my love?"

"Definitely," agreed Molly, squeezing his hand affectionately.

"I'll look forward to getting to know you better," said Lori.

"Thanks for coming out with us," was Greg's comment.

Back at Baker Street, Sherlock and Molly sat on the sofa and discussed the evening. "I really like Lori," Molly said. "She's devoted to Greg already, I can tell."

"I like her too. I hope Greg has better luck with her than his former wife. That woman was awful."

"Yes, Greg deserves to be happy."

"Thank you for not making a big deal over the Irene Adler thing."

Molly shrugged. "It isn't like I didn't know you had seen her naked, it was just the circumstances I wasn't aware of. I know it wasn't your fault." She leaned over and kissed him gently.

Suddenly, Sherlock realized he hadn't heard much from Molly about her actual spa experience earlier that day. "So, tell me about your spa day."

Molly told him about the facial and exfoliation treatment, then she enthused so much about the massage, that Sherlock felt a bit annoyed.

"I'll bet I can give you just as good of a massage as they did," he remarked.

"Oh is that so?" questioned Molly. "I highly doubt it, although you did do a nice job a few weeks ago."

"Well," he huffed. "I suppose I'll have to prove it. Take off your blouse."

"What?" asked Molly in a shocked voice.

"Your blouse. I didn't say your bra!" he exclaimed. "I'm going to show you my massage prowess."

"Fine, then. You can try." She pulled off her blouse and sat with her back to him.

Sherlock delicately placed his hands on her shoulders and began to massage them, pressing his thumbs where her neck met her shoulders, then asked,

"Well, my love, how does that feel?"

"Oh, Sherlock, that feels so good," Molly said with a moan. She was so responsive to massage. That was something he was going to have to remember. He filed it away in his mind palace.

"Mmm, you like that do you?" he asked huskily, moving his thumbs in circles along her shoulders, applying just the right amount of pressure.

He was most gratified by her response. "Mmm, honey, for a novice you really have magic fingers."

He bent down and kissed her neck, then continued to massage his fiancée for several minutes more. He fancied at some point he had heard a noise outside the front door, but decided he'd check
after he had finished the massage.

Molly made the most satisfying sounds of pleasure, and he couldn't help wondering if she would sound that way when they made love on their wedding night. He hoped so. Unfortunately those little noises were stirring his own desires once again, so reluctantly, he stopped.

When she made a little sound of protest, he said, "Molly, those sounds you make, they're just like the ones you make when we are kissing at times. You know that's my cue to stop, before we take things further. If we keep going, I'll be tempted to get in some more bra unhooking practice and we both know what dangerous territory that would be. Perhaps massaging you should wait till we are married as well."

Molly sighed. "I guess you're right. Hey, did you hear a noise outside a few minutes ago? I vaguely remember hearing something, but your massaging me was a bit distracting."

"I thought I heard something too." He went to the door and opened it. There on the landing was a covered plate. "What in the world?" He picked up the plate and lifted up the cover. "It's scones, and some jam and cream."

"Oh, how sweet. Mrs. Hudson must have brought them up for us. But why didn't she knock at the door?" They looked at each other. "You don't suppose she thought she might be interrupting something, do you?" Molly asked, wide-eyed.

Sherlock chuckled. "I think she might have. You did say something about it 'feeling so good' and me having 'magic fingers.'"

Molly flushed with embarrassment. "That does sound a bit compromising. Should we go downstairs and tell her she was mistaken?"

"No. I think she would like the idea of us sleeping together before the wedding night. Let her have nice dreams about it tonight. We'll 'fess up in the morning."

Molly laughed. "We're going to 'fess up about NOT sleeping together. She's going to be so disappointed!"

Sherlock looked at his laughing fiancée and suddenly she wasn't laughing anymore when she saw the look in his eyes that he couldn't conceal. "You'd better head on up to bed now Molly, or there will be nothing to 'fess up to," he said, in a voice that was suddenly deep and laced with desire for her.

"Yes, yes, I'm going," she said hastily. She scooped up the plate of scones first though, putting them in the kitchen, and the cream in the fridge.

Sherlock was rather glad they were not sharing a bed, because with the way he was feeling, that might not have been a good idea. He got ready for bed, then used his phone to FaceTime Molly.

She had obviously been expecting his call, because she too was in bed, with her iPad in hand.

"Just wanted to say goodnight, love."

"I'm sorry we didn't have our goodnight kiss, but that was probably for the best, wasn't it?" she asked.

"Yes, for the best," he admitted sadly. "I love you, Molly Hooper."
"Love you more," she said.

"No, the same," he insisted, blowing her a kiss.

She blew a kiss back and said, "Thanks for the iPad cover, by the way. I guess it arrived today?"

"Yep. Thought I'd put it on right away."

"Thanks, honey," she said, blowing him one more kiss before ending the call. Sherlock put his phone on the charger and settled into his large lonely bed, wishing Molly was with him, but at the same time glad she wasn't. It was most disconcerting.

With his thoughts still in upheaval, he finally fell into slumber.

Chapter End Notes

Did you enjoy the discussion about "that" Christmas? How about about the dinner and the conversation about Irene and the Bit Not Good explanation?

I hope you were amused by the massage and the way Sherlock and Molly decided not to burst Mrs. Hudson's bubble about her misconception about what was going on. I had a bit of fun with that!

Answering a question from another site, there is no such thing as a "too long" review (comment here). I treasure each and every one. Reviews/comments give me the motivation and encouragement to keep writing. I always respond to them too. This applies to all of my stories.

In answer to a question on another site, there will be a couple time skips closer to the wedding, a few days here and there. Even so, the completed story which ends as they leave the reception, is 168 chapters. I finished it earlier this month, after 11 months of writing it, (It would not have taken so long, but I am constantly writing other stories/chapters too).

Do you, the readers, wish to follow the story past the wedding? Do you feel invested in these characters and want to continue the journey?
Sunday Worship and Lunch Prep – Molly

Chapter Summary

A thought-provoking church service, followed by preparations for a special lunch.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Molly was up early to start preparing things for the Sunday roast she would be making. She browned a large piece of beef on the stovetop, before getting it ready for the oven, scrubbed potatoes and cut them, putting them in water to keep them from getting brown, so they would be ready to be put in the oven after church.

Sherlock appeared in the kitchen fully dressed just as Molly was finishing her preparations.

“Wow, the smell of that meat is making me hungry already!” he commented.

Molly grinned. “Well, you’ll have to wait a few hours for it, but on the positive side, we do have some lovely scones to eat for breakfast.”

“And we have to burst Hudders’s bubble before we go to church.”

“Well, we certainly don’t want to do it afterwards, when Kayla is with us.” She reached up to give her fiancé a peck. “I’m going to get dressed for church now, if you want to get those scones. The kettle has already boiled.

Sherlock nodded.

When she returned from getting dressed, the table was set, coffee made and scones ready to spread with jam and cream. As they ate, they discussed the day ahead.

“So, we are not going to say anything to Kayla about John coming, right?” asked Sherlock.

“Right. I don’t want her changing her mind and leaving. Those two need to talk.”

“You know what, Molly? If we are going to take Rosie to see Mrs. Hudson after lunch so our friends can talk, we can just tell her then about her being mistaken about last night, unless we leave her in blissful ignorance.”

“No,” said Molly firmly, “We are trying to set a good example here. It’s important, at least to me, that she understand we are still holding firm about waiting till we are married to be together that way. I’m not ashamed of being a virgin. It isn’t a dirty word.”

“You’re right, love. It’s just an unusual one these days.”

“No more unusual than a pathologist and detective being in love.”

Sherlock chuckled. “You could say pathologist and anything and it would sound strange, except for maybe a doctor or other medical professional.”
“Well, I do happen to think ‘The detective and the pathologist’ has a nice ring to it.”

“I’d have to agree with that.” He kissed her tenderly. “My pathologist.”

“Mrs. Hudson told me she used to refer to me as your pathologist, and you never disabused her of that notion.”

“Well, we worked together enough that I thought of you that way anyway, so it would have been hypocritical of me to tell her not to say that.” He kissed the tip of her nose, then claimed her lips again briefly. “So, you’re okay with waiting till we take Rosie downstairs to tell Mrs. Hudson the bad news?”

Molly laughed. “Yes, sweetheart.”

After cleaning up the breakfast dishes, the couple headed to church.

Molly spotted Kayla immediately and whispered to Sherlock, “I think we should sit with her, she looks tired, and so down as well.”

He nodded. “Good idea.”

They greeted their friend and went into church together.

“Today you get to see the Girls Brigade and Boys Brigade in action,” Molly whispered to Sherlock.

Boys and girls filed in once the rest of the congregation had been seated. The hymn “To God Be the Glory” was played.

Then followed a procession of a boy with a BB colour flag followed by two other boys walking side by side, behind which was a girl with the GB colour flag who also had two girls following her. All were dressed in a uniform. The flags were then presented to the pastor, who passed them in turn to the BB/GB Captains.

“The colours are held by the oldest boy and oldest girl,” Molly explained in a low voice. “I got to do it a couple times and it was no easy feat, let me tell you.”

Sherlock chuckled. “I’m not surprised, with your rather small stature.”

Molly took no offense at his words. She knew he wasn’t making fun of her height. Being short had its advantages, like the way she could fit so perfectly into Sherlock’s embrace at night, not that this was the time to be thinking about that.

During the service, Molly was excited to hear two of her favourite Hillsongs, “Shout to the Lord,” and “Mighty to Save.” She closed her eyes, letting the music wash over her and singing from memory. She felt Sherlock squeeze her hand. She was delighted to hear his baritone singing a few bars of chorus as he picked up the tune. Kayla wasn’t singing however.

As they sat down, after the praise songs, Molly looked at her friend, who looked miserable. She squeezed her friend’s hand. “I’m praying for you, Kayla. Things will work out.”

“I guess so,” sighed her friend.

Before the sermon, another song was sung - “Here I am Lord.” This tied in with the sermon which was 1 Samuel 3:4-10.
The pastor read, “(4) Then the LORD called Samuel. Samuel answered, ‘Here I am.’
(5) And he ran to Eli and said, ‘Here I am; you called me.’
But Eli said, ‘I did not call; go back and lie down.’ So he went and lay down.
(6) Again the LORD called, ‘Samuel!’ And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, ‘Here I am; you called me.’
‘My son,’ Eli said, ‘I did not call; go back and lie down.’
(7) Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.
(8) A third time the LORD called, ‘Samuel!’ And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, ‘Here I am; you called me.’
Then Eli realized that that the LORD was calling the boy. (9) So Eli told Samuel, ‘Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, “Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.”’ So Samuel went and lay down in his place.
(10) The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’
Then Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’”

“Are you listening to God’s call?” asked Pastor Briggs. “It is very easy to not hear that still, small voice of God calling us. We have so many distractions these days. In this era of technology, now, more than ever before, people just can’t seem to find the time to listen to God.”

He continued. “When you have big decisions to make, are you praying for God’s guidance, or are you just doing your own thing and hoping for the best? How does God speak to you? Some people hear God’s voice through music, or through prophetic dreams. Others turn to the Word and find the answers they seek. I know of many people who tell me that sometimes in times of trial, they will turn to their daily devotional, and God will speak to them through that day’s reading.”

Molly nudged Sherlock. “That happens to me a lot. I’ve shown you that in my ‘Our Daily Bread,’ at times,” she whispered.

Her fiancé nodded his agreement and smiled at her.

As the pastor disseminated further about listening to God’s calling, Molly realized she needed to ask for God’s guidance more. Too often she tried to do things herself, without thinking about it. She resolved to make a better effort.

Once the service was over, Molly and Sherlock walked outside, holding hands. It was a lovely summer morning and Molly felt wonderful. Her happiness was somewhat tempered though by Kayla’s continued sadness.

“Come on,” urged Molly. “Let’s go. I need to get our Sunday roast finished so we can eat at around one.”

The threesome headed back to Baker Street. As soon as they started up the stairs to the flat, Kayla commented, “I can smell that roast from here. It’s making my mouth water!”

As soon as they got inside, the women got to work preparing the rest of the meal, including getting Yorkshire puddings ready for the oven. Kayla took charge of those, stating that her family often had Sunday dinner at her parents’ place. Kayla’s two older brothers and their families would often visit for special occasions, and she was usually the one who made the puddings. Molly was glad to leave that to Kayla, she had not made it herself. People did not tend to make Yorkshire pudding when they lived alone. It had been her mother who had shown her years earlier, and that had been the extent of Molly’s experience, helping her with it.

“Can I do anything?” questioned Sherlock.
“I think we have everything under control, sweetheart,” said Molly. She would have kissed him on the lips, but mindful of her friend Kayla’s current state, she just pecked him on the cheek. He smiled and she knew he understood why she was acting so chastely.

At ten minutes before one o’clock, the roast was out of the oven and the Yorkshire puddings were in. Kayla excused herself to use the loo and Molly went to Sherlock, who was sitting in his chair, engrossed in the book she had bought him. “I haven’t set the table yet, because I didn’t want Kayla to realize there’s an extra place setting,” she told him.

“Probably a good idea. So, while she’s in the bathroom, can I have a real kiss now?” He stood and opened his arms.

Molly giggled and stepped into his embrace. She lifted her head as he leaned down for a very tender, very sweet kiss.

He released her and said, “Tonight, are we still planning on talking about our sleeping arrangements?”

Molly thought about the abstinence guidelines that had sat in her bedside drawer for some time. She didn’t even remember what all they’d put on it, but figured that would be a good place to start. “Yes, Sherlock. I have an idea bout that. Hopefully we can come to an agreement on what to do next.”

“Okay, love.” He kissed her again quickly, just before Kayla exited the bathroom.

Molly was just pulling the Yorkshire puddings out of the oven when she heard the doorbell ring.

“I’ll get that,” said Sherlock cheerfully, as he opened the door to the flat and went downstairs.

Kayla looked at Molly suspiciously. “Molly, you aren’t having anyone else over for this Sunday roast of yours, are you?”

Molly blushed slightly. “Uh, maybe.”

“Molly, how could you?” hissed her friend, angry tears sparkling in her eyes. “Why couldn’t you just leave well enough alone? He hasn’t spoken to me in a week. He obviously doesn’t give a damn about me, and now you are just going to make things worse! How could you do this to me?”

Molly stared at her friend open-mouthed. She had never seen Kayla angry, nor had she heard her utter a word like “damn” either.

“I’m sorry, Kayla. I just thought you needed to talk, and you seem so upset...”

“Molly,” Kayla’s voice was suddenly flat and lifeless and no longer angry, "Life isn’t always a bed of roses. Just because you and Sherlock have your happily ever after, doesn’t mean I’ll get mine.”

“Kayla, it took seven years for me to get my ‘happily-ever-after.’ I know life isn’t a bed of roses. But I stand by my actions. You need to talk with John before it’s too late.” She would have said more, but at that moment the door opened and Sherlock stepped inside, closely followed by John, holding Rosie.

Molly registered the shock on John’s face as he saw Kayla. He looked as if he were about to bolt back down the stairs,. Fortunately, Sherlock had stepped behind him and closed the door, then casually stood in front of it so there was no escape.
Molly gave Sherlock a grateful look. This was going to be a very interesting afternoon, one she hoped would end with a positive outcome for their friends.

Chapter End Notes

So, the stage is set. What do you think will happen? The next chapter will be from John's POV again.

How did you find the church service? Are you familiar with the Hillsongs I mentioned? Could you relate to the sermon?

Thanks so much to Ashblood for her explanations about the Girls and Boys Brigade and what they do in a church service.
Worth the Risk? - John (Sunday)

Chapter Summary

John and Kayla are finally face to face. Can they work things out?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

John looked again at the DVD that had arrived in the post on Thursday. He had watched it, heard Mary's words and looked at her image on the television screen. He had thought about calling Sherlock right away to watch it too, but decided it could wait. They had had a busy day the previous day, and really, there was no hurry. Maybe next week.

The DVD had been the reason he had not tried to contact Kayla. After his talk with Sherlock on Monday night, John had spent the next day thinking about his friend's advice. With Wednesday and solving that Baxter murder, he just hadn't had time to think about talking to Kayla.

The unexpected arrival of the DVD in the post had been a shock. Mary had been gone for over four months, so why now? It had presumably come from the same friend who had sent the other one to Sherlock, though why they had waited so long to post it to him was incomprehensible.

In any case, watching that DVD had stirred up all the memories of his time with Mary, as well as his guilt over her death, despite the conversation he had had with Kayla. Kayla, the sweet, innocent woman who he was terrified of falling in love with, of replacing Mary with.

So, he decided to let things go, to forget about Kayla and just let his life revolve around his work and Rosie.

The trip to the tailor yesterday had been a welcome respite. It had been rather fun, joining in with Mycroft to tease Sherlock about his virginity. He really was pretty impressed with his best friend. Sherlock had gone from being a man who abhorred sentiment, to one who had embraced it wholeheartedly.

John was still a bit confused about Sherlock's determination to wait till his wedding night to be with Molly. He supposed all that waiting would make for a hell of a good one though. Without conscious volition, John's thoughts turned again to the sweet school teacher. In the short time they had been seeing each other, he had learned quite a lot about her. Kayla's parents were both police officers. She had actually considered becoming one herself, but when her dad had been wounded in the line of duty and had to endure months of recuperation, she had changed her mind. Kayla had told him she didn't want to be in a profession that could cost her her life, because she wanted a family of her own one day, and wanted to be there for her children.

Teaching was a good profession for a woman with a family to raise. Of course, Kayla had not had any good luck with relationships. She had admitted that, at 38, she had pretty much given up on the idea of ever being a mother herself. Listening to the woman talk so openly had broken his heart. Then of course, he had gone and broken hers last Sunday.

Yes, she is still better off without me, John thought, putting down the DVD from Mary. He
gathered everything together to take along to Baker Street, then picked up Rosie, who had been on
the carpet, contenting herself with rolling from her back to her side. *She'll be crawling soon,* he
reflected.

John drove to Baker Street. He had timed it pretty well, finding a park a block away from the flat.
He was surprised that Sherlock answered the doorbell for once.

The smell of roast beef wafted down the stairs, as John followed Sherlock upstairs, holding Rosie
and the changing bag. His stomach rumbled with anticipation of having a good, home-cooked
meal. It had been awhile.

When Sherlock opened the door, John walked in and stopped short.

*Oh God,* he thought. *What is she doing here?* His first reaction was one of anger, that his friends
had set him up, and he turned to go back down the stairs. Unfortunately, Sherlock stood blocking
the door, and he knew there was no escape.

*God, she looks beautiful,* he thought involuntarily. Kayla's face was flushed, probably from being
in the heat of the kitchen. Her hair was plaited around her head, but a few stray wisps had escaped
and were curling around her ears. She was also in a very pretty dress, having most likely come
straight from church with Sherlock and Molly. She obviously had not been expecting him either.

"Hi, John!" said Molly brightly, acting for all the world as if this were an everyday occurrence. "I
was just about to set the table. Do you need to feed Rosie?"

Kayla had turned away, obviously doing some last minute preparations with the food. "Uh, no. I
fed her only fifteen minutes before I left to come here. Thanks for the invite."

"I'll get the play mat for her," said Sherlock, going to the corner of the sitting room to fetch it, then
lay it down. Sherlock opened his arms for the baby, and John handed her over.

Then he turned back to where Molly was setting the table, and Kayla was removing what looked
like very delicious Yorkshire puddings from a muffin tin. His mouth watered.

John looked over at Kayla. He should at least be polite. "Hello, Kayla," he said, aiming for a casual
tone.

"John," she nodded, then averted her eyes.

The foursome sat down to eat the delicious meal. "Wow, Molly, this Yorkshire pudding is great!"
proclaimed John.

"I can't take the credit for that," said Molly. "Kayla took care of it while I was busy with getting the
other food ready."

"Oh. Uh, nice job, Kayla," he said, glancing at her.

"Thank you," she responded softly, not looking directly at him. He was no genius detective, like
his friend, but he had the definite feeling she was trying to avoid him. No wonder, after the way he
had dumped her.

An awkward silence ensued, then Molly decided to tell her friend about the case she, Sherlock and
John had been involved in on Wednesday. That at least kept the conversation going for a time.

At the end of the meal, Molly stood and gathered the plates, putting them in the sink.
"I'll do the dishes," offered Kayla.

"Oh, thanks," said Molly. "I just remembered, I promised to bring Rosie downstairs to see Mrs. Hudson." She looked at John. "Do you mind?"

"Go ahead," he nodded.

Sherlock stood up hastily. "I'll come too, There's something I needed to speak with her about."

Sherlock," said John with a warning note in his voice. He knew exactly what was happening. A person didn't need to be a detective to figure it out.

"Yeah, uh, maybe you can help Kayla with the dishes?" suggested Sherlock, even as Molly scooped up the little girl, who had been contentedly batting at the little toys hanging over the play mat. "We won't be long."

Before John could say anything else, the couple had left the flat, closing the door behind them.

Kayla said nothing, just started filling the sink with water to do the dishes.

John felt obligated to at least talk to the woman. Besides, it would be churlish of him to not help with the washing up, after enjoying a free meal. He picked up the tea towel.

"So, uh, how have you been?" he asked, feeling like an utter fool.

"I'm fine, John, just delightful," she answered, and he could hear the hurt in her voice.

He struggled to come up with another topic of conversation, as she began to wash the dishes, while he dried them.

"Uh, Rosie is cutting her second tooth."

For the first time, she looked directly at him. "She is? How is she doing with that? A lot of babies are really fussy when they are teething. My niece had a terrible time with it, she cried constantly."

"Oh. She seems to be doing okay with it. She has her teething ring to use when she needs it."

"I...I miss her," said Kayla softly.

**Do you miss me too?** he wondered. Aloud he said, "I think she misses you too."

He was looking at Kayla as he spoke, and saw that she blinked rapidly a few times.

They finished the dishes in silence. John checked his watch. It had been ten minutes since Sherlock and Molly had left to go downstairs. Surely they would be back soon.

Nervously, he cleared his throat. "Well, I guess we should go and sit down till they come back," he suggested.

"Yes," agreed Kayla. She took a seat on the sofa, while John seated himself in a yellow armchair, not Sherlock's chair of course.

"So, uh," he started to say, but was surprised when Kayla interrupted him, looking directly at him once again. He could see a shimmer of tears in her eyes, and he felt as if his heart were being torn in two.
"I just want to know one thing, John. What did I do wrong?" Even as she said the words, a tear trickled slowly down her cheek, and he longed to wipe it away.

He felt his own eyes filling. "Nothing, Kayla, nothing at all."

"I don't understand," she said, still looking at him, uncaring of the tears slipping down her cheeks.

John stood and walked to the sofa, then knelt and looked at this sweet, kind woman in front of him. "Kayla," he began, "Let's face it - I'm not good enough for you. You need to be with somebody who is as strong in their values as you. I'm not very religious and I swear an awful lot when I'm pissed off."

"Are you happy with the way your life is now?" she asked him.

"Of course I'm not bloody happy. I'm a single father, trying to raise a baby alone. I have barely any friends and I'm bloody jealous of Sherlock and Molly too. Aren't I just an arse? Go ahead, you can say it. I'm happy for them, but I'm jealous, and I have no right to be."

Kayla leaned forward and took his hand. "It's not wrong for you to feel a little jealous. I'm a little jealous too, because I want what they have. But they also waited a really long time to be together, and Molly never gave up on him. And look at Sherlock. I didn't know him before, but he's a wonderful man, and he is devoted to Molly."

"I know he is, but I'm not like him. Kayla, he doesn't have the kind of baggage I have. I've had girlfriends, a wife, and I have a child."

"And isn't she a gift from God? She's beautiful, John. We all have our paths to travel through life. Besides, the problems of your past are your business. The problems of your future are what I'm concerned about."

John started, it was eerily reminiscent of what he had said to Mary last Christmas. For the first time he felt a flicker of hope. Did he really have the right to make Kayla's decisions for her? If she was really willing to see where things led with them, didn't he owe it to her to at least make the effort? "I'll just end up hurting you, Kayla," he said though, feeling a battle within himself.

"I know that's a possibility," she responded. "I want you to know, I would not want to replace Mary. I know she will always hold a special place in your heart. I would hope you will talk about her sometimes, and not feel uncomfortable. Rosie needs to know her mother, and that her mother loved her too. So if that is why you are concerned about trying something new, I hope I've allayed your concerns somewhat. But I'm willing to take the chance on you, because I happen to think you are worth it. There's something...special about you, and about Rosie too."

It was her last words that did it. She was willing to take him, and she was willing to try, despite his baggage, despite his having a daughter. He looked from her hand into her eyes. "Are you sure you want to risk it, being with me?"

She reached her other hand to touch his cheek. "Of course I am." Then she leaned in towards him, as he did the same and their lips met.

He felt a tingling sensation spread through him. **Oh, but her lips were sweet.**

He started at a voice saying conversationally, "What do you think, Molly? Do you think our plan worked?"

John stood up and regarded his friend solemnly, flushing slightly. Sherlock was not looking at him,
but at Molly, who responded, "Well, judging by what we interrupted, I'd say so." She was holding Rosie on her hip and John could not help looking at what a sweet picture it made - Sherlock, Molly and a baby.

They both looked at him then with identical raised eyebrows. Kayla stood beside John and slipped her hand into his, and he glanced at her, smiling at the lovely woman who held his hand. "We're going to try this again. For some reason, Kayla seems to think I'm worth the effort."

Molly beamed at him as Sherlock said, "If Molly was willing to take me on, I don't see why Kayla would have a problem with you. I'm a much more difficult man to deal with."

"Not these days," said a smiling Molly, kissing his cheek.

Kayla dropped John's hand, approached the other couple and extended her hands towards Rosie. The little girl immediately lifted her arms up, and Molly relinquished her to the other woman.

"I missed you, little one," said Kayla, holding the child against her, and John had this unaccountable feeling of rightness as he looked at them both. He expected they had a long road ahead of them, and a lot of discussions to have, but maybe, just maybe, if he was very lucky and God smiled on him, things would work out. He was not going to rush things, however.

"Sherlock, Molly, thank you for today. I was pretty pissed off when I got here, but I know you have my best interests at heart, and I appreciate you giving me a little push."

Sherlock had wrapped his arms around Molly from behind after she had given Rosie to Kayla. They looked so damned cute together. He wished he were taller so he could do the same with Kayla. "Thanks for the great lunch," he continued. "I think I'd like to take Kayla back to my place now so we can talk, catch up on things." Kayla turned her attention on him. "Is that okay with you?" he asked tentatively.

"Yes, I'd like that," she said with a gentle smile, and his heart leapt.

He and Kayla left shortly thereafter with Rosie. He was truly grateful for his friends, and he smiled as he walked with his, maybe, girlfriend and daughter back out to his car. He felt so much better than he had upon arrival.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed reading another chapter from John's POV. I wanted my readers to understand his conflicting thoughts. Of course it's always fun to show Sherlock and Molly's relationship from an outside POV.

Do you think John and Kayla have a chance for happiness together? Did you like learning a bit of Kayla's backstory too?
Returning to Basics - Molly (Sunday)

Chapter Summary

Sherlock and Molly re-evaluate their sleeping arrangements. Then they enjoy quiet time together, watching an old film on the telly.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

After John and Kayla had left with Rosie, Molly heaved a sigh of relief.

“I’m glad our gamble paid off,” she remarked to Sherlock.

“It was your idea, sweetheart, and I’m glad you thought of it,” he said, squeezing her hand. “Looks like our timing was spot on.”

“It helped that Mrs. Hudson insisted on us staying for tea. Did you see the look on her face when we explained that you were giving me a massage last night? She looked so disappointed.”

Sherlock chuckled. “I’m not really sure why she is so anxious for us to sleep together. Perhaps it is because she is a bit of a romantic herself and wants us to enjoy the main event already.”

“The main event? Oh, that’s too funny, Sherlock. I’ll have to remember that one. Once we are married, that can be our code phrase for making love. I’ll ask if we can get to the main event if you are teasing me too much, or if we are out somewhere and I just want to get home.”

“Mmm,” he responded, dropping a kiss onto her lips. “Same goes for me, if you are tempting me too much. So, my love, are we going to talk now about our sleeping arrangements, or would you like to wait until later tonight?”

“No time like the present, I guess,” she responded. “It looks like our friends took care of the dishes, so we can get comfy on the sofa. I just have to get something from the bedroom.”

She walked into the bedroom and went to her bedside table, pulling out the abstinence guidelines from weeks earlier.

She took it into the sitting room and sat down on the sofa next to Sherlock, who was patiently waiting for her.

Together, they looked at the list she had written for them. Sherlock was the one to say out loud what they were both thinking. “It appears we have not been following these guidelines very well, have we?”

“Yeah, I have to agree. To be honest, I didn’t even remember anything beyond us not spending too much time in the bedroom. We certainly have not been sticking to the chaste kissing in bed, have we?”

“Not always. It’s very hard to not kiss you any time you are close to me. But we should really keep that in mind if we are to share the bed again.” He looked seriously at Molly. “If we do return to our
previous arrangement, can I go back to holding you? I really like having my arm around you, even if you would prefer that I do not put my hand on your chest.”

She sighed. "I’m not saying no to that for good, because it felt really natural and comforting, but maybe for a day or two you just put your hand over mine.”

“Okay, that works for me. I just really miss your warmth at night, and kissing you goodnight just before we sleep.”

“Me too. Hmmm, let’s keep looking at our agreement. No kissing below the face. We’ve definitely broken that one, most notably after that dance to “A Thousand Years.”

“Well, we did say no more dancing until the wedding day, so that could be added to the list.”

“And we broke the no sitting on your lap just a few days ago,” she noted.

“To my detriment, when I had to take a cold shower because of it.”

“Yeah, it’s a bummer, because I really, really love sitting on your lap. Once we are married, I intend to do that a whole lot.”

“You know what will happen if you do that.”

“Once we’re married, I will welcome it,” Molly said, blushing a little. “Right now we are talking about ways to avoid making love, not when we are going to do it, though.”

She looked at the agreement again. “Doing more public activities. I think we’ve been doing pretty well with that really, although we have to go see a film yet.”

Sherlock smirked. “I distinctly remember suggesting some mid-row kissing.”

“Maybe.” She smirked back. “Keeping the door unlocked. We need to do that, so we know Mrs. Hudson could come in. And oh, no marathon kissing sessions .”

They looked guiltily at each other. “Okay, that one has definitely been a problem for us,” he remarked. “So, our pressure points, as Magnussen would have said, are getting carried away when kissing, even outside of the bedroom, and doing things like dancing or having you sit on my lap, which are conducive to the act of overindulging in said activity.”

Molly giggled. “I love it when you use quaint, fancy terminology.”

“You have to concede it is true, my darling.”

“Most definitely. So it is controlling our kissing frequency we need to work on more.”

He nodded. “So, are you satisfied for now, can we share a bed again?” he asked hopefully.

“Yes, Sherlock. Let’s try again, just as John and Kayla are doing.”

She put the guidelines down on the coffee table and slipped her arms around Sherlock, cuddling him, enjoying his warmth.

“Well, I’m not dreading going to bed tonight without you at any rate,” he commented. “Oh, by the way, I’d like to do something this coming weekend, if you are not working. Do you know your schedule?”
“I do actually. I’m not working on the weekend, because I’ll be back on nightshift the following week and have to start at midnight on Sunday.”

She felt Sherlock kiss her hair as he put an arm around her shoulders. “How would you like to take a trip to North Yorkshire this weekend?”

“North Yorkshire? Whatever for?”

“Mycroft told me yesterday that the gravestone has been laid on my friend Victor’s grave. I wanted to pay my respects, you know, say goodbye. I never got to do that.”

“And you need closure. Of course I’ll come with you.”

“One more thing. I thought maybe I’d show you Musgrave Hall, my childhood home. It’s a burnt out shell for the most part…”

“Oh, Sherlock, I’d love to see it, whatever’s left of it. It’s part of your childhood, and I’d like to understand more about you and your early life.”

“Wish I could recall more of it myself,” he said sadly, and Molly tightened her arms about him. “Anyway, I thought we’d take the train up there on Friday evening, hire a car and find a hotel to stay at overnight. We could visit Musgrave and Victor’s grave, then head back home Saturday night. Do you know your hours for Friday?”

“Let me check my phone,” Molly said. She rose from the sofa and got her phone, then checked her schedule, before sitting down again next to Sherlock. “Looks like I’m doing seven till four all week. Oh yeah, Mike is going to be out of town, so I’m acting supervisor. That means paperwork all week, and then again next week on nightshift.” She made a face. Paperwork was so boring, but someone had to do it.

“That’s good. I’ll check the train schedule and we’ll see if we can go right after you finish work.”

“You said you would hire a car in North Yorkshire. When is the last time you drove?”

“A few years back. Don’t worry, I don’t think I’ve forgotten how to do it, love. Besides, it will be good practice for our honeymoon. Oops, didn’t mean to say that.”

Molly looked at him. “So, you will be driving us to our honeymoon destination?”

“Of course not, Mycroft is letting me use a car when we get there. Now stop trying to get clues out of me. I’m not divulging any more information, Molly.”

“Oh, well I look forward to seeing how well you drive,” she said with a grin.

“How about you? When did you last drive a car?”

“Oh, gosh. Not since before I started at Bart’s. Really I have no need to drive when the Tube is so convenient.”

“So, what shall we do now until dinnertime?” asked Sherlock, putting his arms around Molly.

She looked at him coquettishly. “We could watch some telly, or…”

He didn’t let her finish, effectively silencing her with a firm kiss. Molly slid her arms around his waist and returned his kiss, enjoying the feel of his wonderful, sensual lips. They restrained themselves from a prolonged embrace, being mindful of the need to not have any more marathon
Molly turned on the television and checked what was showing that evening. “Oh Sherlock,” she exclaimed, “‘Calamity Jane’ with Doris Day is showing tonight - have you ever seen it?”

“Can’t say that I have,” he responded.

“She has a lovely voice, and there’s a beautiful song near the end. Will you watch it with me?”

“Of course I will. Perhaps on some other night in, we can also start watching your Disney collection.”

“Oh, yes,” Molly said enthusiastically. “You have to watch ‘Beauty and the Beast.’ There was a live action one that came out a few months ago that I never got around to seeing. Maybe we can find a cinema that is still screening it.”

“I remember Mrs. Hudson saying one of her favourite actors from ‘Downton Abbey’ was playing Beast. And wasn’t Belle played by the Harry Potter girl?”

Molly stared at him, impressed. “For someone who says he is having trouble with his mind palace lately, that apparently doesn’t extend to film trivia.”

Sherlock flushed slightly. “I do occasionally pay attention to people when they are discussing their favourite shows or films.”

“Apparently so. I do wish I owned the Downton Abbey series. It really was good, I wish you would watch it. I’m rather fond of historical stories.”

“Not surprising with your collection of those Barbara Cartland historical romance novels,” he commented.

She blushed. “Well, the hero is usually titled, tall, dark and handsome. You have three of the four attributes, so I guess maybe it’s just my type.”

“Aha,” Sherlock said triumphantly. “When I packed up those books for you before your move to Baker Street, I just knew you were a closet romantic, looking for a hero.”

“And your point is?” Molly smirked at him.

“You think I’m your Barbara Cartland hero..”

Molly put her arms around his neck. “Of course you are, you silly man. I thought you already knew that.” She leaned into him and kissed him, thinking dreamily that Sherlock would have excelled in the role of any of those heroes, and he kissed better than any of them too. Sherlock’s hand went to the back of her head, deepening their kiss, until she sighed, as she inevitably did when they were kissing, and he released her.

“Perfect timing to call a halt, my love,” he said and smiled. “Should we have some dinner?”

“There’s plenty of food left from lunch. I’ll heat some stuff up, and there are still Yorkshire puddings let that I can heat in the oven.” She left Sherlock and went to prepare their dinner. Twenty minutes later, all was ready.

After dinner, and dessert which included the remaining doughnuts from Friday, seeing there was still time before the movie was about to start, Molly suggested she and Sherlock continue their kissing sessions.
Bible reading together.

She went to collect their Bibles, asking, “Do you want your reading glasses?”

“I’ll use the ones on my desk,” he responded.

Sherlock read Galatians 3 aloud. Molly was totally mesmerized. The sight of him in his reading glasses, speaking in his deep voice made it rather hard to concentrate on what he was saying, but she tried to listen. After he had finished, Sherlock remarked, “That chapter talks a lot about being redeemed from the law. What does it mean that Christ came for gentiles? Who are gentiles?

“The gentiles refer to everyone who is not Jewish, like you and me, and the rest of the world. The Old Testament was God’s promise to the Jews. Then, when Jesus came, He was rejected by His own people. Christ came for all of us, not just the Jews.”

“Thank God for that, then!” Sherlock responded, and Molly knew he meant it sincerely. “And this is where it talks about us becoming God’s children through faith too. Verse 26, which says “So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,” that’s pretty clear. I am beginning to understand how extraordinary it is, how we have been given so much information through the Bible.”

Molly kissed his cheek. “Watching you make sense of it all is exciting for me, sweetheart.”

He looked at her in surprise. “They may be new concepts to me, but they contain a logic within them that I find completely believable.”

“It’s because the Holy Spirit has unveiled your eyes, as you said a few weeks ago. I’ll read the next chapter and then it will be about time to watch the movie.”

She read Galatians 4, noticing that Sherlock was watching her as she spoke.

“Do you realize what a lovely speaking voice you have? I suppose it makes sense, knowing how well you sing as well.”

Molly grinned. “I think the same about your speaking voice. Well, it looks like it is time for the film.”

They set their Bibles down and Sherlock replaced his reading glasses on his desk.

Molly cuddled into him as they watched “Calamity Jane.” Feeling his arm around her shoulder was so wonderful and she was quite pleased that they managed to refrain from kissing, probably because the film was enjoyable. Near the end, when Doris Day sang “Secret Love,” Molly turned to Sherlock and sang the last part - “Now I’ll shout it from the highest hills, even told the golden daffodils. At last my heart’s an open door, and my secret love’s no secret anymore.” The words were so appropriate for them. The secret love she had held for him for so many years was now evident for all to see, and she was loved by him in return.

It was then Sherlock clasped her face in his hands and gave her the sweetest, most reverent kiss. When he released her, he said, “I’m glad your secret love for me is no secret anymore, just as mine was secret from myself and is now on display. I love you so overwhelmingly, it hurts sometimes.”

Molly felt tears coming to her eyes at his words, wrapping her arms around his waist and holding him tightly. “You are such a gift to me, Sherlock. I realize that more each day. It’s getting late though, so I’m going to take a shower now and head to bed.”
Sherlock nodded. “I’ll take care of cleaning things up and be right behind you.”

Molly headed off to the shower, then went upstairs to bring her alarm clock back into their bedroom, before getting into bed. While Sherlock was in the shower, she took the time to make another entry in her diary.

She was still awake when Sherlock slipped into bed beside her, smelling of his aftershave and soap. She had missed that, missed him so much. She turned towards him, and he stroked her face before settling a gentle kiss on her lips. "Goodnight, sweetheart."

“Goodnight, my darling,” she responded, turning away from him with a contented sigh and tucking herself up against his warmth, the way she had become accustomed to and had desperately missed over the past few days. His arm came around her, linking his fingers with hers, and they slept.

Chapter End Notes

So, Sherlock and Molly have re-evaluated things and seen that they were neglecting their abstinence guidelines. What do you think about their decision to return to sharing a bed, and their resolve to do better in abiding by their guidelines?

Are you familiar with "Calamity Jane?" I love that song from it!
Molly woke to the sound of the alarm and extricated herself from Sherlock's embrace to turn it off. She had slept so well. It felt so good, having his warmth beside her once again, and she sincerely hoped nothing happened to convince her to return to sleeping in the other bedroom.

She slid out of bed and padded around the room, collecting her clothes for the day, then got dressed quietly. Looking over at Sherlock, Molly could see he was still asleep, so she decided to head to the kitchen and fix her breakfast, after which she went into the bathroom and finished getting ready for work. It was going to be rather boring, just doing paperwork, but it also meant she could probably text Sherlock during the day to see how he was doing.

Molly left the bathroom, hair in a neat ponytail and wearing a light pink lipstick. She went into the bedroom to give Sherlock a good morning kiss before heading out for work, but he wasn't there.

Sherlock was in the kitchen, pouring himself a cup of coffee as Molly entered.

"Morning, love," he greeted. "Did you sleep well?"

"Wonderfully well," she answered, smiling. "It feels so good being back in our bed together. I missed your cuddling."

"Me too." He walked to her, giving her a brief kiss. "When I woke and you weren't there, I thought for a minute that maybe you decided to return to the other bedroom."

"Why would I have done that?"

He flushed. "You were in my dream again, tempting me. I thought I might have, um, made unwelcome advances."

Molly put her arms around Sherlock and gave him a tight hug. "Your advances are never unwelcome, only your timing, sweetheart. Maybe I over-reacted the other day."

"Well, there's one good thing about that brief separation," he said, resting his chin lightly on top of her head.

"What's that?"

"It's four days closer to our wedding now."

She rubbed her hands along his back. "Always a silver lining."

They stood for some moments before she released her hold. "I suppose I had better leave for work."
"Text me later?"

"Of course, sweetheart," he said, leaning down and brushing his lips against hers again, leaving them tingling. She wondered at his restraint. **Maybe because he had a dream about her?**

She would have asked, but she really didn't have time, collecting her phone and handbag, then heading out the door.

At St. Bart's, Molly went straight to Mike's office to start her work day. On his desk she spied a note from him. "New microscopes coming this week, after years of asking for them, so watch for them. Have a good week."

Molly looked at the note. With the new microscopes arriving, the old ones would be disposed of. She wondered if she might be able to get one for Sherlock, to replace the one that had been destroyed. Now that Mrs. Hudson had agreed to let her use 221C, Sherlock would need a microscope. She decided to send off a text to Mike about it later.

Molly spent most of the morning in Mike's office, doing paperwork. He never seemed to have time to take care of the pile of work, because he was also contending with teaching students.

Just before lunchtime, Molly heard Sherlock's text alert and picked up her phone.

"Booked our overnight trip to North Yorkshire this weekend. Will give you details when I see you. Found a cinema still showing 'Beauty and the Beast' too. Will come to your work, we can have dinner and watch the film afterwards. Good?"

Molly smiled. She was impressed that Sherlock had taken her comment about going to the cinema seriously. Of course, he was probably anxious for the bit of mid-row kissing.

"Looking forward to it," she responded, then added, "Love you."

His response was almost immediate. "Love you too, sweetheart."

Molly headed down to the canteen for lunch. She sent off a text to Mike, not sure how soon she'd get an answer.

"Hey Mike, I was wondering what will happen with the old microscopes once the new ones arrive. Any chance I can buy one? Sherlock's was destroyed in the Baker Street explosion a few weeks ago. I've found a place for him to do experiments and obviously he needs a microscope."

Surprisingly, Mike texted back within ten minutes. "We usually donate our microscopes to affiliated, less advanced hospitals or universities. I'm sure we can spare one for Sherlock. He has done enough unpaid work over the years to merit a freebie. Wait till I get back next week, though."

Molly was delighted at this. She couldn't wait to tell Sherlock about it. It would have been nice to keep everything a surprise for longer, but she would not be able to do the clean up of 221C alone anyway.

The rest of the day seemed to drag, because Molly was so excited she could barely contain herself. Doing paperwork meant she had plenty of time to daydream. Kaitlyn popped her head in at one point to say hi. At least that provided a welcome respite from signing off of reports and requisitioning this or that item.

"Hey Molly. I was wondering what was happening with Kayla. She was pretty upset last week."
"It's all resolved," said Molly, grinning. "I invited her and John over for a Sunday roast yesterday. They had not talked since last Sunday. After lunch, Sherlock and I took John's daughter downstairs to visit with our landlady for awhile."

Molly cast her mind back to that rather interesting conversation between Mrs. Hudson, Sherlock and herself. They had gone downstairs and knocked on her flat door.

While Mrs. Hudson had been cooing over Rosie, Sherlock had casually remarked, "Thank you for the scones you left for us last night. Molly was telling me about the wonderful massages you had at the spa yesterday. I couldn't resist the challenge of showing her I could do just as well at it, even though my knowledge of doing massages is limited to what I have learned from YouTube."

"Yes," Molly agreed, looking at Sherlock. It was very clever of him to bring it up casually like that, and not to act like they were hiding something. "I have to say, Sherlock proved to me he does have magic fingers himself when it comes to massage. Show Mrs. Hudson how good you are at it." She lifted her hair out of the way.

Sherlock placed his hands on Molly's shoulders and within a few moments, his thumbs were getting into those areas that elicited those involuntary moans from Molly. He really was good at it.

Sherlock dropped his hands and Molly pouted. "That felt so good, sweetheart. I wish you could do it for hours."

Mrs. Hudson gave a huge sigh of disappointment, and Molly could tell she had understood what they had intended for her to understand. "Er yes, I didn't want to disturb you last night, so I just left the scones outside. I figured you would find them eventually."

"We had them for breakfast, and they were delicious as usual. We must bring the tray back to you later," said Sherlock with a smile.

"Well, seeing as you are here now, how about a cup of tea?"

Of course, they had stayed for tea with a rather forlorn looking Mrs. Hudson.

Snapping out of her brief reverie, Molly said, "When we came back, John and Kayla had resolved their differences. They are going to try again."

"Oh, that's such good news," exclaimed Kaitlyn. "She was upset last week. I was really worried about her."

"So was I. I just knew Kayla and John needed to talk, because they were both miserable."

"So, how are things going anyway with you and your fiancé? Still behaving yourself?"

Molly rolled her eyes. "If you are implying what I think you're implying, the answer is yes. We're over halfway there now, you know. Less than five weeks to go."

"It's coming up so fast, isn't it? I need to organize a hen night for you. Give me a list of who you'd like to invite, okay? I thought maybe we could go out to dinner and then go dancing at a night club."

"I don't know," said Molly slowly. "I'm not big into the nightclub scene, and I don't think my church friends are either."

Kaitlyn pouted. "Fine, we'll go to dinner, and I'll think of something else to do afterwards."
"Thanks, Kaitlyn. By the way, Sherlock is taking me to see 'Beauty and the Beast' tonight at the cinema."

"Isn't it already on DVD and Blu-ray?"

"Probably, but he found a place still screening it, and we kind of promised ourselves to go to the cinema during our engagement."

"Oooo, I wonder what he has in mind? Not watching the movie, I'll bet. I'm guessing he'll be more interested in snogging you in the back row."

Molly smirked. "He did make a comment to that effect when we discussed going to the cinema a few weeks ago, and I told him no back row kissing, although I said a kiss or two in mid-row seating would be okay."

"You'll probably have the cinema all to yourself anyway, with how long the movie has been showing."

"Maybe." Molly shrugged. "It will still be fun. I mean, I've liked Emma Watson since the Harry Potter movies, and I loved Matthew in Downton Abbey, even if I can't remember the actor's name."

"He is handsome. Sherlock might get jealous if you make too much fuss over a blonde guy."

Molly giggled. "Maybe I'll mention it just to tease him. I rather like it when he's territorial. You know Detective Inspector Lestrade of course, because he is the one who has consulted with Sherlock on a bunch of murder cases over the years, and I've done the post-mortems for them."

"Yeah, he's a nice man."

"well, Sherlock has had this idea that Greg has been interested in me, and you should see the green-eyed monster come out. Rather ironic, considering Sherlock already has green eyes, well, in some lights. Luckily Greg just got a new girlfriend, so my darling fiancé can finally be assured that Greg isn't interested in me."

"I think it's adorable that Sherlock is like that now, after being so stand-offish in the past."

Molly laughed. "I have to agree."

Fifteen minutes before her shift was due to end, Molly's phone pinged. Sherlock was informing her he was on his way. **It was sweet of him to let her know,** she reflected, with a soft smile.

The new microscopes had arrived and had been set up, while the old ones had temporarily been stored in a corner of Mike's office. They would stay there until he returned to work the following week. Molly hoped he would allow her to choose the one for Sherlock, but at least she could inform him that he would most likely be getting one.

She was just logging off of the computer when she heard a knock on the office door. She opened it to admit Sherlock, who was wearing her favourite aubergine shirt, and as usual, seeing him almost took her breath away.

He entered, closing the door behind him. "I missed you," he murmured in his beautiful, rich voice, and took her in his arms, kissing her in a way that showed her how much. She luxuriated in it, allowing herself to be lost in it, feeling the tenderness of his lips, his firm grasp around her waist. She felt so protected, so loved. It was several minutes before he raised his head and said, "Ready to
He took her hand as they left the hospital to seek out a place for dinner.

Chapter End Notes

So Sherlock might get a replacement microscope, isn't that nice? Are you looking forward to seeing them at the cinema? Did you know that the British always say cinema, rather than movie theater? They also say film instead of movie. This is one of the things I try to do, keep the English definitions accurate. If you are an English reader and spot an error, please let me know so I can correct it.

Extra note: I added in a reflection scene of the visit to Mrs. Hudson, especially for reader Kathy, who wanted to see what happened when Sherlock and Molly had to burst her bubble. Hope you enjoyed the little addition. I'm always open to adding reader suggestions to my story when they can be accommodated.
Sherlock had woken from a dream in which he was kissing Molly all over her body, caressing her as he went. As soon as he woke, his senses aflame with desire, the way they had been a few mornings earlier, with the same rather obvious evidence of the desire the dream had evoked within him, he had at first worried that Molly had gotten out of bed to avoid him.

Then he heard noises coming from the kitchen and decided she had been up before he had experienced the last part of his dream that had left him in the state he was in. He took a few minutes to breathe deeply and reassert control over his traitorous body. He certainly did not want Molly to decide it was best for her to sleep upstairs again. He was making a conscious effort to control things between them, but he could not control his body’s unconscious response, and it was very annoying.

Sherlock did not like feeling he was at the mercy of his betraying body, when he was so desperately trying to keep to their agreement. He decided it couldn’t hurt to have a quick word to God about it.

*Hey God,* he thought, keeping his eyes closed. *If it wouldn't be too much trouble, would you please find a way to stop me having these unconscious thoughts about Molly? You know I'm trying to do what’s right, but a little help would be appreciated.*

Feeling a little better, Sherlock rose from the bed and got dressed. He decided to wear the aubergine one that seemed to be Molly’s favourite, but he slipped his dressing gown over his suit once he was dressed and belted it, so she would not see his shirt. He’d surprise her with it later in the day.

Before Molly left, he kissed her, making sure he didn’t allow things to get out of hand in any way, very mindful of the fact that he was still not fully recovered from that erotic dream.

After she was gone, he set immediately to work. He needed to book the train to North Yorkshire and a car to drive to Musgrave Hall as well as Victor’s grave. Mycroft hadn’t yet told him the exact location of the graveyard and burial plot, so he shot off a quick text to his brother. He also needed to book overnight accommodation.

Looking online, Sherlock saw there was a non-stop train from King’s Cross to Selby station at 17:19 on Friday night, arriving in Selby at 19:26. He looked at return trains and selected one that left Selby the following day at 17:11, arriving back at King’s Cross station at 21:14, another non-stop journey. He booked the return trip for Molly and himself using his credit card. He found an Enterprise Rent-a-Car which was the closest car hire place to the train station, a ten minute walk. He supposed they could take a taxi, but the walk would be nice after being cooped up on a train for two hours. thought. *Rent-a-car* he thought, *yet another example of American terms making their*
After booking a small car for the Friday evening, Sherlock decided to check out accommodation. He contemplated whether to look for somewhere in Selby, or closer to Musgrave Hall, then decided there would be plenty of time to drive to Musgrave Hall and the cemetery the next day.

The Olympia Hotel was only a few minutes drive from Enterprise Rent-a-Car, and had a decent rating, according to online reviews, so he booked a room there for Friday night. He couldn't help feeling a little excited about going away from London with Molly this time, instead of away from her.

Sherlock took a break after making the bookings and decided to read more of the fiction book Molly had bought for him, “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.” It really was quite interesting, he decided. There were many parallels to the lion Aslan and Jesus, which was obviously the author’s intention. He could understand why Molly liked it. He had just reached the part where Aslan submitted to being sacrificed by the evil white witch, when his phone pinged. Just went I was getting to the good part, he thought, slightly irritated.

He checked the text. It was from Mycroft, responding with the address of the cemetery and the location of Victor's burial plot. He thought he’d let his brother know that he was visiting it over the weekend.

“Thanks Mycroft. I’ve booked train tickets, a car and accommodation for Molly and myself for Friday night, coming back on Saturday. I appreciate all you’ve done to lay my friend to rest properly.”

The response came back immediately, and he rolled his eyes at it.

“No problem, brother mine. You and Molly had better behave yourselves out there, all that alone time...”

He did not bother to respond. Checking his watch, Sherlock decided he had enough time to finish the book before lunch. It was really interesting, the way the lion, Aslan returned to life, then how the book continued with the four children growing to adulthood and ruling over Narnia. It was interesting then to see them come out of the wardrobe and find they were children once again, and no time had passed. All in all, a good book, he reflected.

Opening up his laptop again, he thought he might look for cinemas still playing “Beauty and the Beast.” He really wanted that cinema date with Molly. He was fortunate enough to find one little cinema with a single seven o’clock showing time, so made a note of the address and texted Molly about booking the trip and finding a place to see the film, letting her know he would stop by the hospital when she finished work. Of course, she had to say she loved me first again, he thought, a little piqued.

He went downstairs to Speedy’s and got some lunch. There was something he wanted to do. What was it? A thought had struck his mind last night, when Molly had talked about seeing “Beauty and the Beast.” Oh yes, she had talked about Downton Abbey, and how she wished she owned the series. Sherlock opened his laptop once more and went to the Amazon website. He purchased the boxed set series, noting with satisfaction that it would arrive on Wednesday. Thinking about deliveries reminded Sherlock that he had not collected the post, so he headed downstairs to Mrs.
Hudson.

She opened the door to him and produced several wedding RSVP’s, as well as other miscellaneous pieces of post. “Here’s my RSVP too, a yes, of course.”

“Thank you Mrs. Hudson,” responded Sherlock.

He returned upstairs and set the envelopes on the coffee table. He turned on his laptop yet again to check his email, noting idly that the “poison pen” emailer had not sent anything. Of course, those emails had come in on Tuesdays. He’d have to check tomorrow. Has Molly checked her email lately? he wondered.

When Sherlock made his way to the hospital later that day, he texted Molly to let her know he was on his way.

After a very satisfying hello kiss in Mike’s office, they headed out to eat.

“What do you want to go for a walk first? The film is only at seven, and it’s actually a bit early for dinner,” he suggested.

“Sure,” she responded. "It’s such a lovely day for a walk. Where do you want to go?"

“I have an idea.”

He continued to hold Molly’s hand for the few minutes it took for them to reach a famous cathedral, St. Paul’s.

“You’ve probably been here before, but it’s such a beautiful place. Prince Charles was married here, you know," he remarked.

"I’ve never seen it up close. The architecture is simply amazing.”

They approached the front doors and were a little disappointed to discover that the cut-off time for sight-seeing was four o’clock. “Just missed it by twenty minutes, Sherlock,” said Molly in a disappointed tone.

“You’re Sherlock Holmes?” questioned the attendant, who had refused them entry.

“That would be me,” he said, nodding.

“Well, in that case, I’m sure we can make an exception for someone who has done so much good in our city. Hold on a minute.”

She moved away from the entrance to speak to someone and returned a minute later. “Come in and take a look around. Just make sure you are finished by five, unless you wish to stay for choral evensong.”

"I guess fame has its perks," whispered Molly to Sherlock who was looking rather smug. The couple walked into the cathedral and looked at the beautiful ceiling high overhead and the impossibly long aisle.

“It’s breathtaking,” breathed Molly.

“Just think if Mycroft had booked this place for our wedding. Would you have walked down that aisle to me?”
“No,” said Molly definitively and Sherlock felt a little hurt.

“Why not? Because I’m not royalty?”

Molly threw her arms around him and kissed him. When she let go, she said, “The reason I said no, is because that aisle is much too long. I don’t want to walk for five minutes before I get to you. I just want to be able to see you as I walk towards you, sweetheart.”

Sherlock blinked back tears at her words. She was absolutely, utterly wonderful and she was devoted to HIM. It would never cease to amaze him how blessed he was with this beautiful woman who had been made just for him.

He wrapped his arms around her and held her for a few minutes, breathing in her sweet scent. “I love you,” he said at last, taking her hand and kissing her palm, then her wrist. He could feel her pulse racing and smiled.

“I love you too, but you already know that,” Molly responded, grabbing his hand. They walked around for a few minutes, then slowly made their way back outside.

“I’m ready to eat,” announced Molly as they returned to the unusually bright sunshine, blinking a little as their eyes adjusted.

The couple found a nearby café and ate a nice, relatively inexpensive meal. Then, hand-in-hand, they walked along the street, unconsciously retracing their steps back to the hospital, finding a bench nearby to sit at until it was time to take a taxi to the cinema.

Sherlock hailed a cab and spent the fifteen minute journey with Molly cuddled against him, as he kept his arm protectively around her. When they reached their destination, he paid the driver and they headed into the small cinema. Oh, he was really looking forward to the film, well, not really the film, the prospect of being able to experience what it would be like to kiss a girl in a cinema, the way he had heard teenagers always did. So what if I'm a forty year old man? I feel like a teenager with Molly, he thought, grinning to himself.

Chapter End Notes

First off, thanks to Ashblood for making the suggestion that Musgrave Hall might be in North Yorkshire.

I did quite a lot of research for this chapter, checking out train schedules and the Selby location. The places I mentioned are factual. I also researched St. Paul's Cathedral to see visiting hours etc.

I remember watching the royal wedding in 1981. Did any of you? I know that was a long time ago - perhaps your parents did? It was a big deal in Australia.

Anyway, I hope you enjoyed this chapter and the visit to the cathedral. I hope you are looking forward to Sherlock and Molly going on their overnight trip as well. What did you think of Sherlock's little chat with God?
Date Night at the Cinema – Molly

Chapter Summary

Sherlock get some insight into the possible identity of the mysterious poison pen emailer.

That does not stop him from thoroughly enjoying the cinematic experience and the perks of kissing his woman.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Molly waited while Sherlock bought their tickets. "Do you want some popcorn and a drink?" he inquired.

"Sure, we might as well do the whole 'date' thing. I haven't gone to the cinema with a man since I was a teenager, and that was just a boy who asked me out."

"Your ex-fiancé didn't take you?" questioned Sherlock.

Molly shrugged. "He preferred to just go to the pub on weekends. He was kind of poor, didn't want to spend too much money. Most of what he earned went on having drinks with his buddies. In fact, we took turns paying when we went out anywhere."

Sherlock stared at her. "You paid for some of your outings?"

"This is the 21st century, Sherlock. Many women pay their own way these days, especially if they have better careers."

Sherlock sniffed in a derisive manner. "Call me old-fashioned, but I would never expect you to pay when we go somewhere. What kind of job did he have anyway? I don't believe you've ever said."

"He worked in the family owned jewellery store." They had reached the snack stand so Molly said to him, "I'll have popcorn and Coke."

Sherlock bought them and they headed into the cinema. It was completely empty, but they were fifteen minutes early, so that was no surprise. "Looks like we have the place to ourselves," said Sherlock with a gleam in his eye.

"Still not sitting in the back row, Sherlock. I'd like to be able to actually see the film."

"Fine with me, it does not really matter where we sit if we are the only ones here," he commented, with a devilish smile that made her heart quicken.

They took seats in the dead center of the screening room. "So," Sherlock said conversationally once they were seated, "Tom worked in a jewellery store. I suppose he got your ring for a discount then."

Molly felt embarrassed. Why was he bringing up her ex this way? "Yes, he did. I'd really prefer to
Sherlock ignored her request. "Did he get drunk very often?"

Molly coloured. "Sometimes," she admitted. "Never to the point where he'd hurt me. He'd just, like, push me around a bit, make comments about the fact that I wouldn't sleep with him, but not in a serious way, more like he was teasing." As soon as the words were out she wished she had not said them. Sherlock looked furious.

"Why didn't you tell me this before?" he asked in a chillingly calm voice with a note of steel beneath.

Molly gulped. "Because it wasn't important. He was fine when he was sober. And besides, like I said, he never hurt me physically."

"Did he threaten to hurt you?" That steel was still in his voice and Molly cringed.

"No, not physically. He said a couple things to hurt me the night we broke up. He'd had a few drinks during the reception."

Sherlock took her hand, holding it in a vise-like grip and she squawked.

"Sorry, sorry darling," he apologized, softening his grip. "I wish you had told me this before."

"What difference does it make?" asked Molly, confused. "We broke up about a year ago already."

"It might make all the difference in the world," Sherlock said, stroking her palm soothingly, as if he was trying to calm her. "Those emails you have been getting. I had pretty much discounted Tom. I always miss something. This time it was that I was missing some information about him. From the way you spoke about him being a good guy, I thought he was okay about your breakup. What if he wasn't really? What if he's upset because we got together, knowing how you felt about me?"

Molly stared at him wide-eyed. "Oh, my gosh," she whispered. "When we broke up he said he could see it in my eyes that I loved you. He also said..." she hesitated then went on, "His exact words were, 'It will be a cold day in hell before he notices you, though. He's much too concerned with showing off his superiority to everyone.'" She flushed. "Forget I said that last part."

"Did he say anything else?" pressed Sherlock.

"He said...he said maybe his next woman wouldn't deny him sex before the wedding."

Sherlock groaned. "Sweetheart, I'm pretty sure now that he is the one who sent those emails."

Suddenly Molly realized the lights had dimmed and previews were playing. Nobody else had entered the screening room.

"Let's continue this discussion after the film, okay?"

"Okay," Sherlock agreed.

"Want some popcorn and drink?" she offered.

"I suppose so." He took a handful of popcorn, then took a big sip of Coke. "Why don't you rest the popcorn on the empty chair beside you, rather than holding it in your lap? And you can put the drink on the other side of you too."
Molly did as he asked. As soon as the film started, he settled his arm around her shoulders. She didn't remember ever being in a cinema and having an arm around her. The one time she had gone as a teenager, the boy had been much too nervous to put an arm around her, spent half of the film in the toilets and never asked her out again. With Sherlock it was wonderful, his arm felt so good around her shoulders, warm and comforting.

Molly made a conscious effort to watch the film. It really was a lovely retelling of the story. She offered Sherlock the popcorn and the drink several times. He accepted a couple times, but then refused after that. She was quite impressed with his restraint.

Finally, during the big "Be our Guest" musical number, he leaned into her and asked. "Can I kiss you while this song is on?"

They were still the only couple watching the film and Molly nodded, turning her head towards him as he settled his lips on hers. She felt a rush of pleasure run through her at the exquisite feel of his lips, always so expressive in the way his mouth moved over hers. It was with some reluctance she pulled away when the song ended. "Let's watch the rest," she whispered, and he complied, albeit grudgingly.

By the end of the film, the popcorn and Coke were gone, mostly having been consumed by Molly. As the credits rolled, Sherlock drew her face to his, saying, "time for an experiment."

Knowing exactly what he meant, she opened her mouth willingly when he kissed her insistently, delving his tongue into her mouth and tasting its recesses briefly. She sighed into his embrace. Kissing in a cinema was a lot of fun.

A discreet cough startled them and they sprang apart. There was a person who had come into the screening room to clean it before the next show was due to start.

"Ah, hi," said Molly, a bit embarrassed. "There shouldn't be any cleaning to do, we were the only people here. I can throw away my drink and popcorn bag."

The older woman nodded, then exclaimed, "Aren't you that woman from the telly, the one who is marrying Sherlock Holmes? Oh my goodness and here's the man himself!" She made as if to faint, fluttering her hands in front of her face.

Unfazed, Sherlock merely remarked, "I would certainly hope I'd be the only one kissing my fiancée."

They walked to the end of the row, leaving the woman still gaping. Fortunately she had been on the opposite side.

As they left the cinema and Sherlock held out his hand to hail a taxi, Molly giggled. "I can't believe that woman recognized me before she saw you! I am so ordinary. Nobody recognizes me in a crowd."

"Well, apparently you underestimate your beauty," Sherlock said. There was a caressing note in his voice that she responded to.

On the taxi ride back to Baker Street, they spent most of it wrapped in each other's arms, sometimes kissing, sometimes just holding each other. "Buttered popcorn leaves a definite trace inside your mouth," proclaimed Sherlock, between kisses.

Once inside the flat, he immediately went into detective mode. "I need you to check your phone for emails. Have you checked it lately? Have you seen any from that mysterious person?"
Molly shook her head. "I haven't checked it lately. I so rarely get anything interesting." She looked at her inbox.

Her eyes immediately alighted on one from that day, then she went back through her email for the past few days and found another from the previous Monday, which she opened first.

"Time is running out for you to break up with him, Molly," it read. She read it aloud to Sherlock, whose face was set in a grim line.

"That was a week ago," she explained. "Let me take a look at the one from today."

She read it and gave a little gasp. "Looks like I'm going to have to take matters into my own hands," this one read.

Sherlock had put on his reading glasses. "Let me see," he demanded, reading it for himself, before removing the glasses. "Whoever it is, is not going to wait much longer apparently, before taking action. If it is Tom, we need to find out and find a way to stop him."

"I...I could go and see him?" she suggested, although she didn't relish the thought.

"No," Sherlock responded shortly. "Let's wait one more day. I've received three emails from him, so another may come in tomorrow. If we can get some more information, perhaps we can figure out for sure if it is Tom or not. Just be careful, sweetheart. I don't know if this person is all talk or really serious. I thought at first it might be Sally Donovan, but now I think it is far more likely, based on the evidence with which you have furnished me about his character, that it may be your Tom."

"Don't call him my Tom," said Molly fiercely. "My engagement to him is something I'd rather forget."

"I'm sorry, love. I just don't like the thought of yet another thing that could come between us. First Moran, then Irene, and now, possibly, Tom."

"Can we just forget about it for now? I wanted this to be a fun night, and I have some really good news."

"You do?" Suddenly Sherlock's attention was diverted, which was what she wanted.

"Yes, honey. I spoke to Mrs. Hudson on Saturday, when we were coming home from her spa day. I asked if she was planning on renting out 221C."

"I doubt it," said Sherlock. "I think it would cost more to fix it up for habitation than letting it out would bring in."

"Well," said Molly slowly, "how do you think it would work if nobody slept there, but just used it for, say...conducting experiments?"

"Molly, are you telling me..."

"Yes, Sherlock. I asked her if she would let us rent it so you can conduct your experiments there. I know how much you miss it."

"And what did she say?" She could hear the hopeful note in his voice.

"She said yes, and not to worry about paying anything if we fix it up ourselves. She...she also said
that when she's gone...as in dies...that she plans to leave this building to us in her Will."

Sherlock seemed taken aback. "Why would she do that?"

"She says you're the closest thing she has to a son."

"She really said that?"

"Yes, sweetheart. I hope you don't mind, but I kind of said in that case, she'd have to be an honorary extra grandmother when we have children of our own."

"I already had that thought myself," he said unexpectedly, smiling at Molly.

"So, what do you think?"

"I think you are utterly, completely, unbelievably wonderful, Molly Hooper. You are always surprising me with thoughtful things. It's a wonderful idea."

"I would have kept it a secret, but I knew I couldn't fix the place up without you. I have one other piece of good news too."

"What more could you have to tell me?"

"We just got new microscopes at the hospital today. I texted Mike, and he's pretty sure I can have one of the old ones for you."

"You are utterly brilliant," proclaimed Sherlock, sweeping her into his arms and kissing her, lavishing kisses all over her face, her eyes, her forehead, her cheeks, her ears, then returning to her mouth. He kissed her possessively, yet with infinite tenderness until they were both gasping for air and had to stop, panting.

"Okay," said Molly rather dazedly. "I think that was a pretty incredible thank you."

"Remind me to thank you the way I really want to thank you, when we are on our honeymoon," he said huskily, his voice deep and hoarse with longing.

"I will, my love" she promised, her own feelings evident, as she struggled to draw in breath. "I...I think it's time for bed anyway. I'm going to take a shower."

Sherlock nodded. "I'll be right behind you."

Molly took a quick shower, then exited the bathroom so Sherlock could take his own. By the time he was in the bedroom, showered and shaven as usual, Molly had brushed out her hair and was ready to get under the covers.

They slid into bed at the same time, moving towards each other and meeting in the middle, where Sherlock kissed her once more, gently and tenderly.

This time, instead of her facing away from him, they clasped hands, his right and her left in front of them, and wrapped their free arm over each other.

Molly's hands caressed his side gently, until Sherlock drew in a breath, and she stopped, not wishing to tempt him further. Her eyes drifted closed, and she slept, with her arm looped over his body as his was over hers.
Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed this chapter. Do you think the emailer is Tom? Did you like the way the cinema employee recognized Molly first? I thought it would be nice for Molly to be noticed for once.

Did you see the live action version of Beauty and the Beast? Do you prefer the live or the original version?
Disturbing Email – Sherlock (Tuesday)

Chapter Summary

Sherlock discovers the identity of the emailer, and is concerned for Molly

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Opening his eyes to the sight of a lovely, brown-eyed gaze would never get old, thought Sherlock as the alarm beeped. Molly moved away from him to turn it off.

"Snooze button?" he suggested hopefully.

Molly shook her head with regret. "We've completely blown our abstinence guidelines in the past with too much kissing in bed."

"I guess you're right," Sherlock said, sighing a little. "Yet another thing to look forward to after we're married."

"Maybe we can lift that restriction when the wedding is only two weeks away. I kind of feel like it is getting easier now, because the end is in sight. Really, we only have a month to go. In fact, it is one more month today."

"That is true. The closer we get, the more determined I feel to stick it out. I want our wedding night to be unforgettable."

Molly smiled softly. "I know it will be."

"So, um, tonight can we begin my list again? Can I hold you?"

"You already do." She grinned.

"You know what I mean, Molly," he grumbled.

She giggled. "Let's make that decision tonight."

He nodded. At least she hadn't shot him down.

She leaned into him for a quick kiss, then got out of bed. He watched her unashamedly as she collected her clothes and slipped them on, still keeping her back turned of course. Just another month, he told himself. She had slipped her bra on and was reaching to fasten it when he thought to ask, "Molly, can I try to do that for you?"

"Uh.." she seemed uncertain.

"Please? It isn't like I'm going to see anything," he said logically.

"Well, I guess so."

Sherlock slid along the bed so he was directly behind her. He took hold of the two sides of the bra
and was a little flustered when he saw there were three tightness settings. Seriously? Why were these things so complicated? "Um, which set of hooks do I use?" He questioned.

"The tightest setting," responded Molly.

I should probably be wearing my reading glasses so I can see those hooks and eyes properly, he thought. He concentrated, going more by feel than sight, and managed to fasten the bra correctly. "Got it," he announced triumphantly. He had really enjoyed that brief contact with her back.

Surprisingly, Molly twisted around and kissed him lightly on the lips, before putting on her blouse and jumper. "Thanks honey, it only took you five times as long as when I do it myself," she teased.

"You've had probably twenty five years of practice. That was my first time fastening a bra, although I have to say," he couldn't resist being a little naughty, "I much prefer taking it off."

She surprised him again. He had expected her to blush, but instead she admitted, "Me too." She turned towards him once again. "I'm not really sure if I've said this before, but thank you, for always asking if you can do something, instead of assuming. I really appreciate the fact that you let me set the pace for things, even that list of yours."

"Isn't that rather the point, sweetheart? I trust your judgment more than my own, when it comes to this stuff. My body tends to rule my head too much."

Another sweet smile from her. "Well, I'm going to have some breakfast and get ready for work. What are you up to today?"

"The only thing I am going to make sure I do is check my email. I have a feeling there is going to be one from the mysterious person who may or may not be Tom". He noticed Molly give an involuntary shudder. "Molly, are you worried it might be Tom?"

"A little. I don't understand though, if it is him. I mean, it has been about a year. Why now?"

Sherlock was pretty sure he knew. Tom was jealous of him, and the fact that he was now engaged to Molly, but he didn't want to worry her further. Instead he said, "I might pop in to your work today, if I happen to get another email, just to let you know."

"Okay, that sounds good." Her shoulders relaxed, and she left the bedroom.

Sherlock dressed thoughtfully. The more he thought about things, the more it made sense that Tom was behind the emails. Molly had definitely downplayed their breakup and the younger man's attitude towards it. He was still pondering things when he entered the kitchen. He saw the coffee Molly had made for him. It was these little things he loved most, the signs of their shared life together, doing little things for each other without being asked. Yep, he decided. I'm going to stop in the hospital gift shop and buy her some flowers later.

Molly came out of the bathroom and back into the kitchen, ready for work. She had put her hair into a braided twist on the top of her head, and her lips invited his with their soft pink colour and sheen from lip gloss she had most likely applied.

"Thanks for the coffee," he told her, walking over to her and putting his arms around her.

"You're welcome," she responded, smiling.

"Can I taste your lip gloss?"
She looked at him coyly. "I suppose I can reapply it." She lifted her head and he bent down, touching her lips with his. It was strawberry lip gloss. She had a curious mixture of strawberry, along with mint toothpaste. It was quite delicious, much as she herself was, he reflected. He could have continued to kiss her for much longer, but she drew away. "I need to leave for work, or I'll be late."

He released her, somewhat reluctantly. "Have a good day, and I'll see you later, love."

"I'll look forward to it. Paperwork is so boring. I'll need a little distraction."

"I think I can definitely help with that," he said, grinning.

Once Molly was gone, he turned on his laptop and looked at John's blog. The Baxter case was up, although no names were mentioned, of course. John had mentioned Molly's help with the case. Molly will get a kick out of that, he thought. He'd have to tell her later.

Checking his email, Sherlock flagged a couple of emails to give further consideration. No email yet from Tom, or whoever. He checked the time the others had arrived. They were around eleven in the morning, still a couple hours away. Waiting was the hardest part.

At ten he texted Molly. "How's your day going, love?"

When he didn't get a response for a few minutes, he began to worry. Why wasn't she in Mike's office? He decided to wait fifteen minutes and head to the hospital after that, if he still didn't hear from her.

Fortunately, a few minutes later, Sherlock heard the sound of Molly's text alert and he breathed a sigh of relief, picking up his phone to check the message. "Hi, honey. Sorry it took me a few minutes to respond. Remember the new intern, Stacy? Of course you do - you flirted with her." Here Sherlock cringed. He was hoping she wouldn't ever mention that to him. "Anyway, she needed my assistance in the lab, so I was helping her out and left my phone in Mike's office. I just got back. Everything's fine. The office is a bit cluttered though with all the old microscopes."

"Okay," Sherlock texted back. "Just checking. I love you." Said it first that time, he thought complacently

"Love you too XX"

Sherlock was in the kitchen fifteen minutes later, making himself a cup of tea, when his phone sounded again with Molly's text alert. He took his cup into the sitting room and set it on the coffee table and picked up his phone once again to read her message.

"Guess what? Mike called me and told me to just go ahead and take one of the microscopes for you. He said to take whatever one I wanted, it would be one less microscope to have to deal with in finding a place for it. Isn't that great? When you come later, you can choose it and we can bring it home."

Sherlock smiled at this. He'd have to thank Mike in some way. Those microscopes were worth well over 1000 second-hand. Maybe he could invite Mike and his wife out for dinner with Molly and himself. He decided to see what Molly thought.

"Absolutely. What would you think if we invited Mike and his wife out to dinner with us to thank him? Maybe we could go out one night next week?"

"What a lovely idea, Sherlock. Remember, I'll be on nightshift next week, but "I'll have Friday
night free, before I work the weekend. We could do Friday or Saturday evening. Maybe even Sunday. Do you want me to check with him and let you know? He said on the phone he's not actually going anywhere this week, just taking it off to have a break from work, so he's at home. I can call him now."

"Sure, that would be fine." Sherlock didn't bother to say goodbye over text this time, because Molly would obviously be texting him again shortly.

Sure enough, ten minutes later, another text came in. "Mike said that sounds lovely, and he's fine with Friday or Saturday of next week, just to let him know."

"Thanks, love. We'll make plans later, then. Bye for now. Love you, sweetheart."

"Love you too, my darling XX"

By this time, it was after eleven o'clock, so Sherlock decided to check his email again. He was not surprised then, to find another one with "Sherlock Holmes" in the subject line. With some trepidation he opened it and read,

"Moly is a girl who needs someone who will not just use her. Break it off now. This is your last chance."

Sherlock stared thoughtfully at the email. This was the first one where the writer had actually made a demand of him, and he/she seemed protective of Molly, which certainly fit with the idea it could be Tom.

Sherlock decided to open each email, then copy and paste them to the "pages" app on his phone, to see if there was some correlation between them. Once he had done this, the emails read as follows, in order -

"You are heartless. You should just leave Molly now before you break hers."

"It took you so long to get together, she deserves better than that."

You'll be my enemy always if you do anything to hurt her."

"Moly is a girl who needs someone who will not just use her. Break it off now. This is your last chance."

Sherlock read the emails over again and closed his eyes, having committed them to memory. He entered his mind palace easily for once. Perhaps it was because this was something that concerned the woman he loved, and was of great importance.

He decided to use the premise that it was Tom, and see if all the evidence fit.

First, he thought over his conversation with Molly. It appeared that Tom had not been quite as prepared to break up with her as he had thought. There had obviously been some hurt and animosity surrounding it. The emails indicated that this person knew Molly personally and cared about her. Again, this corroborated the premise of it being Tom. The writer did not seem to intend harm to Molly, which meant he was probably not dangerous. Of course, Sherlock could not be certain about that. The writer seemed more likely to want to come after Sherlock himself, especially with the wording of the final email. Sherlock's mind palace went over the emails in his head, searching for clues. He remembered the way Eurus had used certain words in a certain order, which let to him discovering her at Musgrave. What if there is some word play here? he thought, following a wild hunch.
Then he saw it. Using the first word of the first email, the second of the second email and so on, the message read,

"You took my girl."

It was Tom. There was no longer any doubt.

Sherlock exited his mind palace. He needed to head to the hospital now. He glanced at his watch and saw it was already almost twelve-thirty. Picking up his phone, he left the flat. The Belstaff remained on its hook because the weather was warm enough that he no longer needed to wear it during the day.

A short taxi ride later, Sherlock reached the hospital and hurried into the lobby. The first person he saw was that intern. What was her name? Ah yes, Stacy. She seemed to be heading towards the canteen, but stopped when she saw him.

"Oh hello, Mr. Holmes," she said. "I expect you've come to visit your fiancée."

"I have indeed come for that purpose," he answered, trying to be polite, although he really just wanted to head upstairs right away.

"That's funny," she said, surprising him.

"How so?" he inquired.

"Well, you're the second person today who is visiting her. Some friend of hers stopped by a little while ago when she was at lunch and I showed him to her office."

Sherlock felt a cold prickle of dread run through him. "Did he say his name?"

"I didn't think to ask. He came directly up to our floor and asked for her. It's funny, he kinda looked a bit like you, taller though."

"Thanks. I'll be going now," Sherlock said, and left the woman standing there with her mouth open.

He punched the button for the lift, then decided he didn't want to wait, so he took the stairs instead, two at a time, until he reached her floor, a little out of breath. He took a few breaths to compose himself and headed to Mike's office, unsure of what to find when he got there.

The door to Mike's office was slightly ajar and he pushed it open with a tense "Molly, darling, are you okay?" Then he stared in astonishment at the sight that met his eyes.

Chapter End Notes

So, are you surprised at the identity of the emailer, or did you guess it might be Tom?

I know my little email cipher was pretty basic, but hopefully it surprised you anyway.

What do you think is going to happen next? I always love to hear what my readers think when I end with a little cliffhanger!
Molly headed into work, feeling a little apprehensive. She knew Sherlock was concerned about the emails. Could they really have been sent by Tom?

If she was honest with herself, she supposed it was entirely possible. It had, after all, been her decision to break the engagement, so presumably there had been hurt feelings on Tom's part. She would have expected him to have gotten on with his life by now, though. Perhaps it was the fact that her engagement to Sherlock was public knowledge, and that had been difficult for him. Oh well, she trusted Sherlock to get at the truth.

She had been at work for about two and a half hours, doing mundane paperwork again, when Stacy had popped her head into Mike's office to ask for help with something in the lab.

Molly patiently explained things to the intern and helped her to do things the right way. It was almost a quarter past ten when she got back into Mike's office. Sitting at the desk, out of habit, she checked her messages. One had come in from Sherlock at ten.

She texted him back, then settled back down to work. She was quite surprised when the phone rang. She answered with, "Mike Stamford's office, this is Molly."

Mike was on the other end of the line. "Ah, Molly, I'm glad you picked up. Talking on the phone is so much easier than texting. Look, I've been thinking about all those microscopes. I suppose they are stacked in my office."

Molly laughed. "You are quite right about that. Your office is rather cluttered right now."

"Anyway, why don't you just go ahead and choose one for Sherlock? I can do the paperwork for it later. There are plenty of others for me to figure out what to do with."

"Oh, thank you so much!" she exclaimed. She was thrilled that she would be able to take one home right away for Sherlock, well, actually, if he came into work, he could carry it. She'd let him choose it if he came in anyway.

"You're welcome. Anything for my favourite pathologist and her fiancé. If there's anything you need, just call. I'll be home this week. Just needed to take a week off for myself and the wife."

"Alright, thanks Mike. Bye now."

"Bye."

Molly immediately texted Sherlock with the good news. At his suggestion to invite Mike and his wife to dinner as a thank you, which she thought was definitely not something the old Sherlock
would have thought of, she called Mike back. They would set something up later for the following weekend, for either Friday or Saturday night, both dates were fine with him.

After sending Sherlock another text, to which he responded they could figure out the details later, Molly settled down to work again, until it was time for lunch.

Molly headed down to the canteen to eat and returned upstairs half an hour later. As she went down the corridor towards Mike's office, she passed Stacy, who said, "You have a tall, dark and handsome visitor. I showed him into Mike's office for you."

"Great," said Molly. She hadn't expected Sherlock to come so early, but it was typical lately. He was always surprising her. She pushed open the door to the office saying, "Sherlock, what are you..." Then she stopped short, because the tall, dark and handsome stranger waiting in Mike's office wasn't Sherlock. It was Tom.

"Uh, Tom," she said carefully, with a prickle of apprehension running through her, "What are you doing here?"

"I came to see you of course," he said, swaying just a little. Molly could see immediately he'd obviously had a few beers. She knew the signs.

"Um, why don't you sit down, Tom," she suggested, motioning towards a chair.

To her relief, he sat down on the chair she had indicated. Molly decided the best thing to do was to get him to talk, and to keep her cool. "What did you want to see me for?"

"Didn't you get my emails? Why didn't you ever respond?" She was surprised at this. So the emails HAD been from him, as Sherlock had suspected.

_He had expected her to respond?_

"Tom, I didn't know the emails were from you," she said honestly. "I didn't recognize the email address, and you didn't sign them."

"Why, Molly? Why did you do it?"

Molly was confused. "Why did I do what?"

"Of all people, why did you have to end up with - him?"

"Tom, you knew how I felt about him, you even said it yourself."

"Yes, but it was easier to let you go, when I thought you had no chance with him. I hoped eventually you'd come back to me." He put his hands on his face and she saw he was truly hurting.

"I'm sorry, Tom," she told him gently. "I didn't mean to hurt you. It has been nearly a year, after all."

"I know, but I've never stopped loving you. I guess I wasn't good enough for you."

"Oh, Tom. It was never about you not being good enough. It was about me being in love with someone else, before I met you, someone I thought I might not see again."

"Is he the reason you refused to sleep with me? Was it because you wanted to be with him? I suppose you've had sex with him," he said rather fiercely.
"Tom, you knew shortly after we met, that I was a Christian, and that I wanted to wait until I was married. As it happens, that still applies."

"Really?" He lifted his head and looked at her. "I guess that makes me feel a bit better." Molly was definitely not going to mention that it was much more difficult to stick to those values, because she loved Sherlock so overwhelmingly. Better that he think she was simply practiced at self-control. "Molly," he said, looking down again, "I did a bad thing."

"What bad thing?"

I...I've been sending him, your fiancé I mean, emails. I guess I was kinda wondering if he would figure it out. I made, like, a puzzle for him to solve."

Molly was confused. "Look, Tom, why don't I get you a cup of coffee? It might clear your head a bit."

"Okay."

Molly left him in the office and went to the staff room to get Tom a coffee. She knew now he was not dangerous, just lost and lonely, and she felt somewhat guilty for having contributed to his pain. As soon as Tom left, she'd have to text Sherlock and let him know.

Returning to the office, she handed Tom the coffee and he immediately took a sip.

"Why don't you tell me about this puzzle you sent Sherlock," she suggested, keeping her voice gentle.

"It...it was stupid of me, but every Tuesday I go to the pub. If you remember, it's my usual day off, when I work in the shop on Saturday or Sunday. I did not really mean him any harm, Molly, honestly I didn't. He's a detective and I wondered if he'd be able to figure it out."

"I don't understand, Tom. Do you think Sherlock and I wouldn't have discussed this?"

"I guess I didn't really think about that. I just wanted to be clever."

"It's okay Tom, you don't need to explain, but I do think you need to get some help. You seem to have a bit of a drinking problem."

The young man buried his face in his hands. "I know I do, I know I need help. After I sent off that email today to your detective, I realized how crazy I was acting. That's why I came to see you. I'm - I'm awfully sorry."

Molly walked over and put her hand on his shoulder. At that moment she heard Sherlock's anxious voice saying, "Molly, darling, are you okay?" He pushed open the office door and stopped just in the doorway as Molly stood from patting Tom's shoulder.

"Hi, sweetheart. You remember Tom, don't you?" She glanced between the two men. Sherlock stood there, with his hands clenched and he looked furious. Tom sat in the chair, cowering.

Molly walked over to Sherlock and put a reassuring hand on his arm. "Relax, sweetheart, everything's okay."

Sherlock ignored her, asking the other man instead, in a fierce tone, "What the hell are you doing here? If you dare touch her, I will make you very sorry."
Tom lifted his hands in supplication. "I didn't come here to hurt her, and I'm sorry I sent those
e-mails to you. I guess you figured out my stupid puzzle?"

"Yes," responded Sherlock shortly. "Totally juvenile. First word of the first e-mail, second word of
the second e-mail and so on - 'You took my girl.' Did you think I wouldn't figure it out? Do you dare
think I'd let you touch my fiancée or hurt her in any way?"

"Sherlock," Molly interposed. "He's not dangerous. He's just a little drunk, and he knows he needs
help."

"She's right," put in Tom. "I would never hurt Molly. I just thought you were using her. I see now I
was wrong. You just called her darling, and you are being all protective of her. God, I've been an
idiot."

Molly saw Sherlock's expression soften, and she knew he at last realized that Tom wasn't really a
threat, just a guy who had had his heart broken and hadn't gotten over it.

"Look, Tom," he said, "I can see you are telling the truth. I'm sorry your heart was broken. Neither
of us wanted that to happen. You see, I've loved her myself for a very long time, but it took a
terrible tragedy for me to realize it. I don't want to be cruel, but you do need to move on."

Molly was standing next to Sherlock and here, he put his arm around her protectively. "Molly and I
are not going to break up. I am not ever going to break her heart. She is the woman I was born to
love, and I know she feels the same about me, despite my many faults."

Molly smiled up at Sherlock before looking once again at her ex-fiancé.

"Do you understand what we are saying, Tom? Can you let this go? Neither of us want to press
charges against you." Here she looked up at Sherlock, who gave her a slight nod. "But I do think
you need to see someone, to get your life back on track."

"I know you're right," replied the younger man. "All this time I just let myself believe you'd come
back to me eventually. Then, when I saw on the telly that you and the detective got engaged, I was
sure he was going to use you and break your heart. I mean, he and that Janine woman made the
papers."

"Those were the tabloids," Sherlock interposed. "And you can be forgiven for thinking I'd hurt
Molly. I was using Janine for a case, and she retaliated with those stories, which, incidentally, were
not true. But it is different with Molly and myself."

Sherlock squeezed her shoulder, and Molly was proud that Sherlock didn't try to publicly mark his
territory before the other man, although she was sure it was tempting. It really would have been
rather cruel.

Tom stood, taking another gulp of his coffee, then setting it on the desk. "I'm going to leave now. I
promise I'll get some help. I think that now I understand the way things are, it will be easier to
move on."

"Just a minute, Tom, I want to have a word with Sherlock." Molly indicated with her head that she
wanted Sherlock to come out of the office with her, and he did so, taking his hand from her
shoulder so they could walk out of the room.

"Sherlock, if you aren't okay with this, I won't do it, but I feel like I should keep in contact with
Tom, see how he's getting on and make sure he gets help. If it would bother you, I won't make the
offer." She held her breath, not sure what Sherlock would say. She wasn't sure what she would do
if she was standing in his position.

Sherlock thought for a moment, then said slowly, "My first instinct is to say no, because I don't want to share any part of you, but God is telling me you are doing something good. I think it will help Tom if he knows you truly forgive him, and just want to help him. As Christians we need to forgive those who have wronged us." Then he added, almost as if to himself. "As a matter of fact, I think I owe Janine an apology for the way I used her."

Molly rose onto her tiptoes to brush her lips against his. "If anyone doubted you were sincere about your faith, that would have proved you have truly changed, sweetheart. Let's go back inside." She tugged on Sherlock's hand, and they returned to the office.

Tom was still standing where they had left him. "Tom, how would you like it if we kept in touch via email. Sherlock is okay with it. I'd like to be an encouragement to you, if that's okay. As long as you know though, anything you write to me will be shared with my fiancé, so I don't want you to get false hope. Obviously I have your email, and I'll add it to my address book."

Thank you, I'd like that," responded Tom, and he smiled for the first time. Then he held out his hand to Sherlock. "Congratulations. You've got yourself a really good woman there."

"I know I do," replied Sherlock gravely, returning the younger man's handshake.

Impulsively, Molly gave him a hug. "Best of luck, Tom, and I'll be in touch, okay?"

"Okay, and thanks again, both of you." He walked out of the office, and the engaged pair followed him to the lift, giving him a nod and wave as he entered it.

When it closed behind him, Molly let out a sigh of relief. "Well, that went a lot better than I expected."

Sherlock followed her back into the office and closed the door behind them. As soon as he had done so, she was surprised when he took her in his arms and began to kiss her. It was the kiss of a man who was very relieved she was okay. He poured out his emotions in that kiss, and she understood the anxiety he had obviously been feeling. He kissed her until the room was spinning around her and she was trembling.

Finally he raised his head and said in a very deep voice, "I was so scared for you, Molly. When I figured out those emails, and then when that Stacy girl told me she had sent someone up to your office, who she said looked a bit like me, I thought I'd put you in danger again. Oh, God, Molly, if anything were to happen to you I...I just couldn't bear it."

She stroked his face gently. "Nothing's going to happen to me, sweetheart. We must keep trusting God."

"I know, but you make me so happy, I keep thinking I'm TOO happy and things are perfect, if you know what I mean."

"I think we all struggle with that sometimes when things are going well, with waiting for the other shoe to drop, but we deserve this my love, and I know God will bless us, we just need to trust Him."

"I'll try to remember that," he promised.

"I really need to get back to work, sweetheart. Did you have lunch?"
"I was a little distracted after I got that email."

"Well, why don't you go eat something and then come back when I've almost finished my shift."

"Alright, I'll do that," he answered.

Molly gave him a quick kiss, then sent him off with a gentle, "I'll see you later."

Sherlock left the office and she returned to work, thinking it had been an interesting day. She was very glad that things with Tom had been resolved, and offered a little prayer of thankfulness.

Author's note: so, I have been thinking about this storyline arc for quite a while. It wasn't until I was actually writing this chapter, that I realized I couldn't make Tom out to be the bad guy. I've seen some stories in which he is a complete psychopath. To me though, he didn't seem like a bad man. I thought it far more likely he would be misguided and heartbroken. After all, he and Molly were engaged for months with no sign of them setting a wedding date.

What do you think about the way I interpreted the situation, and Molly's desire to help him, as well as Sherlock’s growth as a Christian?

Would you have preferred to see Tom in a different way?

Side note: I have a short multi-chapter story dream AU planned, which addresses that long engagement, so keep an eye out for it maybe in a couple weeks. I just published another dream AU yesterday called "Sherlock's True Pressure Point." If you are interested in more of my writing, please check it out and let me know your opinion :)

Chapter End Notes

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Chapter Summary

Sherlock bumps into an old "friend" and later talks about his uni days with Molly.

Chapter Notes

Special note: I have a family funeral to attend tomorrow, so I am not quite sure when I will get to updating with the next chapter. Hopefully later tomorrow. Just a heads up.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

With a couple hours to kill before Molly finished work, Sherlock headed out of the hospital. He didn't really feel like having the canteen fare, so he stopped at a nearby café for a sandwich, then decided just to take a walk around.

He was thinking of the events that had just occurred with Tom. It had been quite unexpected. He had fully expected the younger man to be making some kind of threats against Molly, or even physically hurting her, so had been somewhat shocked to see Molly in calm conversation with him. After the tone of the emails, Sherlock had been certain the other man was up to no good. Finding him to just be a lonely, heartbroken man was most illuminating.

Typical Molly, to have known the exact right thing to do and say to calm Tom and explain things to him gently. Sherlock now realized he had misjudged "meat dagger." Yeah, the other guy had a bit of a drinking problem, but he wasn't a bad man, just someone who wanted what he had lost, and really, who could blame him?

If Molly ever decided to leave him, he would fight tooth and nail to get her back. He genuinely felt sorry for the poor fellow.

Sherlock was so lost in his thoughts that he almost bumped into someone coming from the opposite direction.

"Sorry, excuse me," he muttered, as he continued to walk, then was shocked to hear a familiar voice say in a soft Irish lilt,

"Sherlock, is that you?"

He looked up and met the eyes of his former "girlfriend."

He had not thought about her in sometime, and the fact that just today he had realized he owed her an apology was obviously not a coincidence. This was a God thing.

"Janine, it's uh, nice to see you."
"Sure," she said easily. "Nice to see you too. Still engaged this time?" she added, a little tartly.

"Yeah, about that. Are you busy right now? Can I maybe buy you a cup of coffee?" He vaguely remembered passing a Starbucks a minute or so earlier.

She raised an eyebrow at him. "Wouldn't your new fiancée be a little upset about you having coffee with an old girlfriend?"

"Molly trusts me. She knows I would never betray her trust. Please, Janine. I really need to speak with you. Believe it or not, I was thinking about you less than a half hour ago."

"Now that's intriguing. I guess I can spare you a few minutes out of my shopping time."

I think I saw a Starbucks around here somewhere," he murmured, turning around the way he had come.

"It's just on the next block," supplied Janine. "I often go there."

They walked in silence until they reached the shop, ordered coffee, for which Sherlock paid, and went to a small round table to sit down.

The first thing Sherlock asked was something he was curious about. "Why are you in London if you bought a cottage in Sussex Downs?"

"Oh, that? I sold it, made a nice tidy profit. I missed city life. So, out with it, Sherlock. What did you want to talk to me about? I'm sure it wasn't about Sussex Downs."

"Actually," Sherlock said, "I wanted to apologize to you. I used you to get to Magnussen and it was very wrong. I should have taken you into my confidence instead. I feel especially bad about showing you that engagement ring and giving you false hope."

Unexpectedly, Janine laughed. "Do you really think I bought your infatuated act? Honestly, you weren't much of a kisser, no tongue, barely opening your mouth. Yeah, you're a hot looking guy, and for that reason alone I was attracted to you, but do you seriously think I would have believed you wanted to marry me after we'd only been going out together for a month - especially when you didn't even seem interested in going to bed with me?"

Sherlock flushed. "I needed to find a way to get to Magnussen, and you seemed to be my best option."

"Yeah, and you got yourself shot and almost killed as a result. Did they ever find the shooter, by the way?"

"Er, no," Sherlock said He didn't like to lie, but there was no point in stirring up trouble. Mary had been Janine's friend, after all. "Random burglar I guess."

"Wonder how they got through all of Magnussen's security measures?" she wondered aloud, and Sherlock hoped she would not continue to question him. To his relief, she didn't. "Anyway, I got my little dig at you and we're even, so it's all good."

"So, I really didn't break your heart or anything when you found out I was using you?"

"Hell no, you hurt my pride, that's all."

"Well, once again, all I can say is, I am deeply sorry."
"You're forgiven," said Janine lightly, and Sherlock breathed a sigh of relief. He felt somehow cleaner, having apologized. "So tell me, you're really and truly engaged this time? I mean, this isn't for some long case?"

"Definitely not. Our wedding is one month from today, and I am very much looking forward to it, I assure you."

"I sure hope she had better luck getting you into bed than I did." Sherlock chose not to respond to that hot potato. "I also hope you've improved your kissing technique."

This one he had to address. "I believe that Molly finds my kissing technique very satisfactory."

"Wasn't she the girl at the wedding, the one who was engaged to that funny guy who kind of looked a bit like you?"

"One and the same. We kind of have a long history, but it took a traumatic event recently that led to me confronting my feelings for her."

"What about her other guy? I could have sworn she was wearing an engagement ring," pressed Janine.

"She was. They broke it off after the wedding. Remember how I told you during our short relationship that I had faked my death a couple years earlier?"

Janine nodded.

"Molly was the one who helped me most with it. She and I were on fairly good terms."

"I see. Well, I wish you both lots of luck." She finished her coffee, which she had been sipping from every now and then as they talked, as had Sherlock with his own drink. "Look, I need to go. I appreciate you taking the time to apologize, but really, it's all water under the bridge, and I got over it a long time ago. I have a very nice boyfriend now."

"Glad to hear it," responded Sherlock sincerely. "Thanks for hearing me out."

"And thanks for the coffee. Maybe I'll see you around London sometimes. Have a great day."

Sherlock nodded. "You too, Janine."

She left Starbucks and Sherlock checked his watch. He still had half an hour to kill, but that wasn't too long.

He walked back towards the hospital. He suddenly felt lighter, as if a burden had been lifted off his shoulders that he had not realized had been there. He was very glad that Janine had not been seriously invested in their relationship. It did seem rather ridiculous that he would have proposed to her so fast, come to think of it.

Two exes dealt with in one day, he thought. God certainly moves in mysterious ways. He'd have to tell Molly about that.

Sherlock remembered he had been planning on buying Molly some flowers. Instead of just getting her something from the hospital gift shop however, he decided to see if there was a florist nearby. He was sure he had passed one only a couple blocks from the hospital. Retracing his steps, Sherlock found the florist and went inside. He had seen roses displayed in the front window. He browsed the little shop and found several colour arrangements with a dozen roses. So he picked up
one of the arrangements with red roses and bought them for the woman he loved.

By that time, it was already ten minutes to four, so he hurried out of the shop and down the street. He arrived on Molly's floor of the hospital just before she was due to finish and knocked on the office door.

"Come in," she called, and he entered, holding the bouquet of roses in front of his face. He then lowered the roses and was about to make a grand gesture of presenting them to his fiancée when he saw she was not alone. That new intern was also in Mike's office, and she had obviously been talking with Molly.

"Awww, you shouldn't have, we've barely met," Stacy quipped, and Molly laughed while Sherlock's face burned. The woman was going to think he was a total flake.

Sensing his embarrassment, Molly walked over to him and took the roses out of his suddenly nerveless fingers. "Thank you darling, that is so sweet of you." She kissed his cheek.

"Don't mind me," said Stacy. "I was just teasing. Molly is lucky to have a great guy like you. I wish someone would bring me flowers at work." She spoke sincerely and smiled at him, and Sherlock felt himself relax a little.

She continued. "Molly was just telling me a little about your complicated history together, and about that other guy who was here earlier. I'm sorry about that. I should have checked before sending him to her office. It's hard, being so new here, I'm still learning the ropes."

Sherlock nodded. "You were not to know that he was her ex-fiancé, and everything turned out fine."

"I hope you don't mind me saying, I think she chose the much better-looking man."

Sherlock could feel himself blush. He was not used to getting compliments from a woman besides Molly, and perhaps Kaitlyn who blurted out the first thing that came to her mind.

"Oh Stacy, you are going to give him a big head," teased Molly, looking up at him coquettishly and his mouth ran dry. (Why did she have to always act so innocent, yet look at him that way?) He gave her a heated glance of his own.

Stacy, noticing the look they exchanged, said hastily, "Well, I'm off to the locker room, it's the end of my shift and I have a date tonight. Nice to see you again Mr. Holmes."

"Please call me Sherlock," he responded.

"Okay, Sherlock." She turned to Molly. "I'll see you tomorrow, Molly." She left the office, closing the door tactfully behind her.

Molly set the bouquet down on the desk and returned to him, winding her arms around his neck. "Now I can thank you properly for your lovely gesture." She raised herself on tiptoes, pulling his head downwards at the same time and pressed her lips against his. He immediately responded by putting his arms around her, clasping her tightly.

He felt the warmth flood through him that always accompanied Molly's tender embraces. He felt at home whenever they were together and suddenly thought of the phrase, "home is where the heart is," really understanding the term for the first time. They kissed for several minutes, sweet, tender ones, rather than passionate ones this time, just enjoying that feeling of their mouths pressed
When they finally drew apart, Sherlock said, "You really are my home, sweetheart."

She gazed at him with such adoration he felt the most blessed of all men. "And you're mine, Sherlock."

Molly gathered her things, including her bouquet, and then Sherlock took her free hand to hold it as they headed home to Baker Street.

After such an emotional day, dealing with past loves, it was nice to just curl up together on the sofa with chips from Joe's Fish Shop, where they had stopped on the way home.

After eating, Molly updated the wedding RSVP list. For once, they had stopped in at Mrs. Hudson's before going upstairs, and picked up their post which contained another two RSVP's.

"Things are going pretty well here," commented Molly. "Considering the rather short notice and the timing with summer holidays, I'm quite surprised we've only received a couple regrets so far. I must catch up with Meena before the wedding too. I'm glad she's coming, it has sort of become a 'send a Christmas card once a year with an update' thing for awhile now. I'm sure she'll want all the details about us. She didn't much care for you, you know."

Sherlock was surprised. "I barely knew her. I don't even remember speaking to her."

"I think she was a bit miffed that you rebuffed her when she asked you out in her first year at uni."

"She did? I don't recall."

"My point exactly, sweetheart," Molly responded with a grin.

Sherlock thought back to his uni days. That had been a very long time ago. "I didn't go out with anyone at all because I just wasn't interested in romantic entanglements, and I saw how they messed with my various roommates' psyche, ruined grades when they broke up with girls."

He continued. "After I finished my chemistry degree at Queen Mary's and came back to do my postgraduate year in Forensic Medical Sciences, I rented a place off-campus so I didn't have to deal with a roommate, as I told you a few weeks ago, I believe?"

"We need to talk about that more sometime. I'd like to know more about you as a young man."

"You might not want to know too much, love. At the end there I was in my 'experimenting with drugs' phase. If your friend asked me out during that time it's possible it was while I was high, which is why I don't remember it. Thank God, Mycroft finally intervened and got me into rehab."

Molly gasped. "I didn't know you had a problem with it back then."

"It's not the type of thing you casually bring into conversation, my love."

"I guess I never really thought about it either, because I didn't know you back then. The first time I saw the results of you using was when you were chasing after Magnussen. Then of course it was much worse during the Culverton Smith thing."

Sherlock cringed. He really didn't like to revisit those dark days. "Can we talk about something else now?" he pleaded.

"Of course," said Molly sweetly. Then, in a decidedly cheeky tone, she asked, "So, when you had
your own place, were you as much of a slob as you were here?"

He groaned. "Hey, I might have been a slob, but I was an orderly one, I knew where to find what I needed." Then he had to concede, "I may have had a few take-away containers lying around and various empty cups. But it isn't like I needed to impress anyone. I never brought anyone back to my flat." Then he added, "But I did always make my bed. Mummy taught me that I should always make my bed."

Molly giggled. "I've noticed that. When I leave for work first, I always find the bed made when I come home. What were you like during your uni days, I wonder?"

"You would not have liked me, Molly. I was as arrogant as they come. Because I finished my A-levels in secondary school, I started at Queen Mary's when I was still 16. The arrogance was to protect myself from the ridicule of classmates because I wasn't yet legal, I had to just act like they were beneath me."

"My poor darling," she said sympathetically, giving him a sweet kiss on the cheek. "Isn't it funny that we went to the same uni?"

He shrugged. "Not surprising really. They have an exceptional chemistry programme and their medical one is also highly regarded. I've never told you this before, but I admire you for the long years you put in to become a pathologist. Twelve years of study requires a lot of dedication."

Molly blushed, "Why thank you, Sherlock. Now, maybe you can understand why I didn't have time for boyfriends either. I was just too busy studying. And when that job came up at Bart's soon after graduation, I was lucky to get it."

"Luck had nothing to do with it, you earned it, my love. And now, I think I am done with talking about uni. I'd prefer we proceed to some non-verbal communication. What do you think?"

He was rewarded by her leaning into him and offering her sweet lips for him to kiss.

After they were both in bed, Sherlock put his arm over her as usual. They had not discussed his list again, but when he laid his hand in front of her, she guided it so it was gently resting against her chest, and he kissed her hair. "I love you, Molly Hooper."

"Love you too."

Cuddled together that way, they slept.

Chapter End Notes

First off, thanks to Ashblood for making me realize Sherlock never apologized to Janine for his behaviour towards her. I had just thought of her as a nasty person, due to the tabloid thing.

I hope you enjoyed their conversation. I honestly doubt she really was too upset, or thought his proposal serious after only a month.
There is also a lot of uni backstory in this chapter which I hope you also found interesting. Those facts will come into play in the uni dream Molly has later in this story. It provides the backstory for her dream.

What part of this chapter did you respond to most - the Sherlock/Janine conversation or the uni backstory?
Molly's first thought when she woke to the sound of her alarm, was how wonderful it felt, having Sherlock so close behind her. Apparently neither of them had moved during the night. His warm, long length always felt so right, as if their bodies had been made to connect. She shivered a little with anticipation about what it would be like when they really connected, more intimately.

It had been interesting to hear more about Sherlock's uni days the previous evening. With her emotions for him as strong as they were, she had to wonder if she would have been able to stick to her Christian principles if they had met back then and he had shown an interest in her. Her faith had not been as strong back then. Over the years she had learned to nurture it and grow in it, but as a teenager?

Molly felt there was a distinct possibility she would have succumbed to his advances, if he had made them back then. There was no point in thinking about that now, of course, but it was a rather intriguing, if disturbing thought.

As she lay in bed for a few minutes more, knowing she had time to do so, Molly thought again about the previous day's events. She felt a peace about how things had turned out with Tom, and it felt right that she and Tom would keep in touch. Molly had been pleased when Sherlock had agreed to that, because she didn't know if she would feel the same about him keeping in continued contact with Janine, despite the fact that he felt he owed the woman an apology. Molly, soft hearted as she was, was not too impressed with the way the other woman had tried to smear Sherlock's name. However, she supposed he had behaved rather badly. If he had done that to her, she would have been devastated. Thank God she would not have to experience that.

Reluctantly, Molly slid out from Sherlock's light hold on her. A sleepy voice came out of the semi darkness as she got dressed. "It's too lonely in bed without you."

Molly turned to Sherlock. "Well, get up and dress then. I'm going to put on the kettle."

She went into the kitchen and did so, then went upstairs to John's bedroom to retrieve her iPad, which she had not used since she had been sleeping up there. She had set up the iPad to synchronize with her email and decided to check her messages.

She was not surprised to see there was one from Tom, with the subject line reading "Thanks."

Before reading it, Molly added his details to her contacts, so it would no longer show as an unknown sender. Then she read the message. It had come in the previous evening.

"Thanks for the talk, Molly. I feel a lot better now about things and ready to move on at last. I can see how much you and the detective love each other. Maybe one day I will find that too. I suppose I..."
am only 31, so I have time. Tell your fiancé sorry again from me, for those stupid emails.

By the way, I made an appointment with a therapist too.

I won't bug you for constant updates, just email me back when you have time.

Tom.

Sherlock came into the living room just as she was finishing reading.

"Did you want me to make the coffee, love? The kettle has boiled."

"Thanks, honey. I just want to shoot off a quick response to the email I got from Tom. See?" She handed the iPad to Sherlock. She was not going to keep secrets from him.

He read in silence, then returned the iPad to her. "I guess he's a decent chap, after all. I didn't realize you were such a cougar, Molly. Now you have to settle for an old man of forty. Good Lord, the guy is 9 years younger than I am!"

Molly set her iPad down and wrapped her arms about his waist. "Age is just a number, Sherlock. It's our hearts that matter, and mine has belonged to you since I first met you."

Sherlock bent his head and kissed her tenderly. "My sweet love," he said, a little unsteadily, when they drew apart, "I wish I had given you my heart earlier, instead of locking it away. When I returned to London and came to the hospital, I know I felt something when I saw you at your locker. It tugged at my heart, and that warm hug you gave me was really special. It's funny though, I didn't notice an engagement ring on your finger. Was I just not observing things properly?"

Molly blushed. "You didn't see it, because I left it home when I went to work. Putting on those gloves over the ring when I had to do a post-mortem was annoying."

"Yet you don't take your engagement ring from me off," he remarked.

"I never want to take your ring off - a little glove struggling is worth it. I have to admit though," here Molly blushed again. "If I hadn't been engaged, I think I would have flung my arms around you and kissed you, whether you wanted it or not. It would not have been right to do that though, when I was engaged to Tom."

"Ah, if we could only turn back time to that moment, if you were not engaged, and you had kissed me, that would have been rather interesting. I wonder what would have happened?"

"You would have probably pushed me away."

"I don't think so. Even before Sherrinford, you were chipping away at my hard exterior. When we had our day of crime-solving, I told you I was starting to think about you in a different way, until I saw the ring of course. Then I shoved those feelings back down and pretended they had not happened. Sherrinford precipitated my realization of love for you, but I think eventually I would have figured it out for myself."

"Maybe, but at the rate you were going, I would have been past child-bearing age," said Molly, smiling wryly.

"I'm glad it isn't too late," he said, stroking her hair. "I'll need to thank Eurus for that sometime."

Molly held him for a moment, then suddenly realized she didn't have time for a long conversation.
"Oh, gosh. I need to finish getting ready for work. I'll have to answer Tom's email later. Don't worry about my coffee, I'll get a nasty one from the staff room."

She hurried into the bathroom to finish getting ready. That had been quite an illuminating conversation with Sherlock, she would have liked to discuss it further, but she didn't have time.

When Molly was ready, she grabbed her things, gave Sherlock a quick kiss goodbye and headed for work.

Once there, she saw Kaitlyn, who had called in sick the day before, which was why Molly had had to help Stacy so much. "Hey, you feeling better?"

"Much, thanks. Just one of those 24 hour bugs I guess." She had one earbud in and was obviously listening to a song, because she was practically dancing.

"What are you listening to?" asked Molly.

"Oh, it's this really sexy song by Ed Sheeran called 'Shape of You.' Have you heard it?"

"I don't think so."

"Oh, you've gotta hear this." Kaitlyn unplugged her earbuds and restarted the song.

Molly listened to it. Some song about a guy saying a nightclub wasn't a good place to pick up a lover so he went to the bar instead. It was a bit scandalous. But oh, that one sentence, Molly blushed at it even as she heard it.

Kaitlyn, noticing Molly's expression, said, "what? Don't you like it?"

"It had a good beat, pretty catchy, but that one line makes me cringe a bit."

"What line?"

"The line - 'Last night you were in my room, now my bedsheets smell like you' is a bit risqué." Molly couldn't help but blush again.

"Oh, Molly, it's so obvious you're a virgin. David always says he can detect my scent when I'm turned on. I'll bet Sherlock can too. It's part of that attraction, helps the man get, you know, in the mood."

Molly put her hands to her face. This was so embarrassing, if somewhat intriguing. It might be an interesting conversation to have with Sherlock. "Uh, okay, you're the expert here, not me," she managed to say, cheeks still flaming, and Kaitlyn laughed.

"You know, Molly, that song is popular in nightclubs. If we went to one for your hen night, you'd hear it."

"No nightclub," said Molly firmly. "I was thinking maybe some board games or charades or something? We could probably squeeze everyone into Baker Street."

"Fine," sighed Kaitlyn. "It's your night, after all. Should we do it the Friday, a week before the wedding? Any idea on where to have dinner first? Did you make your list yet?"

"Whoa, hold your horses!" exclaimed Molly. "There's still time. I'll make a list soon. The Friday sounds good. As for restaurant, you can pick...or maybe we can go to Angelo's?"
"Oh, Angelo's would be good. Everyone loves Italian food, and they have a function room too."

"There you go, half the planning is done already," Molly said with a grin.

"Oh!" Kaitlyn exclaimed suddenly, "I have the perfect party game. You can play with as many people as you want. It is matching a picture with a phrase from cards in your hand. Some of my American relatives were playing it one night. It was great, so I bought the game and brought it back home. It's called Bubble Talk."

"I'm game," responded Molly with a smile.

Molly settled into her work day. She took a little time out to respond to Tom's email, pulling it up in her phone.

Hi Tom,

Glad you are getting help. You have many years ahead to find a nice girl and settle down. Maybe someone a bit more fun than me, and younger too.

Take care,

Molly

At around two o'clock, a text came in from Sherlock which intrigued her.

"I'm at John's. Going to swing by and come for you after work - Angelo's for dinner? Afterwards, I have something to show you which I think you will find interesting."

"Ok, sweetheart. I'm guessing you are not going to tell me over text?"

"Nope. It is something that will surprise you, or maybe not."

"Alright, I'll see you at four. I love you, Sherlock."

"I'm glad I realised how much I loved you after Sherinford, and not just now."

That's rather cryptic, thought Molly to herself. How is now any different than any other day?

She went back to work, finally making some decent inroads into Mike's inbox. It was quite a surprise then, to hear the knock on the office door and have Sherlock walk in just a few minutes before four.

He stood there, waiting patiently for her to turn off the computer. She was just about to pick up her phone and handbag when he stopped her.

"No, let me kiss you first."

And so he did, kissing her forcefully, plundering her mouth with his own, holding his arms around her tightly. He kissed her until she was dizzy and breathless, then said, "You are the most precious person to me on this earth, Molly. Know that, always. I love you, darling."

Molly wondered what had brought on such a passionate declaration, figuring it probably had something to do with what he wanted to show her.

"I love you too, sweetheart. Always, with all my heart." Then she suddenly realized something.

"Guess what? We forgot to pick you a microscope yesterday. Seeing as we are going out for
dinner, I suppose we'll have to get it tomorrow, and you'll just have to come again to get me."

"I have no objections to that," stated Sherlock, giving her a loving smile. He took her hand and they left the hospital, heading for Angelo's.

Chapter End Notes

Well now, what could have prompted that mysterious text and passionate clinch by Sherlock - any guesses?

What did you think about Molly's thoughts on how she might have responded to Sherlock at a younger age? Do you feel your faith has grown and matured over the years?

I used to hate the song "Shape of You," but now I really like it, it has a great beat and inspires me when I write love scenes for Sherlock and Molly haha. Are you an Ed Sheeran fan?
Shadows of the Past – Sherlock

Chapter Summary

Sherlock spends some time in reflection of his past, then receives a call from John and receives some revelatory information.

Chapter Notes

I must give thanks to M Sherlock for her guidance in helping to improve my writing. She has been giving me instruction on the correct way to italicize, and when to do so, as well as better paragraphing etc. You will hopefully notice these changes in my writing, and I will slowly be going through my previous work to make revisions. I also need to give credit to Virtuella for her earlier suggestions and help in improving my flow. I hope my readers will see and appreciate my efforts at becoming a better writer!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After Molly left for work, Sherlock spent some time thinking about his conversation with her. He hadn't thought about it in a long time, but now he reflected on those dark days after "The Fall."

He remembered using Molly's flat as a bolt-hole, the generous way she had allowed him to use her bed. After that one brush of his lips against hers, he had been embarrassed at allowing sentiment to get to him. He had been far too repressed then to allow himself to think of it as more than a way of thanking her for being there for him. During those days before the funeral, he had tried to keep out of Molly's way. She was tense and nervous and he knew it was because the funeral was coming up and she would be speaking at it, she had told him John had asked her to deliver a eulogy.

On the day of his "funeral," Molly had left the flat with a brave, "Well, here we go. Gotta get this over with." She didn't know he was not going to be there when she returned. In Sherlock's mind he felt it best. He didn't want some long drawn-out goodbye where she clung to him. He didn't have time for histrionics. Not that Molly would have been that way, she was the bravest woman he knew, but he did understand that she cared, and felt it would be better to make the break sooner rather than later. He had considered writing a note, but had been concerned that it might somehow fall into the wrong hands.

It was funny, he thought now - with his transformation over the last several weeks, he could look back and really think about the shell of a man he had been, and how much he had cared for Molly even back then. When he came back, he had understood the sentiment a little more, but the engagement ring had stopped him in his tracks before he had even seriously considered getting involved with her romantically. Now, with the benefit of hindsight, he could see clearly how she had begun to grow on him little by little, how he had come to depend on her more and more as time passed.

That Christmas party, where Mrs. Hudson had suggested he invite Molly, had really been the first
time he felt jealousy, although he attributed it to concern, rather than sentiment.

There had been so many mis-steps and near misses for them over the years.

He suddenly remembered there was something he had never shown Molly. It was stored in the box with his important papers in the wardrobe; the box that now housed their important documents together, since the day they registered their intent to marry several weeks earlier.

Rousing himself from his memories, Sherlock went into the bedroom and took out the box from the wardrobe. He hunted through it until he found the letter, still sealed, near the bottom, addressed to Molly Hooper. He didn't actually remember what he wrote to her, because he had been high at the time.

After killing Magnussen and spending that week in solitary confinement, Sherlock had had a lot of time to contemplate his life choices.

When Mycroft informed him he was to be sent on that dangerous mission that would almost certainly prove fatal in less than six months, he had accepted his fate. He had begged his brother for just enough time to say goodbye to Mrs. Hudson and pack for the trip. Of course, a guard had been set at the entrance to the flat to make sure he did not try to slip away.

In the time he had been allotted, Sherlock managed to say farewell to his rather devastated landlady, to pack, then find his stash of drugs and syringes, carefully hidden not in his flat, but in 221C, for which he had secretly had an extra key made years earlier, after the Moriarty business. It was rather fortunate that Mycroft and Lestrade had never considered he might have drugs hidden in a location other than his flat.

He was suffering a tremendous amount of guilt over shooting Magnussen in cold blood, and he needed to escape from his own thoughts. He had just used the syringe when he remembered he hadn't said goodbye to Molly, his dear friend, Molly. A text seemed somewhat impersonal, although it had sufficed for Lestrade, and he decided to write a letter. He knew what he had to say, to apologize for the way he had manipulated her in the beginning, and to stress that he considered her one of his dearest friends.

Sherlock returned to his flat, carefully locking 221C and making sure Mrs. Hudson did not notice.

Back in his flat, he found pen and paper and began to frantically write a letter, which he sealed and placed in an envelope, writing the words Molly Hooper on the outside. He slipped the envelope into his coat pocket, as well as an extra syringe and the list detailing its contents, just in case Mycroft asked for it - he had made a promise to his brother, after all.

The high had hit quickly and by the time he reached the airport, he had regained enough control of himself to say a proper goodbye to John, and to disguise the effects of the high he was experiencing. Sherlock was a master at hiding it when the need arose.

It was only once he was on the plane that he remembered the letter for Molly. He pulled it out of his pocket, cursing himself for forgetting to give it to Mycroft, then realizing he couldn't remember what he wrote.

He returned the letter to his pocket and settled back in his seat, and then Mycroft’s call had come in four minutes later. The way Mycroft said England needed him was enough to get him scrambling for the hidden syringe, to temporarily escape from the demands of a nation that needed his help yet again.
That extra dosage of drugs had a bizarre impact. He'd have to tell Molly about that strange mind palace dream he had had, where she was dressed up as a man in Victorian London, in order to have a career. Funny how John Watson, and not himself in the dream recognized her as a woman.

*Enough reminiscing,* Sherlock told himself, looking at the still sealed envelope. *How had he forgotten about this for so long?*

He could only assume the many stressful events of the year, followed by the emotional breakthrough that preceded his engagement to Molly, had served to completely distract him from remembering the letter.

Sherlock made the bed, as he always did, then set the letter onto Molly's pillow.

He then spent the rest of the morning looking at emails and scheduling client appointments for the following day.

When John called right after lunch, Sherlock was surprised. John usually just texted him. But this time his friend said some strange words, "Uh, yeah, I think you'd better get round here."

It sounded rather ominous, so Sherlock immediately left to see his friend. When he arrived at John's place, it was to find that the ever prepared Mary had left John a DVD. It had probably come from the same anonymous sender as his own DVD.

There were sweet words of affection, ending with her calling them her "Baker Street Boys, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson."

As soon as the screen turned into the black and grey snow that indicated the end, Sherlock turned to his friend, about to speak, when John held up a hand, preventing him. The doctor pointed at the screen and Sherlock's attention went back to it.

All of a sudden, the snow disappeared, to be replaced by Mary once again, and she said, "Sherlock, I'm sure John will show this to you. I'm telling you right now, if it is not too late - pull your head out of your bloody arse and go after Molly Hooper. She loves you, and if you would open your eyes properly, you'd realize you love her too. I hope making you both Rosie's godparents will do the trick, but if it doesn't, maybe this message from beyond will get your attention."

The image disappeared, and returned to the snow, this time unbroken by further images. Sherlock blinked back tears. "How is it she knew before I did?" he asked John finally.

"She was a very perceptive woman. I didn't pick up on the clues because I was sidetracked by Irene Adler, and the fact that she was alive." There were tears in John's eyes as well. "I even told you on our way to Dartmoor a few weeks ago that Mary was sure of it. Of course, I had no idea she would ever record herself to tell you so."

"When did you get this?" questioned Sherlock.

"Last week. I wanted to tell you right away, but I was going through that stuff with Kayla. In fact, after you spoke to me about things on Monday, I had decided we needed to talk, and then the DVD came, and I couldn't stop thinking about Mary, and grieving again."

"She would have wanted you to move on, you know," said Sherlock seriously.

"I know," answered John, "and I am, bit by bit. Kayla and I talked. We are going to take things very slowly, start on our friendship and growing it first, then see what happens."
Sherlock nodded. "That is wise. You've been lucky enough to have loved and been loved by a wonderful woman once, and maybe you'll have that chance again."

"I hope so," responded John. "As for you, I'll bet you're glad you already figured out for yourself your feelings for Molly."

"I am extremely relieved that she will be my wife a month from now."

"'Bet you're just counting the days till your wedding night," teased his best friend.
Sherlock scowled. "You won't be teasing me when I collect my fifty quid. Want to make it a hundred?"

"Hell, no! If you've made it this far, I'm resigned to the fact you can wait another month."

"Good," said Sherlock smugly. "I shall expect payment in full on my wedding day. One minute please, I need to text Molly about this DVD. May I borrow it to show her?" He got out his phone as he spoke.

"Sure, just bring it back when you are done."

"Of course." Sherlock texted Molly and their short texting conversation ensued. Then he asked John, who had been patiently waiting for him to get off his phone, "So, where's Rosie? And why are you home today anyway?"

"You remember Stella and Ted?"

"As in 'big squishy hugs' Stella and Ted? Mike Stamford's sister?"

"That's the one."

"I vaguely remember her from my uni days. Mike bribed me once to do a double date with him and his future wife, and Stella. I went with them to see Titanic and Mike procured some needed body parts for me to experiment on."

"You went on a DATE?"

"It was not really a date," responded Sherlock, somewhat stiffly. "It was a means to an end, and I did not enjoy myself one bit. Women and the cinema, bad combination." Then he remembered going to see Beauty and the Beast on Monday night with Molly and amended it to, "Unless you are with the woman you love."

"You've been to the cinema with Molly?"

"On Monday night, actually."

John raised an eyebrow. "Did you actually watch the movie, or did you just snog the entire time?"

"Of course I watched the movie, Molly insisted. Although we may have spent a few minutes afterwards in non-verbal communication, until the cleaning lady came in. We were the only ones in the screening room."

John snorted with laughter. Non-verbal communication indeed! What boring film were you seeing that you were the only ones there?"

"It was not boring. It was the live version of Beauty and the Beast, and the songs were quite
entertaining. But the movie is already out on DVD, so I suppose not too many people are interested in paying to see it at the cinema when they can already buy it."

"Unless they are planning on snogging the entire time. Did the cleaner tell you to get a room?"

"Your teasing is most unbecoming and childish, John," huffed Sherlock. "And please stop referring to kissing as snogging. You know I detest that word." It was almost time for him to leave, but they hadn't even finished the conversation about Stella and Ted. "Anyway, you were saying...about Stella and Ted?"

"Oh yeah. Well, as it turns out, Stella is a licensed child-minder now. She needed some extra income, with Ted's leg issues and all keeping him from working at times. I've been sending Rosie there to help her, and myself, out."

"I am glad you have found someone trustworthy to care for Rosie when you are working. And you are not working today because?" pressed Sherlock.

"I worked this morning, just took the afternoon off."

The men chatted for a short while longer, then Sherlock left for the hospital to pick up Molly. All the reminiscing about the past and the DVD from Mary made him especially anxious to see her, so he could take her in his arms, kiss her and tell her how much he loved her. And that is exactly what he did.

Author's note 2: Big, big chapter - I have been anticipating publishing this for months, anxious to see what people think. I figure that end montage from the show could easily have had the extra little message from Mary on the DVD. I'm certain she wanted Sherlock and Molly to be together, and that she made them godparents for that precise reason. I mean, really - who makes an atheist a godparent?

Also, I'd love to know what people think about the letter - what do you think it is going to say? If you are a lurker/reader who doesn't usually review/comment, perhaps this chapter will evoke a response. I'd like to think so! Guest feedback always welcome too.

The next chapter is the biggest, most revelatory one yet, so prepare yourself.

Chapter End Notes

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Extra note: To read more about the disastrous Titanic date, refer to my one-shot where Sherlock takes Molly to a viewing of it, after they are married. The one-shot is called "Titanic 20th Anniversary."
Molly and Sherlock decided to go for a walk before having dinner, it was still a bit early and it was a beautiful summer day.

"You do realize you could have left your coat at home, don't you? You are so attached to that thing," Molly teased.

Sherlock huffed. "My coat is not a 'thing,' Molly. It is part of my whole detective persona."

"You're not being a detective today, though," she pointed out.

"Well, I must admit, wearing it is force of habit, but I will take it off when we get to the park. It is rather uncomfortably warm with it on at the moment," he confessed, with a wry smile.

They strolled to Postman's Park, only a few minutes away, where Sherlock removed his coat carefully, and they sat on one of the many benches surrounding the seasonal bedding display. Being a weekday, there weren't too many people around and it gave the couple an opportunity to talk.

"So, how was your day, love?" inquired Sherlock as he settled his arm around Molly's shoulders.

"Just routine, no surprises or unexpected visitors today."

He chuckled at that. "Glad to hear it."

"Kaitlyn and I discussed my hen night."

"Are you going to go to a club and enjoy some cocktails? If so, let me know now so I can prepare myself for uninhibited Molly."

She giggled. "No, no nightclub. We're going to reserve the function room at Angelo's for dinner and then maybe play some games back at Baker Street in our flat, if that's okay with you."

"Just tell me what night and I'll keep out of your way or tell John to make that night my stag night."

He rolled his eyes. "He and Mycroft insist I have one."

"Are you going to go to multiple pubs, like you did with John?"

"I guess that is up to John to decide, seeing as he is the best man. Regardless, I will not be over-indulging. I learned my lesson on that. By the way, I must apologize to you, sweetheart."

Molly looked up at him. "For what?"
"I always thought it was your miscalculation that resulted in my intoxication that night," he admitted. "As it turns out, John accidentally spiked my drink with a shot intended for himself. I am sorry for thinking that you were in error." He raised a hand to her face and bent his head to gently kiss her on the lips.

"I like the way you apologize, Mr. Holmes," she said playfully, once their lips parted. During the brief embrace, there had been the sound of a camera click.

"Uh oh," said Sherlock, as they noticed a man with a camera hurrying away. "I guess it must be a slow news day and we were recognized. I hope you are ready to have our public display of affection hit the newspapers tomorrow."

"Doesn't bother me." Molly shrugged. "I'm surprised you aren't making a bigger deal out of it, though."

"If people have nothing better to do than gossip about us, I really don't care. In fact," he added roguishly, "If it's a good photo of us, I might just buy a paper and cut out the photo for us to keep."

Molly had to laugh at that. "Should we head for Angelo's now?" she asked, after a few minutes of sitting quietly together, enjoying the warmth.

"Let's go," he said, picking up his coat and holding it, rather than putting it on this time.

During their meal, Molly tried to get some information out of Sherlock about what he had to show her, but he wouldn't even give her a clue. She was glad when they were finished and on their way home.

"There are actually a couple things I want to show you tonight," he informed her, and Molly was intrigued.

At home, Sherlock led Molly to the sofa. He then, surprisingly, pulled a DVD out from inside his jacket. She was amazed she hadn't detected it there earlier.

Sherlock played the DVD, and Molly had to blink back tears as the image of Mary appeared, talking about her "Baker Street Boys." She was intrigued by what came next, and afterwards said in wonder, "I can't believe she knew things like that. You didn't even know you loved me, but she did. She knew I loved you, although I never put it into words. Of course, it was probably obvious by the way I always talked about you when we were together." She grabbed a tissue from the coffee table and wiped her eyes. "Do you think her DVD would have made you re-evaluate our relationship if Sherrinford had not happened?"

"Quite possibly. I respected her a lot. She was a good, intelligent woman. Apart from you and Mrs. Hudson, she was the only female I considered a friend, although you were my best friend. Of course, you are not my best friend now, you are my fiancée, and soon to be wife, which means much more to me than the term 'best friend.'"

Molly kissed his cheek impulsively. "That's a lovely thing to say. Thank you for showing this to me. I'm glad Mary had such insight, that she recognized you had feelings for me. It makes me think that God had several contingency plans for us that would bring us together."

Sherlock nodded. "I think that must be true."

"You said you have something else to show me?" asked Molly.

"Yes, it's a letter for you."
"For me? From whom?"

"From me."

She looked at him in surprise. "What do you mean, a letter from you?"

"Remember after the Magnussen incident, how I was all set to head out on a mission for Mycroft?"

"I remember," she responded soberly. "John told me about it afterwards. I was a bit upset you didn't even text me to say goodbye, especially when you didn't know if you'd ever come back."

"Well, that's just it. I didn't want to say goodbye in a text, too impersonal. I decided to write you a letter, and have Mycroft give it to you. I wrote it when I went home to pack my things for my one-way trip."

Molly shuddered. "You really were not expecting to come back?"

"No, gauging by what Mycroft said, it was a suicide mission."

She felt horror at his matter-of-fact statement, but merely asked, "So...what happened to the letter?"

"I kept it. The thing is..." here, Sherlock paused, embarrassed, "I injected myself with drugs before I wrote it," he said in a rush.

She stared at him, shocked. "You were still on drugs?"

"I had stopped for several months, but I still had a stash." He flushed. "If I hadn't, I would hardly have been able to take them for the Culverton Smith case."

Molly put her hands to her mouth. "I had no idea."

"I was clean - mostly, after the Magnussen thing, but that was a bad day, when I was leaving. Anyway, to cut a long story short, I wrote you a letter, sealed it then took it on the plane."

"What did you write?"

"I pulled it out today for you to read, from my important documents box. I forgot it was there. It was that reminiscing of the past that made me remember. I actually have no idea what I wrote because I was high at the time," he said in a tone of shame.

"That's all in the past," Molly told him, squeezing his hand.

"Well, the letter is on the bed, if you want to read it."

"Of course I do. Should I get it?"

"You can read it in privacy if you like. I can stay here."

"No, I want you to read it too. Why don't you bring it here?"

"Very well." Sherlock left the sitting room and reappeared a minute later with the letter in his hands and a letter opener from the kitchen drawer. He handed them both to Molly. "I sincerely hope I didn't write something embarrassing."

"Well, let's find out," she said, then added, "I hope I can read your writing. It's a bit untidy, judging by the way you wrote my name."
He shrugged. "I rarely write, I text."

With a feeling of both excitement and trepidation, Molly carefully slit open the envelope and slid out the sheet of paper, which was filled with untidy scrawl.

"That writing is even worse than usual," commented Sherlock. "I guess my hands were shaking."

Molly peered at it, then smiled at the first line, Dearest Molly,

Her smile disappeared though as she began to read, and finally, the tears came.

The letter read,

_Dearest Molly,

I wanted to send you this, rather than a text because you are my dearest friend, and you are the one who matters most to me.

I killed a man in cold blood on Christmas Day. He deserved it, he was a monster who posed a threat to many people, including some friends. The fact that he died at my hands though has placed an enormous burden of guilt on me.

In order to avoid imprisonment, Mycroft is sending me on a one-way mission that should ensure my death in less than six months. I know I deserve this, it is my just punishment for taking another man's life.

There's just one thing I need to tell you.

Molly, when I told you that you were the person who mattered the most, it was the truth. I realise now that those words meant more to me than I knew myself at the time. I know it's far too late to say this, and it really can make no difference now, but you have to know.

I love you. Maybe it's only because I am high that I can admit it to myself, but it's the truth. I love you, and have done so for a long time. I wish things could have been different for us, that I'd been a better man, one deserving of you, but I guess that is the way life goes. What goes around comes around, as they say. I am getting what I deserve, and that is not you, because you deserve so much better.

Be happy Molly, because you deserve it, not a sometime junkie who is too emotionally unstable to recognise what is in front of him. Goodbye, Molly Hooper. I love you, I love you.

_Love, Sherlock XXX_

The last few words were hard to read, because the ink had run, where he had undoubtedly teared up.

Molly dropped the letter and threw herself into Sherlock's arms and felt his arms encircle her tightly. He hadn't been reading with her, just observing her reaction.

"My goodness, love, what has you so upset?" he inquired, sounding completely baffled. "Did I say something totally inappropriate?"

"N..no," she sobbed. "You told me you loved me."

"I did?" There was astonishment in his voice.
Molly sniffled and she felt him kiss away her tears. "Sherlock, you need to read your own words. I can't believe it. It looks like God was trying to get your attention even then, putting things in place for us to be together. It's...it's nothing short of a miracle, that there have been two other confirmations of your feelings today, one in your own words."

Sherlock picked up the discarded letter and read through it himself, as Molly waited, with tears still running down her face, not tears of sadness, of course, but tears of joy. By the time Sherlock had finished reading, he too had tears running down his face. "If I had opened the letter earlier and read it, I would have been confronted with my innermost feelings sooner," he whispered, in a voice of sorrow.

"Oh darling, don't think of it that way. This, today is a gift we've been given. It's another sign of what a wonderful God we have, how things work together for good. He made us for each other, and one way or another, we were meant to be together."

Sherlock dropped the letter then and he kissed her, gently at first, then more demandingly, offering his lips to hers in a vow of devotion, in agreement of all that had transpired, and Molly was swept up in it, in the glory of it. Sherlock had loved her for a long time, there was no doubt of it, seeing it written in his own hand, untidy, almost illegible scrawl it may have been.

Wanting to be closer to him, she tugged at his shirt and put her hands underneath, feeling his warm skin. He reciprocated, putting his hands under her blouse to feel her skin as well, peppering her face with kisses and murmuring, "Molly, I love you."

"I love you too, Sherlock." His kisses were like a drug to her, she thought dimly, wishing they could be closer still. Apparently Sherlock had the same idea, because his fingers found the clasp of her bra and he fiddled with it until he had it unfastened, moving his hands to slide the bra away from her breasts and cup them with his hands, even as he continued to kiss her. She was panting, only vaguely aware of the precipice they were heading towards.

Her hands came up to tangle in his curls and she arched towards him as his fingers caressed her breasts, thumbs brushing along their hardened peaks. "Sherlock," she gasped. Her focus was entirely on him and how much she, heaven help her, wanted him. Reading that letter had ignited a new fire within her, and it seemed to have done the same for him, because he too was as lost as she was. At that moment she didn't care about waiting till their wedding night, because he was hers already and she was his.

Molly reached and undid Sherlock's coat button, then was just about to start on his shirt, when they were both startled by a knock at the door, and a cheery call from Mrs. Hudson as she opened it. "Hoo hoo. I thought I'd bring up the post because there's quite a pile, and an envelope from Amazon as well...oh my!" He chattering stopped as she spied the couple in front of her, in somewhat of a dishevelled state that embarrassed all three of them.

Sherlock, however, calmly tugged his shirt back down and stood, while Molly put her hands over her face. First, Mrs. Hudson had supposed them to be doing something that wasn't happening. This time she had prevented something that very well might have happened. Molly felt both relieved and disappointed.

"Thank you for bringing our post," Sherlock told his landlady calmly.

"I'm so terribly sorry. You two should definitely just get on with it once I'm gone. Maybe lock the door next time, though?"
Molly cringed, as Sherlock said, "Not at all, Mrs. Hudson. It is as well you came up when you did. I think it was a sign from God that we were treading on...um, rather thin ice."

"Perhaps you need to listen a little less to God and more to yourselves," said the landlady, eyes twinkling, giving them a roguish smile.

"That would not be wise. We are only a month from our wedding, and I should very much regret if we did anything untoward now, when the wedding is so close."

Molly let Sherlock do the talking and remained facing away. If she turned towards the landlady, the other woman might see that her bra was not where it ought to be, over her breasts rather than covering them, unmistakably so, by the line you could see through her blouse.

"Whatever you say, dear," responded the elderly woman, and Molly thought she detected a note of disappointment in her voice. It was rather funny, how much the woman wanted them to take their relationship to the next level already. "Well, I'll leave you now to do whatever you need to do. I won't be back up here anytime soon. Ta ta for now."

"Goodbye, Mrs. Hudson." Sherlock closed the door behind the elderly woman, but he did not lock the door. He then dropped the post onto the coffee table and looked at her.

"I'm sorry," they both said at the same time.

Sherlock smiled wryly. "I should not have kissed you that way, sweetheart. It just became so overwhelming all of a sudden. These outward signs that showed I loved you, even when I could not admit it to myself..."

"I know. We always seem to have things get heated between us after intense situations. Thank God for the interruption. We've come so far. I'd hate for us to give in now. Thank you for not locking the door. I know you did that to show we are not going to continue what we started."

He sat beside her, taking her hands in his. "I should not have unclasped your bra either. I allowed myself to get carried away."

"Don't blame yourself, sweetheart. I didn't stop you. I...wanted you to touch my breasts." She blushed. "I haven't forgotten how wonderful it felt when you were touching them the day you returned from Dartmoor."

"I still crossed the line."

"Well," Molly said slowly, shyly, "That is part of your list, something we were considering getting to before the wedding day, although we kind of jumped to the end. If...if you want to, I would not be averse to proceeding to step two." She felt her cheeks warm again as she admitted, "I'd like to have skin to skin contact with you in bed, if you think we can do that without losing control."

"I think if we wait till we have kissed good night, and just do it with the intention of going to sleep, it will work," Sherlock said seriously. "Our problem is always the buildup and then not being able to stop. I was quite comfortable just going to sleep last night holding you."

Molly nodded. "And we just have to keep reminding ourselves it's going to be worth it to wait."

"I know it will. I have plans for our wedding night," he winked, and Molly blushed yet again. "I also have a suggestion, if you would be amenable to it?"

"Yes?"
"Once we are married, I would like us to sleep...naked. I want to be able to feel your body properly against mine at night, without anything between us. Besides, that would also make it easier if I succumb to carnal urges in the middle of the night." He winked again and Molly giggled.

"I find that suggestion to be highly satisfactory," she told him, with a wink of her own, and they both laughed.

He took up the Amazon package. "I got something for you."

"You did? Why ever for?"

Sherlock shrugged. "You said something and that made me think of something. Open it."

"Very mysterious," commented Molly. She tore open the packaging and then gasped. "I don't believe it! It's the complete series of Downton Abbey! That is so unbelievably wonderful of you."

She kissed Sherlock lightly on the lips, mindful of keeping it that way, after their earlier encounter. "Can we watch an episode now, please?" She entreated.

"How can I say no to such a sweet request?" He smiled indulgently.

They watched two episodes actually, and Molly gave Sherlock a bit of background on the characters.

Afterwards, it was Sherlock's suggestion that they spend some time reading the Bible again. "I always feel like that helps us in our resolve," he told Molly.

"I agree. Why don't you take a shower, while I catch up on my devotional, then I'll take one while you make us some tea, and then we read?" she suggested.

"Sounds like a plan."

So that is what they did. After finishing reading Galatians 5 out loud, Sherlock made the comment, "I like verse 4. 'You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace,' because it shows we are not supposed to just live by the law, right? That's the Old Testament stuff?"

"That's right. As believers, we live by faith, and we received God's grace. By the way, another nice acronym to help you understand what grace is, is 'God's Redemption At Christ's Expense.' I think it explains what God has given us very well."

"So we receive God's grace because Jesus died on the cross for us, right?"

"You're a quick learner," smiled Molly.

"And love your neighbour as yourself is there too. It is remarkable how many sayings I am discovering are direct quotes from the Bible."

"Yep. Personally I think the most important verses in this chapter are about the 'fruits of the spirit.' Verses 22 and 23, with the talk about the good things we should nurture in life, like love, joy, peace and so forth."

"Good rules for living. We could all learn from that."

"Have you noticed, Sherlock, you are living that way now? You have love, you have joy, you have a peace you never had before."
"I guess you're right. Why didn't anyone tell me about Christianity before and how much it makes sense?"

"You were not ready, Sherlock. You had to open your heart to it."

"Once I'd opened my heart to you, it was easy," he said, leaning in to kiss her gently. She loved those kisses, they demonstrated his devotion, rather than his passion, and it was beautiful and a blessing from God.

Molly looked at her watch. "I think we will just have to leave the next chapter to another time. It's getting late."

"I agree."

They both got ready for bed, taking off their dressing gowns and got into the bed. Once they were settled and the light was off, Molly turned to Sherlock in the darkness. "Shall I...shall I take off my chemise so you can hold me?"

He found her hand and squeezed it. "Sweetheart, that is entirely up to you. If I am honest, I would like nothing more than to hold you against me without anything between us, but you must not do it if you are not comfortable with it."

"I...want to," she said shyly, crossing her arms over herself and lifting the chemise over her head. Then she slid back down and settled into Sherlock's embrace, where, for the first time, they fell asleep with his hand ever so gently resting over her breast. And it felt right.

Chapter End Notes

I'll admit that I'm very proud of this chapter. It is longer than the usual chapter, although still by no means the longest. I hope it makes you cry, because, well, I cried while I wrote it and while I read over it.

A LOT of stuff happened here. The revelation that God has been bringing them together despite themselves, that they were meant to be in love and together - how did you find the revelations? I do believe God has a plan for each and every one of us. Sometimes we fight God's calling, but it is always there.

So, if you have stuck with the Journey this far, please consider taking the time now to let me know your thoughts on Sherlock's letter to Molly and the other events in this chapter. (Yeah, I know I said much the same thing last chapter, but I feel that these past few chapters have been particularly illuminating, in dealing with exes and revelations galore.)

Galatians 5:22-23 are such important verses in my opinion, because they talk about the "fruits of the spirit." Wouldn't it be wonderful if we all took those to heart?

What do you think about Molly's decision at the end of the chapter. I suspect it will be controversial. Can you understand it? That interruption by Mrs. Hudson earlier was timely, wasn't it? Sherlock and Molly definitely have challenges with control after
intense situations, just like characters in many movies/television shows I have seen, (although few characters actually seems to stop before things go too far!)
Steps towards the Future - Sherlock (Thursday)

Chapter Summary

Sherlock reflects on how far his relationship with Molly has come over the last few weeks.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The buzzing sound of the alarm woke Sherlock, as it did Molly. She reached over to turn it off and he suddenly realized his hand had been on her bare chest.

"I'm sorry," he said without thinking, then his mind turned back to the previous day's events and the way it had ended. They hadn't done anything wrong. Molly had simply made the decision she wanted their bodies to be in closer contact as they slept.

"Why are you sorry?" questioned Molly, with a slightly confused expression on her face.

"For a moment I thought I had done something wrong, compromised you in some way."

"Well, you didn't," she assured him. "I appreciate the fact that you did not press me into doing anything I was not comfortable with." Then she admitted, "Having your arm over me, feeling your skin against mine is lovely."

"I think so too," he agreed. They were no longer touching, since Molly had turned the alarm off, and Sherlock knew it was best that they separate that way so they didn't get caught up in the feel of each other's bodies, in the close contact. "One chaste kiss, before you get up?" he suggested instead.

She leaned in and kissed him sweetly on the lips, before sliding out of bed to get dressed. As usual, she kept her back to him, preserving her modesty. It's funny, he mused silently. I've both seen and touched Molly's breasts, but usually not at the same time. Well, except for the day he returned from Dartmoor. Look but don't touch, touch but don't look. It was quite amusing. He smiled, and Molly caught the expression as she turned after putting on her bra.

"What are you smiling at?"

"Nothing important."

"Tell me, anyway," she demanded, putting a hand on her hip and staring him down.

"Bossy, aren't you?" he countered, grinning. "If you must know, I was just thinking how funny it is that I've had glimpses of your breasts, and I have felt them, but usually not at the same time. Although there was one delightful exception."

She blushed and relaxed her posture."You mean after Dartmoor. I think we would have made love if Mycroft hadn't interrupted us. We were both feeling such intense emotions after the Mary thing, and I was thinking how close I came to losing you."
"I know. Really, my list only has stuff we have already done, too. It just tries to break it down somewhat to a manageable level."

Instead of responding, Molly fished in her bedside drawer, then pulled out Sherlock's list. She looked at it, then said, "Looking and touching at the same time isn't even on there. Too tempting, most likely."

Sherlock grimaced. "As we've already discovered. There's no getting away from the fact that sight and touch combined would probably be a very precarious situation for us, well, for me at least."

"Yep," agreed Molly, popping her p, the way he did.

"And now you are stealing my pop," he complained, crossing his arms in mock annoyance.

"Yep," was the response, with another popped p, before she left the room, with an impudent grin, to which Sherlock shook his head in amusement.

After he dressed, they ate breakfast together, and discussed their plans for the day.

"So, what's on the agenda for you while I go to work and slave all day?" asked Molly with a sly look. "Are you going to just lounge around the flat in your dressing gown?"

"Certainly not," he huffed. "I actually have some clients coming today, which I set up yesterday, so I'll have none of your nonsense, Doctor Hooper."

Molly poked out her tongue at him cheekily, then asked, "Will you have time to pick me up and choose your microscope?"

"Yes, I'll be done by then."

"Great. I think I'll stop by Farm Collective on my lunch break to pick up some vegetables and make a stir-fry for dinner so I can try out my new wok. We haven't had a home cooked meal in a few days."

Sherlock smiled. "I like the sound of that. I enjoy your cooking, love."

"Maybe afterward we can snuggle and watch a couple more episodes of Downton Abbey?"

"I never object to snuggling with my fiancée," he responded, with an even bigger smile.

"Molly smiled back so adorably he wanted to kiss her, but he decided to wait until she was about to leave.

After breakfast, Molly put a few items into the washing machine and finished getting ready for the day, while Sherlock did the dishes.

Just before she left, he took her in his arms for a lingering kiss that was quite satisfying. He would quite happily have had her in his arms longer, but as usual, work persisted in getting in the way. Then he reminded her, "We need to pack tonight for our trip to North Yorkshire as well. You won't be coming home after work tomorrow."

"Oh, that's right. Our first night away together as a couple. I hope you will behave - somewhat," said Molly cheekily, before she winked at him and departed.

Sherlock took a deep breath. Molly is definitely getting more naughty with her talk lately, he thought. But that was a good thing. It showed they were comfortable together and obviously she
was losing her shyness somewhat, judging by the way she had allowed him to hold her during the night. It was a good feeling to know their comfort level was increasing.

Sherlock turned on his laptop and checked his emails, as he usually did, deleting the irrelevant ones and flagging a couple potential cases to look into later. They'd have to wait till the following week though, with the impending trip to North Yorkshire and Musgrave Hall. Sherlock wondered what Molly would think of his childhood home. It was in a fairly isolated area. He actually much preferred the family home now in Sussex. It was more cheerful, at least it seemed that way. Perhaps it was because Musgrave held bad memories for him, even though he still didn't remember most of them.

His worst memory was the recent one, when he had confronted Eurus and begged her to help him save John. He had been so afraid that she would refuse, but she had told the truth and John was saved from drowning.

He should go and see his sister again, perhaps the following week. I wonder if she will see how I've changed? he mused to himself.

Whether intentional or not, his sister had opened his eyes to his love for Molly, and he needed to thank her.

Sherlock sent Mycroft a text. "I want to see Eurus again, next weekend if possible. I think it would be good to continue regular visits with her."

The response came in quickly. "I was actually thinking along those same lines, brother mine. How about Saturday after this one? Say, ten o'clock?"

"Works for me. I'll be back home before Molly finishes work that day. Thanks Mycroft." He texted back.

Sherlock wondered what Eurus would think if he told her he had become a Christian. Perhaps he'd get some kind of verbal response. He'd have to try that.

Once the clients arrived, the detective was kept busy. They were easy cases, ones he could deduce the answers from, by looking at them and asking a few pointed questions. It felt rather good to be making himself useful, rather than sitting around the flat.

After a quick lunch, Sherlock had two more clients. He sent them away with the answers they needed, then decided to see Mrs. Hudson.

He knocked on the door to 221A and the elderly landlady answered it.

"Sherlock, what can I do for you?"

"I understand you have offered Molly and myself the use of 221C if we fix it up?"

"That's right. I'd be happy to see it used in some way."

"May I take a look, see what needs to be done?"

"Of course you can, dear. Let me just get the spare key."

"Uh, Mrs. Hudson, I don't need a key," he told her, flushing. "I, uh, had a copy made several years ago during the Moriarty incident with the shoes. I apologize. I should not have done it."
To his surprise, the elderly landlady nodded. "I know you did, Sherlock. I was hoping one day you would admit it to me."

"How?" he questioned in some surprise.

"I found the drugs, dear. I happened to be in there once, just looking around, trying to see whether there was anything I could do to make it inhabitable for a tenant. I saw your stash in the fireplace."

Sherlock was astounded. "Why didn't you turn me in, or tell Mycroft?"

"That reptile? I would never tell him anything. I would also never do anything to get you in trouble. You are like the son I never had. Besides, I hoped you would one day turn your life around, and now you have."

"Thank you Mrs. Hudson. I don't deserve your loyalty."

"You can repay me by getting busy with your fiancée, or wife if you still wish to wait, and make some babies for me to look after and spoil."

At that, Sherlock really blushed. But he said, nonetheless, "I fully intend to, God-willing."

"It is still hard for me to believe you have become a Christian, but I can clearly see how you've changed, even by your admission today of having a key. You've come a long way, my boy. Perhaps there is something to be said for faith."

"Indeed there is," responded Sherlock earnestly. "It has given my life new purpose, as has Molly."

Mrs. Hudson gave him an indulgent smile. "I always knew you were a good man underneath."

"Why thank you. You saw more than I did, then. Anyway, would it be alright if I checked out the flat?"

"Certainly. I'll need to have the electricity turned on again though."

"I will, of course, pay for that. Just let me know what it costs. Thank you, Mrs. Hudson. He bent down impulsively and gave the elderly woman a kiss on the cheek, which delighted her, if her expression afterwards was any indication.

Then he took his leave and unlocked the door of 221C. He entered, remembering the times he had entered it to hide his drug stash, during the time he had been going after Magnussen, and also Culverton Smith. The fireplace no longer held anything though, as he had thrown every syringe, every needle he still possessed away after Sherrinford, as he had told Molly. He believed God had lifted the addiction from him, but he supposed he should still consider attending meetings at some point for recovering drug addicts. He had always called himself a user, not an addict, but he knew they were much the same thing. Perhaps his story, and his journey to faith could be an encouragement to others.

Sherlock peered around the dim interior, which was lit only by sunlight drifting through a high window at street level. He made a mental image of where he would put a laboratory bench for his experiments, and one for his microscope. He was feeling a bit excited at the prospect. What a wonderful idea his sweet fiancée had had to do this. How he loved her for her thoughtfulness.

The place needed a good cleaning first, perhaps that was something he could tackle next week, or even start on Sunday. He'd have to see about that.
Sherlock exited 221C, locking it once more, then returned upstairs to collect his phone and wallet. It was time to head for the hospital to pick up Molly.

Chapter End Notes

A more relaxed chapter here. Thanks to those of you who commented on the last chapter, glad Sherlock's letter had such a positive response.

I hope you liked the conversation between Sherlock and Mrs. Hudson. I often wondered about Sherlock's drug habit and why there was no evidence of it - so I thought 221C might be a good hiding place. Do you have your own ideas on that? It's always interesting to hear other theories.
Mycroft's Interesting Gift - Molly (Thursday)

Chapter Summary

Mycroft stops by with an unexpected and unnecessary gift.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Molly was having a reasonably uneventful day at work. She was still doing paperwork and had made significant inroads into Mike's inbox, which pleased her. The mindless work at times of inputting data into the computer, afforded her time to reflect on other things.

This whole week so far had been an emotional roller coaster, with Tom and then the DVD from Mary, as well as Sherlock's letter saying he loved her. God was on the move, that was for certain.

On her lunch break, Molly walked quickly to Farm Collective and bought various vegetables to use in the stir fry that evening.

Back at the hospital, Kaitlyn popped in to see her. "How's the paperwork going?" her friend asked by way of greeting.

Molly looked up from the desk. "Boring, but someone has to do it."

"Well, I've been listening to the soundtrack of a musical I heard about when I was in America. It's called 'Dear Evan Hansen'." She explained the story of the musical, then said, "Here, borrow my phone for awhile. I bought the soundtrack from iTunes. I'll be back in a bit to see what you think."

"Thanks, Kaitlyn," said Molly, smiling at her thoughtful friend. A bit of music would be nice to have on in the background as she worked at the computer. She was surprised she hadn't thought of it herself.

Molly listened to the music as she worked. One song in particular caught her attention. The title of it was Only Us, and it was a duet. One line in particular made her sit up and take notice - "And what came before won't count anymore or matter". It struck a chord within her, remembering how so long ago, Sherlock had said she counted, then later, that she mattered. The first two verses sung by the girl also seemed to be something she could have said to Sherlock when he first came to see her after Sherrinford. It was funny, she thought to herself, how a song could really touch you.

Impulsively, Molly went to the iTunes app on her phone and purchased the soundtrack for herself, then began to play it from her own phone as she worked. She played Only Us, several times, and had learned some of the lyrics by the time Kaitlyn returned to retrieve her phone.

"What did you think?" asked her friend, upon re-entering the office.

"I love it. I really like the song, 'Requiem', but my favourite is 'Only Us'."

"That's my favourite too!" enthused Kaitlyn. "It's such a sweet duet."
"Well, thanks for showing it to me. I bought it for myself, as you can tell," Molly said, indicating her phone, which was playing one of the songs. "It will give me something to listen to if I get bored on the train ride to North Yorkshire, or the ride back."

"When are you going there? Do you have family there I don't know about?"

"No family. Sherlock and I are going there tomorrow night, just overnight. He wants to visit the grave of a childhood friend, and show me the old family home." Molly couldn't help thinking dreamily of how lovely it would be to spend a night away from London with her fiancé.

Kaitlyn cocked her head to the side with interest. "Well, that sounds interesting. A night away, with the man you love..." Her voice trailed off as she gave Molly a broad wink. As usual, Molly blushed.

"No more teasing," she ordered sternly, wagging her finger at her always outrageous friend. To her relief, Kaitlyn backed off and left the office with nothing more than a cheery wave.

Molly didn't even realize she had not texted Sherlock that day, until he appeared in the doorway to Mike's office a few minutes before four.

She had left the office door open, and Sherlock walked straight over to the desk to give her a kiss hello.

She stood and moved away from the chair to welcome his kiss, then said, "Hi, honey. Do you want to choose your microscope now?"

"Most certainly," he responded with a smile, walking to the corner of the room where the old microscopes were stacked side-by-side. Sherlock examined them and finally selected one, pronouncing it to have the least scratches on it, therefore making it the most aesthetically pleasing, to which Molly laughed.

She collected the groceries and the pair took a taxi home.

Molly set to work immediately, chopping vegetables for the stir fry. As she did so, Sherlock opened the RSVP's from the previous day and added names to their guest acceptance list.

They talked, Sherlock telling Molly about the day's clients and his conversation with Mrs. Hudson. When he told her Mrs. Hudson had found his stash of drugs in 221C, Molly gasped.

"You had drugs there?" She still found it hard to believe that there was a side to Sherlock to which she had not been privy before the Magnussen case.

"I needed somewhere away from the flat. Mycroft would have the place periodically swept for drugs. He never thought to look outside the flat, though."

Molly paused in her task of preparing the meal ingredients and looked at Sherlock, "And there's nothing there now?"

"I told you, as soon as I got back from Sherrinford, I disposed of the remaining needles. That goes for what was left of any other drug paraphernalia too." He looked back at her steadily and she knew he was being truthful. She believed in his absolute honesty with her.

Molly put the vegetables in the wok and began to cook them, as well as boil the water for the rice.

"Anyway," Sherlock continued, as he leaned against the counter and watched her, "I kind of
thought of things that we'd need for the flat once it's fixed up - like a couple lab benches, stuff like
that. It needs to be thoroughly cleaned, of course, so I thought I might do that next week."

"I'll be on nightshift," pointed out Molly, "so my hours are going to be messed up."

"That's alright, I can tend to it myself," he told her, with a dismissive wave of his hand.

"But I want to help," she declared, pouting. "It was my idea to use the flat, after all."

"We'll see." He bent his head to give her a swift kiss. At that moment a text alert came from
Sherlock's phone. He peered at it, huffed and went into the sitting room to get his reading glasses,
putting them on and reading the message.

_He really looks adorable in them_, Molly thought to herself, before returning her attention to
making dinner. She was thoroughly enjoying using her new wok, and the smells of cooking
vegetables mixed with the soy sauce was mouth-watering.

Sherlock groaned, and Molly looked over at him questioningly as he remarked, "Well, we made
the papers. Not the front page, thank goodness, but according to Mycroft there's a nice picture of us
snogging in the Park."

Molly laughed. "We did hear the click of that camera, remember? But goodness, it was hardly
more than a brief, chaste kiss. There was definitely no snogging involved."

Sherlock glanced back down at the text. "'Apparently there is an article about us too. My brother is
taking it upon himself to come over and bring us a copy."

"When?" she questioned, casting Sherlock another admiring glance, before grabbing plates from
the cupboard. _Oh, those glasses, what was it about those glasses that made him look so absurdly
hot?_

"Now." Sherlock rolled his eyes, then shoved the phone back into his pocket, before removing the
glasses.

"Well, we had better hurry up and eat then." Molly commented. She served them both and they
settled down to eat. She was pleased when Sherlock complimented her cooking once again. It was
always nice to know he appreciated her efforts, and it made her want to take care of him even
more.

"With all that went on yesterday, there's something else I meant to tell you, and just didn't get
around to - something that happened on Tuesday," Sherlock commented as they ate.

Molly gave him an inquiring look. "What was that?"

"After I left the hospital to wander around until it was time to go back and get you, I bumped into
Janine." He looked at her, almost as if he expected her to be irritated about it.

A flicker of jealousy went through her, but she kept her expression deliberately neutral. She knew
there was no reason for her to feel jealous about the beautiful woman who had briefly occupied
Sherlock's time, but human nature being what it was, there would always be a little pain in her
heart when she thought of Sherlock being with the other woman. "I thought she spent the money
she made on those tabloid articles buying some cottage."

"Apparently she sold the place because she missed London," he said, as his eyes remained fixed on
Molly.
"What did you talk about?" she asked carefully, keeping her tone and expression calm.

"I apologized to her for using her to get at Magnussen. Then I told her about you. She was a bit skeptical at first, thought maybe I was faking our engagement, but I assured her that wasn't the case, and that our wedding is only a few weeks away."

Molly raised her fork to her mouth and chewed her food thoughtfully for a minute, then remarked, "Isn't it funny we both saw our exes on the same day and resolved some issues? That had to be a God thing."

"That's exactly what I thought." Sherlock looked relieved that she had accepted his explanation for what had happened, and Molly smiled at him.

They had just finished eating and were doing the dishes when the doorbell sounded downstairs. A minute later the unmistakeable tread of Mycroft Holmes was heard ascending the stairs.

Sherlock opened the door before his brother could knock.

Mycroft sniffed the air appreciatively. "I smell Chinese food."

"Molly cooked a delicious stir-fry," Sherlock informed his sibling proudly, then looked at Molly, who had come to stand beside him in welcoming his brother.

"One more reason you have yourself a keeper, brother mine," commented Mycroft, and Molly smiled.

"Hi Mycroft."

"Doctor Hooper, you are looking very well."

She grinned at her future brother-in-law. "Your brother takes very good care of me - look at the lovely roses he bought me yesterday." She indicated the roses, which were now in a vase on the kitchen table.

"I see a microscope also," observed Mycroft. "Are you going to start doing experiments again in the flat?"

"Not at all," Sherlock assured him. "Bart's got in new microscopes and Molly asked Mike Stamford if I could have one, and he agreed. The microscope will go downstairs into 221C once we have it cleaned up."

Mycroft raised an eyebrow. "You propose to use it as your laboratory? Is your landlady offering you a special discount?"

"As long as we fix it up, she is not going to charge us rent," interposed Molly.

"Very good. Better to do the experiments away from your home, especially if you plan to start a family of your own soon after the wedding."

Molly blushed, remembering how Mycroft had caught her and Sherlock in a rather passionate embrace a few weeks earlier, and then again, had been the one to interrupt them after Sherlock had returned from Dartmoor. They might have been starting their family earlier than expected if he had not interrupted them.

Now though, the older Holmes thrust the newspaper article at Sherlock. Molly peered over
Sherlock's shoulder and read the headline - London's famous detective and his fiancée enjoy a private moment in a public park. There was a decent sized picture of the couple kissing. Actually, Molly thought, it was a beautifully captured moment. The flowers behind them framed the photo and their kiss looked very romantic.

The article mentioned their wedding was less than a month away, although the venue had not yet been disclosed. There were also mentions of recent high profile cases Sherlock had solved, including the Silver Blaze one. Culverton Smith, serial killer, was also talked about. All in all, quite a nice article.

"Can we keep this?" Molly inquired.

"Be my guest," responded Mycroft. Then, addressing his brother, he said, "Mummy and Daddy will come to Sherrinford next Saturday as well."

Molly looked at the men in surprise, and Sherlock explained. "I texted Mycroft earlier today. I thought it was time to visit Eurus again."

"I'd really like to meet her someday, but I'll be working next weekend."

"I don't think I'm ready for her to meet you yet," said Sherlock gently, squeezing her hand, and she understood. She knew he just wanted to protect her.

"I understand, Sherlock. I just want you to know I am not frightened of meeting her. So it is when you feel comfortable that I will accompany you."

Mycroft gave her a nod of approval. "I shall be proud to call you my sister-in-law, Doctor Hooper."

"I think it's about time we dispense with formality, don't you? Please just call me Molly. As you said, I will be your sister-in-law soon."

"Thank you," he paused a moment, then finished, "Molly."

Having declined any refreshment, Mycroft asked his brother, "May I have a quiet word outside, Sherlock?"

"Very well," Sherlock responded with a shrug.

"Goodbye for now - Molly."

"Bye, Mycroft," she returned, and smiled as Sherlock followed his brother onto the landing and pulled the door to.

Molly was intrigued. What could Mycroft be wanting?

She hoped it wasn't some dangerous case. He had said he would not ask Sherlock to do anything like that again, now that he was getting married.

She could hear the murmur of their voices, Mycroft saying some words like "Mummy" and "precipitate."

Then she clearly heard Sherlock expostulate, "I don't need those!" There were a few more words and Sherlock came back inside, shoving something in his trouser pocket, as Molly heard Mycroft descending the stairs.

"What was that all about?" she asked curiously. Sherlock was very flushed in the face. Something
had clearly embarrassed him.

"You don't want to know," he huffed.

"Yes I do. What did you put in your pocket?"

"Do I really have to show you? This is so bloody embarrassing."

Now Molly was really curious as to what had her fiancé so agitated. "Yes," she told him firmly. Slowly, reluctantly, he pulled a box out of his pocket and showed it to her.

"Is that what I think it is?"

His face reddened even more, if that were possible. "Read the outside of the box."

"Durex, extra safe," she read aloud, and then she snorted, then giggled, and finally she was laughing until the tears came to her eyes.

"What's so funny?" he demanded crossly.

"Just the idea..." Molly had to stop and catch her breath, before she continued, "of Mycroft giving you those, when he knows we have made a commitment to wait until our wedding night to make love."

"Yeah, well apparently he's not so sure we are going to make it. According to him, his past 'walk-ins' seem to indicate otherwise, and then with that picture in the paper of us kissing," Here he continued in an imitation of Mycroft, "making a spectacle of yourselves in a public place," then continued in his normal voice, "makes him doubt we can keep our hands to ourselves for the next month."

Molly laughed again. "Even if we didn't, we have already talked about the possibility of me becoming pregnant."

"Well, apparently he thinks Mummy would be scandalized if that happened before the wedding."

Molly wiped the tears from her eyes. It was all so absurd. "Does Mycroft really think your parents would be shocked with that in this day and age? Look at John and Mary. She was already pregnant when they got married, it isn't uncommon."

"Apparently my brother disagrees." He dropped the offensive box onto the coffee table.

"Well, the point is moot anyway, as we have no intention of it happening before the wedding, and we are already being 'extra safe' by not sleeping together at all."

"We are sleeping together," protested Sherlock.

"Very funny, Sherlock. You know I am trying to say it in a nice way, instead of just out and out saying we are not having sex."

"Ha, you just said it," he pointed out.

Molly crossed her arms and glared at him. "Very mature, Sherlock. You are forty years old and now you are making fun of the fact that I said the word sex?"

"You said it again," he snickered. Then he suddenly said, "Come here, baby," and she complied.
She did rather like that rare endearment. Sherlock put his arms around her. "I have not kissed you in hours. But I assure you, having those things is not going to make it any more likely that we shall consummate our relationship. Like you said, I do not wish to take steps to prevent pregnancy when the time comes. I want us to have a baby together, whenever God chooses for that to happen."

Molly smiled at him then and his lips descended on hers, warm and soft. He didn't kiss her passionately, but with extreme tenderness, and he didn't prolong it either. Nonetheless, it still caused her heartbeat to accelerate because it was him kissing her.

He lifted his head, saying, "That is how I love you, Molly. You are so precious to me. I know we get carried away with it all sometimes, but that doesn't stop me from wanting to do this right, for both of us. I want us to be able to tell our children one day that we waited to be together, because that was what God wanted from us."

Molly leaned her head against his chest, feeling his own heartbeat matching hers. She loved how he was determined to keep trying, even with the little "gift" from Mycroft. "I know we will be blessed by this, Sherlock. I want to be able to tell our children the same thing. To lead by example, as it were. I love every sweet, tender moment we share as much as the passionate ones. That being said," she looked up at him, "we should probably pack for tomorrow now."

"Distraction is always a good thing," he commented, and they walked hand-in-hand to the bedroom.

Sherlock brought out the overnight bag he had used for his trip to Dartmoor a few weeks earlier. "Why don't we share this one?"

"Works for me," she agreed. They worked together to pack and within half an hour the task was completed.

Molly looked at her watch. "We still have some time to cuddle and watch 'Downton Abbey'," she told Sherlock.

"As long as you don't tell everyone, as in Mycroft, that I am watching with you...although, really I should not be worried. He seems to have a penchant for old, romantic films."

"He does? How do you know?"

"I played an elaborate trick on him to get some information a few months ago, after John was tranquillized by his therapist, who turned out to be my sister. It was rather an interesting experiment, seeing him so unnerved. But anyway, he was watching an old film when I initiated the 'game,' as it were."

"You'll have to explain that one a bit more sometime," remarked Molly. "But for now," she tugged on his hand, "'Downton Abbey'."

They watched together, cuddled on the sofa, sharing the occasional sweet kiss.

Following that, they showered and got into bed.

Sherlock gathered Molly into his arms and offered her yet another sweet, tender kiss. "Goodnight, my sweet pathologist," he said in his luxuriant, deep voice.

"Goodnight, my darling," she said, repeating the exercise of the previous night, so their bare skin was touching, and they slept.
Oops, a bit longer than usual, this chapter. I made some late additions, to set up a one-shot I will be publishing soon.

I'm also working on surrounding my dialogue with more visual reference, so you can picture what is happening better. All part of my growth as a writer. I hope it shows.

What did you think of Mycroft’s gift and the conversation surrounding it?

Poor Molly and Sherlock can't seem to catch a break, but they are both strong people with firm resolve!
Sherlock awoke from a deep sleep when the alarm went off. He was still nestled up against Molly's body but his hand was now resting on hers.

As soon Molly turned off the alarm, she turned towards him and kissed him lightly good morning. She was careful not to press up against his body, which he appreciated. There was a limit to how much close Molly contact he could stand, before risking his self-control.

Instead of watching her dress, Sherlock closed his eyes. He was thinking about the evening ahead. It would be rather fun to go on a train ride with Molly for the first time. When he heard her exit the room, he too got up.

They ate together and discussed what would be happening later that day.

"I'll bring our suitcase to the hospital and we will head straight for king's Cross Station," he told her.

"You know, I've never been on a long train ride," she remarked. "I'm quite looking forward to it." There was anote of excitement in her voice which he found endearing. Molly found pleasure in the smallest things.

"Me too- especially if there aren't too many people in the carriage so I can spend some time kissing you."

She giggled. "Kissing on a train sounds interesting. A change of scenery for us will be lovely."

"And a public one, so I will have to exhibit some propriety." He gave her a seductive look that belied his words.

"I have the distinct feeling you are going to misbehave." She smirked.

"Who, me?" This time he gave her an innocent look and she swatted his hand. He grabbed hers and kissed it lightly. "Guess we'll see what happens."

When Molly was ready to leave, Sherlock walked with her to the door and rested his hands lightly on her shoulders. "Have a good day, love. I'll see you at four." He gave her a tender kiss and she departed.

After doing some cleaning up of breakfast dishes, he took the overnight case and set it by the door. He sent John a text, asking about returning the DVD from Mary.
Hey John, I have some time on my hands if you want me to bring back the DVD.

John responded a short time later. Yeah, I'm at the practice though. Some people have to work for a living, you know. What did Molly think of Mary's words to you?

Sherlock rolled his eyes at the dig about working. He did not have a regular work schedule, but at times he worked a case for longer hours than a regular job. John had taken an entire month off for his sex holiday - pardon, honeymoon. Sherlock suddenly thought about what that meant, the flippant way he had written those words on John's blog. A shiver of anticipation ran through him. That was going to be him in a month enjoying his own "sex holiday." He really needed to not think of that right now. So he concentrated on John's question, forming an appropriate response.

*Molly was amazed, as I was. When is your lunch break? I'll bring the DVD and we can talk in person.*

*It's at noon, so I'll see you then.*

At lunchtime, Sherlock headed to John's practice with the DVD. The men walked to a nearby café for lunch and chatted.

After handing his friend the DVD, Sherlock said, "I gave Molly a letter too on Wednesday that I had written when I was about to be sent away after the Magnussen incident. I wrote it and sealed it when I was high and never gave it to her. It has been in my box of important papers, and I only remembered it that morning."

"Really?" John sounded intrigued. "So what did it say?"

"You are not going to believe this, John. Molly opened it, and it was quite the revelation. Apparently my high self recognized I loved her much earlier than my normal self did," Sherlock confided to his friend.

John shook his head in amazement. "My God, Sherlock, that's astounding. It sure seems like you were destined for each other."

"A definite God thing, John," he responded, smiling. "We believe that God had contingency plans for us. It was quite the confirmation for us, along with your DVD. In fact, those revelations almost made me lose my bet with you," he admitted.

John looked at him, shocked. "Seriously? I thought you had things well in hand at this point. So what stopped you?"

"The timely or untimely arrival of Mrs. Hudson, depending on which way you look at it."

John chuckled. "I'll bet she was sorry to have interrupted you."

Sherlock rolled his eyes. "You could say that, but it was as well she came in when she did. I do want to wait for our wedding night, I want it to be special. I mean, I waited forty years, you'd think a few weeks wouldn't kill me."

"There's a big difference though," his friend pointed out. "You repressed your emotions before, including your sex drive. It's a powerful emotion."

"So I am discovering. You're the expert though, not me," Sherlock commented wryly.

John gave him a pained look. "I have the distinct feeling I will be suffering the same way you are if
things continue to progress between Kayla and myself."

"Do you have plans this weekend?"

"I'm seeing her tomorrow. She has already invited me to church again too."

Sherlock was pleased with this information. He had the feeling Kayla would be a very good influence on John, maybe even as good an influence as Molly had been for him. "Well, If you go, I should see you there. Molly and I will be home tomorrow night."

"So you did decide to go up to North Yorkshire then? I remember you talking about that last week when we were on our way to see the tailor."

Sherlock nodded. "Yes, I thought it would be a good time. Molly is free this weekend, but working next weekend. After that the wedding would be too close."

"Glad you're getting up there. Even more glad you won't be alone," John said sincerely.

"So am I," agreed Sherlock. "I am not sure how I will feel, standing at Victor's grave, though."

"Hopefully you will make your peace with it, get some closure."

"That is my hope as well," Sherlock said, although he still felt slightly uneasy when he thought too much about seeing his young friend's final resting place.

The men talked for a few minutes longer, then John headed back to work while Sherlock took a taxi back to Baker Street.

Once home, he texted Molly, wanting to hear from her.

_Took Mary's DVD back to John at his work, and we had a nice lunch._

Her response wasn't immediate, and when it came, he discovered why.

_Sorry I didn't get back to you sooner. Had to do a post-mortem unexpectedly. The person assigned to do it was out sick. Glad you got to spend some time with John. Did you talk about Kayla at all?_

_We touched on it_, he responded. He didn't really want to relate the conversation he had had about his sex drive, so he instead added, _He is seeing her tomorrow, and she invited him to church again on Sunday._

_Oh, good. I hope we will see him there._

_I said that also. Well, I should let you get back to work, my love. I'll see you in a couple hours. I love you._

Sherlock grinned to himself. He'd got the words in first, that time.

_See you soon. Love you too XX_

Sherlock spent the remainder of his time at the flat, making sure he had everything for the trip, packing the last minute toiletries and stowing his laptop at the top of the overnight case.

Then he headed off to the hospital, arriving a few minutes early. He found Molly in the lab, talking to Kaitlyn, who saw him first.
"Hey Sherlock," she greeted. "I hear you and Molly are off on a train trip this weekend."

"We are, just an overnight trip," he responded.

"Your first trip away together isn't it?" she asked, giving him a sly look that almost made him laugh. Kaitlyn was always so easy to read.

He just gave her an innocent nod, however.

"I hope you two can behave yourselves, being on a romantic train ride and all." She winked. *Yup, he'd been waiting for that.*

He saw Molly blush at her friend's words. He hoped he wasn't doing the same. He did like Kaitlyn a lot. She was completely open and spoke what she thought without putting a filter over it. In fact, she was a bit like the way he had been; although he had not been playful in his manner, merely arrogant and superior. He smiled at the exuberant blonde and said, "We shall try our best, Kaitlyn."

Then, attempting to match her open nature he added, "Molly and I have a bet to win."

He was quite pleased when Kaitlyn laughed out loud at that. Perhaps he was becoming more accustomed to social interactions.

He turned his attention to Molly, who was still looking rather embarrassed. "Ready to go, love? The taxi is outside, waiting for us."

"Oh, yes of course. See you Sunday night, Kaitlyn."

"Sure thing. Maybe while we are on nightshift we should take a ride on the haunted coffin lift, just for fun. Wouldn't that be spooky?"

*Coffin lift?*

Sherlock wasn't sure he'd heard of that. He'd have to ask Molly about it.

Molly shuddered. "I'm not sure about that one, although perhaps I'd be game if my handsome fiancé was accompanying me," she said, nonetheless not looking too excited at the prospect.

*Being on a lift alone in the dead of night with Molly, even a haunted one, sounds rather intriguing,* he reflected. *Maybe indulging in a little kissing?*

He forced himself to stop thinking about kissing Molly. That could at least wait till they were on the train. "Bye, Kaitlyn," he said, before following Molly to Mike's office where she picked up her handbag and phone. He took her hand and they made their way out to the waiting taxi.

When the couple arrived at King's Cross Station, they walked around for awhile. There was still an hour until their train was due to leave. Sherlock had placed a pair of sunglasses in his Belstaff pocket before leaving the flat, and he put them on as soon as they entered the train station, to preserve his anonymity. It worked, for the most part. The station was so busy that most people were too concerned about finding the correct platform to be looking at other people. One person however, apparently more observant than most, came up to get an autograph, which he gave.

Molly squeezed his hand afterwards. "I'm so glad you didn't just turn that lady away."

"Being kind costs me nothing," he told her, shrugging.

His stomach did a little somersault when his fiancée kissed his cheek and purred into his ear, "I
think you look extremely sexy in those sunglasses."

"Keep it up, Molly," he warned, "and I'll be indulging in some public flirtation myself."

Molly merely grinned and tugged on his hand. She insisted on looking at platforms 9 and 10 and pronounced herself to be very disappointed that she could not see how to get to Platform 9 and three quarters. He was a little confused for a moment, before he realized she was referencing Harry Potter, and he remembered she owned the complete Harry Potter collection of books. He made a note to take her out someday on the Harry Potter Studio Tour. The detective was certain she would love it. He smiled indulgently at his sweet fiancée. She was genuinely excited to be at the train station.

They ate a meal at one of the many restaurants, and then it was time to board the first class compartment on the train. Sherlock double-checked the information for the e-tickets that were on his phone, making sure they went to the correct platform. He felt a little tingle of anticipation run through him. The journey was only a little over two hours long, but it was still an adventure, and he was much happier to be taking this train than he had been when he was taking the one to Dartmoor without Molly. This time they were together, and that made all the difference.

Chapter End Notes

So, they are embarking on a journey together. What will happen?

Hope you liked the Harry Potter reference. I love those books (and movies).

And yes, Sherlock may be a little obsessed with kissing Molly, but remember, he is trying to not think of doing anything beyond that, so really, can you blame him?
Molly was really excited as she and Sherlock boarded the first class carriage of the train. *Of course, he would have to book the more expensive method of travel,* she thought. Sherlock never worried about the expense of things.

She had been looking forward to this all day, even daring to daydream a little during that boring, routine post-mortem. Kaitlyn of course, had been all enthusiastic about the trip she and Sherlock were taking. Molly had endured another round of teasing from her friend, who fully expected they would have a hard time keeping their hands off each other, being away from home. Frankly, Molly thought honestly to herself, the venue didn't matter - hey always had trouble keeping their hands off each other when things became too intense. It was just a matter of making sure that didn't happen.

Now, as Molly took the seat that Sherlock had indicated, she noticed there weren't a lot of people in the train carriage. Sherlock would undoubtedly like that. Okay, she was not averse to the idea of a little train trip kissing either. Molly was quite surprised they had not needed to go to a ticket counter. Sherlock explained he had e-tickets, having purchased them online. If a train conductor came by, they just needed to show the PDF on Sherlock's phone. It made sense, everything these days was going paperless.

As soon as the train started moving, Sherlock put his arm around her and asked lazily, "Should we begin our non-verbal communication now?"

Molly laughed. "We can't spend two hours kissing, Sherlock. We'd have chapped lips at the end of it. Let's talk a little first at least."

He pouted at her briefly, then relaxed his expression, as if in acknowledgment of her practical words. "Alright then," he said agreeably. "Tell me about this coffin lift Kaitlyn was talking about."

"Oh, that." Molly made a little face. She had hoped he would forget about that. She was not superstitious, nor did she believe in ghosts, but the idea of the lift was creepy, and if she was in it...
"The coffin lift is the oldest lift at St. Bart's," she explained. "I've never been on it. Apparently, when you get into it, no matter what floor you press, it goes down instead to the basement. Then the lights turn off and you have to manually push the lift gate and door open in order to get out of it. Why would you want to get in a lift that doesn't go where you want it to go?"

He gave her a sultry look that made her heartbeat immediately accelerate. "I can think of a few things." Oh, he's such a tease, she thought to herself.

"Anyway," she continued, trying to get things back on track, "once you get out of the lift to walk back up, it follows your progress upwards. It just sounds creepy. Legend has it a nurse was murdered in the lift by some deranged basement patient."

"Sounds fascinating," remarked Sherlock. "Would you ride it with me if I asked nicely?" He placed a possessive hand on her knee and squeezed it.

Molly hesitated, "I don't know, Sherlock. I'm not a big fan of confined places."

"But you wouldn't be alone, you'd be with me. Come on Molly, please? For me?" He gave her an adorable pleading look and she capitulated. Who am I kidding - I can never deny him anything, she reflected with an inward smile.

"Fine. But we go to the hospital early. I don't want to be late for my shift." She gave him a stern look and he responded by leaning down to kiss her cheek.

Then he traced a hand along the side of her face. "Works for me. So, now that we've cleared that up and there's nobody looking, can I please kiss you properly? I haven't felt your sweet lips on mine since this morning."

Molly gave him a coquettish look and raised her face slightly. "Well, when you ask so nicely..."

He didn't wait for her to finish, instead pulling her close to him and capturing her lips with his own.

Molly gave a little sigh of contentment, as they kissed. Kissing on a train is quite fun, she thought, as Sherlock's other hand cupped her face, and his thumb stroked her cheek. He kissed her until they were both a little breathless, then pulled away enough to say, "Now that was a most satisfying kiss." He had taken his sunglasses off when they had boarded the train, and Molly found his beautiful blue-green eyes staring intently into hers.

"What?" she asked. "Why are you looking at me that way?"

"I can never keep my eyes off of you for long, Molly," he told her earnestly. "I just like to drink in the sight of you, your sweet face, totally kissable lips." He traced her lips with his thumb and her heart began to race again.

"You're getting quite good at this flirting thing," she managed. Oh heck, we haven't even reached our destination and he's tempting me as usual.

His next words reflected her innermost thoughts. "Why do you have to be so tempting to me? How is it I could control myself and my response to you for seven years, and now I'm like a teenager with his first crush?"

"Oh dear," Molly responded, "Are you implying you only have a crush on me?" She pretended to be hurt, and pouted.
"Oh, my lovely pathologist, you are not going to get rid of me that easily." His hand grasped hers and his thumb drew lazy circles on her palm, which both tickled and thrilled her.

"Well, thank heavens for that. I'd hate for all those weeks of wedding planning to go to waste, all that money we've spent..." Once again he didn't allow her to finish, leaning into her and kissing her thoroughly, until they heard a movement in the train car and a voice saying from the other end of the carriage, "Tickets, please."

Sherlock withdrew from her and pulled out his phone from his trouser pocket. He found the email with the PDF file of their tickets and showed it to the conductor. The man stared at it for a few seconds, and Molly was starting to wonder if somehow they had boarded the wrong train or something else had gone wrong.

Then the conductor's face broke into a broad grin. "Mr. Sherlock Holmes and fiancée, it's a pleasure to have you aboard our train. I'm a big fan of your work. Almost done checking tickets. Can I get you something from the dining car? No charge, of course."

Sherlock and Molly exchanged a look. "Two cups of tea would be lovely," her fiancé told the man, knowing without her saying a word what would be her preference. She loved that they were so attuned to each other.

"Would you like a fresh biscuit with your tea?"

This time Molly spoke, knowing what Sherlock would want. "I don't suppose you have any ginger nuts?"

"We certainly do. I'll pop a couple on a plate for you and have the tea and biscuits brought to you in a few minutes."

"Thank you," responded Sherlock, with a nod at the man. Once the conductor had moved on, he whispered to Molly, "Well, being famous does have its perks," and he winked.

Molly giggled. She was fine with him being famous, as long as nobody tried to take him away from her. She knew though that would never happen. There was no longer any insecurity in their relationship. It was such a turnaround, to have seven years of self-doubt and insecurity, to now be at this miraculous point.

She reached over, took Sherlock's hand and squeezed it. "I really love you so much, Sherlock. With both eros and agape love, like when we talked about the Greek words a few weeks ago. I mean, my heart is full to bursting with what I feel. I can never express it enough.

"My darling, sweet pathologist, my Molly. You know I feel that way too. I want to pour out my love for you, give you everything. Perhaps it is that which makes it so hard to keep my self-control sometimes. I want to give you all of me." She heard the note of passion in his voice and her heart responded to it.

"Me too. Four more weeks, my love." She rested her head against his shoulder until the conductor returned with their tea and biscuits.

The couple enjoyed their little snack, and once the man returned for their cups and plates, they settled back in their seats. Molly half expected Sherlock to pull out his phone for something to occupy himself with during the journey, but he didn't. Instead, he settled his arm around her shoulders again so she could lean her head against his chest and feel his heart beating, strong and steady. With his free hand, he took hers, stroking his thumb around the palm in circles once again,
lulling her into a place of utter contentment. In fact she realized she had drifted off, because
suddenly, she woke and noticed the train was pulling into the station.

"I'm so sorry, Sherlock," she apologized. "You must have been so bored. You couldn't even reach
your phone because you had your arm around my shoulders."

He shrugged dismissively. "It was fine. I just went into my mind palace and catalogued what is
coming up over the next few days - riding that coffin lift for one," he grinned at her. Then he
kissed her lightly before they alighted from the train.

Sherlock pulled out his phone and entered the address for the car rental company. "It's ten minutes
away to walk. Ready to stretch your legs? Unless you'd rather take a taxi..."

"Of course I'd prefer to walk. It's lovely out right now, and sitting in one spot for a couple hours
does get constricting."

Using his Maps app, the couple walked to Enterprise Rent-a-Car. Molly loved the way he always
took her hand, linking his fingers with hers.

Once they picked up the car, Sherlock slid behind the wheel. Molly was looking forward to seeing
how Sherlock drove. Of course, he hadn't driven in years. For that matter, neither had she. It just
wasn't worth having a car in London, unless you needed to travel away from it often. It wasn't so
bad for John, because he no longer lived in central London. Perhaps she and Sherlock would buy a
car if they ever moved from central London to an outer suburb.

She had to stifle a grin at the sight of Sherlock's long legs squeezed behind the wheel of the small
car. Even with the seat back all the way, it still looked uncomfortable. *Perhaps he should have
ordered a slightly larger one,* she mused. Sherlock handed Molly his phone, on which he had
entered the details of their next destination, the Olympia Hotel. When he stalled the car twice
before getting going, Molly could not stifle her laughter.

Sherlock looked at her crossly. "Next time, *you* can drive and we'll see how *you* cope with it when
you haven't driven in years."

"Sorry, Sherlock," she grinned. "It's just so strange, seeing you behind the wheel of a car."

"Well get used to it," he grumbled. "I'll be driving us places during our honeymoon."

Molly felt a twinge of disappointment. *He wants to go traveling during our honeymoon?*

She had been hoping they would stay put, at least for awhile. They were going to have a lot of
learning about each other to do.

Sherlock was obviously following her train of thought, because he added, with a quick glance at
her, "I'm not planning on driving us anywhere until we have spent at least two days in our room.
The most I plan to do is leave it to eat. Aside from that, I have every intention of making love to
you frequently and just being with you, alone."

Molly blushed. So he was on the same page after all. She sat and watched as her fiancé drove.
After that first hiccup, he drove well, shifting gears smoothly and confidently. When he wasn't
shifting gears, he reached across with his left hand to take her right.

They soon arrived at the hotel and checked in. The desk clerk reminded them of the free breakfast
they could have the next day, and the fact that there was complimentary wi-fi.
They headed to their room and Sherlock put down the suitcase, then removed his shoes before flopping on the bed. Molly settled herself on the bed next to him.

"Well, here we are on our little adventure," he remarked.

"It is rather exciting," she admitted. "I got a passport last year, when Tom and I were engaged, because he said he wanted to leave the country if and when we went on our honeymoon..." she stopped, feeling self-conscious. "I'm sorry, Sherlock. I shouldn't have brought him up, I wasn't thinking."

Sherlock reached over and took her hand. "It's okay, Molly. I don't want you to feel uncomfortable talking about him. He is a part of your past, after all. You have memories of things with him together. It's going to happen occasionally. I'll always feel a little jealous of the time you were with him, but that's my problem to deal with, not yours. You didn't do anything wrong. You were just trying to move on. It isn't as if we were together before I left."

"I know. But I never want to do anything that would hurt you." She looked at him, searchingly, trying to gauge his true feelings.

To her relief, his expression was completely open and clear. "It's all good, my love. We are together now and that is all that matters, our future together, and what we make of it."

Impulsively, she leaned over and kissed him. He was so wonderful, so understanding. She would have pulled away, but Sherlock didn't let her. His arms came around her, and he held her close, kissing her back, although not in a passionate way. They were on a bed after all, and that was always their danger zone. So he kissed her sweetly and tenderly. Then he released her and Molly remembered what she had been intending to say about her passport.

"Anyway, as I was saying, I have a passport, but I've never left the country. Isn't that ridiculous? I've never even been on a plane. Either I was studying or working. I was not the adventurous type to go off somewhere alone. You, on the other hand, are so well travelled, it makes me feel like such an ignoramus."

"I may be well travelled, but that is mainly in Europe. I've never been to America, nor to Australia. Now, there's a country I'd like to visit one day, but it's such a long way away."

"Oh, I'd love to see a koala! Kangaroos too," enthused Molly. The thought of travelling anywhere with Sherlock at her side was exciting.

"I hope we get to travel to many places together, Molly, but I expect, if we have a family of our own, most of those travel plans will need to be put on hold until our family circle is complete."

"And there's another reason why we are not having seven children," Molly grinned. But I definitely wouldn't mind one or two miniature Sherlocks running around, she thought dreamily to herself.

"I still think it's a nice number, but yes, I think we've left our run a little late. Perhaps if we had gotten together seven years ago..." he said, a little mournfully.

Molly giggled, and swatted lightly at his arm. "It would not matter how many years ago we got together, I would still have refused to have that many children. Heavens, it will be hard enough to know what to do if we have more than one. Baker Street isn't exactly conducive to having a family,"

Sherlock looked at her seriously. "Like I said before, we'll buy a house with room for our children as well."
Molly felt a shiver of anticipation run through her at the idea of having a precious little baby with Sherlock. She had thought about it over the years, she had longed for a baby for so long, and of course, in her dreams, the father was always Sherlock. Even when she had been with Tom, she could not picture having a family with him. It was always Sherlock's child.

"You have that look in your eyes," Sherlock said. "What are you thinking about where your mind is so far away?"

Molly blushed. "I've thought about it over the years, what it would be like to have a child with you," she admitted shyly. "When Mary was pregnant, sometimes I would even imagine what it would be like if it was me with the expanding belly. I could picture it so clearly, Sherlock. Isn't that weird?"

He reached for her again, pulling her back towards him, holding her. "It's not weird at all. Besides, seeing as you are making a confession here, I should make one of my own." He looked deeply into her eyes.

"What?" she asked, a little breathlessly.

"When I saw you at the wedding with Tom, I disliked him intensely, because I couldn't help thinking about how I disliked the thought of you having a baby with him. Perhaps, if I'd been more self-aware of my emotions, I'd have recognized that as jealousy. I never could stand the idea of you being anybody's pathologist but mine. I felt very possessive about you. I just thought it was because we were friends, and I didn't like the idea of you not being the one to help me at Bart's because we worked so well together, but I couldn't see the forest for the trees, apparently."

"Oh, Sherlock," Molly breathed, "I was always your pathologist, and I always will be." They leaned in towards each other and kissed again. Molly longed to put her arms around her fiancé's neck, to feel his wonderful curls running through her fingers, but she knew that was another one of their triggers, well, for her at least. So the kiss was not too long, even if it was infinitely sweet and she would have liked it to continue. She sat up and said, "I think I'll go take a shower now."

"Okay," said Sherlock. "I'll take one after you."

Molly got off the bed and opened the suitcase, rummaging in it to pull out the various toiletries Sherlock had thoughtfully remembered to pack. Then she realized something was missing. "Uh, Sherlock, did you pack my chemise? I can't seem to find it."

He groaned. "Bloody hell, I always miss something. I saw it by the bed, and was planning to put it in, but I was busy getting the other stuff together, and then completely forgot, I'm so sorry. But hey, you've been taking it off for the last two nights once we are in bed, so you haven't been wearing it anyway," he pointed out in what she assumed was supposed to be a helpful tone.

She raised her eyebrow at him. "So what do you propose I do until I get under the covers then? Parade about the room half naked?"

He gave her a sultry look. "I would have no objections to that."

She was tempted to give him a swat on the backside for that, but glared at him instead.

"I suppose you think I am being a Bit Not Good again?" he asked dolefully.

Molly placed her hands on her hips. "No, you are being a lot not good with that one. Seriously, Sherlock. If I really did that, walked around half naked, do you truly think we'd be able to keep our hands off each other?"
He gave her a penitent look. "Definitely not, you are right of course." He brightened suddenly. "I did bring an extra shirt, just in case of an emergency. You can wear that if you like, unless you want to just wear your bra?"

"I think the shirt would be a better idea, don’t you agree?"

"I suppose." He looked a little disappointed and she laughed. "I'll still take it off once I get under the covers, okay?"

He smirked. "Okay."

Molly headed for the small bathroom and took her shower, slipping Sherlock's shirt over her head afterwards. She rather liked it, she thought, wearing his shirts. It made her feel closer to him. Maybe she would have to do that more often. Sherlock also seemed to rather like it.

"You fill out that shirt very well," he told her admiringly. Then he added cheekily, "It's a bit tight around the chest area though." He came up to her then and gave her chest a gentle squeeze through the shirt. He didn't keep his hand there though, so she didn't tell him off. Besides, he was holding her bare chest in bed at this point. She had to admit though, it was a bit exciting when he touched her that way, a a little glimpse of what it would be like when they would be able to feel each other's bodies properly, without the barriers of clothing. She sucked in a breath at the thought.

Sherlock's mind was apparently wandering in the same direction, because he said hastily, "Yes, well, I think I'll go take my shower now."

While he was in the bathroom, Molly checked her phone. There was a text she hadn't seen before, from Kayla.

John and I are going out again tomorrow. I'm really looking forward to just getting to know him again, slowing things down a bit though. I hope we can do that. What are you up to this weekend?

Molly texted back. Actually, Sherlock and I are in Selby right now, in North Yorkshire. We are visiting the grave of a childhood friend of his tomorrow, as well as the place Sherlock grew up as a young boy. Long story - John could fill you in, if you ask. He knows the story.

Oh, maybe I'll ask. I guess it will depend on how our evening goes. But wow, you and Sherlock are on a trip? That sounds exciting, going away together.

It is, Molly texted back. We've had some interesting discussions already about things in our past. We're still learning things about each other. It's really amazing. Oh, I'm going to go now. Sound alike he is getting out of the shower. I'll see you Sunday, we'll have to catch up soon on our respective weekends. "Sounds good. See you then.

Molly put her phone down as Sherlock re-entered the room, his hair rioting adorably around his head. Always so darned hot, and he smelled really good too. That citrus cologne always made her want to sniff his neck.

"Who were you texting?" he inquired curiously.

"Just Kayla. She was telling me she and John are going out tomorrow, like you already told me. I told her what we were up to as well, and that she could ask for details from John if she wanted to know more, you know, about your childhood friend. I hope I wasn't being presumptuous."

"That's fine with me. If she and John get closer, things are bound to come out from our shared experiences, like what happened at Sherrinford. It wouldn't be right for me to ask him to not tell
anyone what happened, because it happened to him as well."

Molly smiled at him. He was going to make a good father one day, with his new views and common sense.

The couple spent the remainder of the evening watching the television, somewhat, but more just enjoying being cuddled together.

When it was time to go to bed, Molly got under the covers and carefully removed Sherlock's shirt, putting it on the bedside table, because she thought she might put it back on for a bit in the morning before getting dressed. Sherlock joined her and held her in his arms as they fell asleep, tucked together in the usual way.

Chapter End Notes

Aren't you impressed with the way they are aware of their triggers and being careful, even away from home?

Did you enjoy the train scene? Wouldn't you love to see Sherlock behind the wheel of a car. I think he'd be a good, confident driver.
When Sherlock opened his eyes, for a moment he wondered where he was. Molly was next to him as usual, but he wasn't at home. Then he remembered, they were in Shelby, and today he was going to visit the final resting place of his childhood friend, Victor.

He really didn't want to get up, comfortable as he was with Molly's body close against his. Her body was so warm. Gently, he kissed the top of her head and she stirred, opening her eyes to look at him. He thought, as he often did these days, what a blessed man he was to have her love. "Good morning, love."

"Morning, Sherlock," she responded, lifting her face and angling it slightly to invite his kiss. Oh, that was dangerous territory. She didn't need to hop out of bed to leave for work today, they had no urgent time frame, and he could definitely see himself just staying in bed with her all day.

Forcing his thoughts away from that, he told her, "You had better put something on, love, or my hands are going to start wandering over that lovely skin of yours."

To her credit, she immediately reached and grabbed his discarded shirt from the night before, slipping it over her head. "Better?"

"Somewhat." He couldn't resist the temptation to say his next words though. "I really wish we could just elope to Gibraltar. A one day waiting period before getting married sounds very good right now, rather than four more weeks."

Molly grinned at him. "Yeah, I know. There is something about being away together on a trip that makes the thought of being with you that way even more inviting." She leaned over and kissed the tip of his nose. He was tempted to push her back on the bed and kiss her properly, but resisted. Not on the bed. Instead he sat up.

"Let's get dressed and have some of that complimentary breakfast. Then we can pack up and head north to the cemetery."

"Alright," Molly agreed. They dressed in silence, facing away from each other. It was rather funny how all of a sudden they felt a little awkward. Perhaps it was because they were away from home. Sherlock was very much aware of Molly, and those feelings that constantly simmered beneath the surface when she was near him. Filling their days with activity was a good thing.

"Ready?" he asked, and she nodded. They made their way to a room where the free breakfast was being served.

As they ate, they discussed their plans for the day.
"I thought we'd head out to the cemetery this morning," Sherlock said. "It's about a forty-five minute drive from here. From Mycroft's instructions, the cemetery is only a couple miles from the village that is closest to Musgrave Hall. We can stop in the village, have some lunch there, go to Musgrave, then head back to Shelby."

"Works for me," Molly said, with a smile at him. As they walked back to their room, she asked, "Do you kind of feel like we are on a honeymoon without the, you know, benefits?"

Sherlock chuckled. "You know what, I think that is why it feels a little awkward. Here we are, away from home, and we are behaving ourselves, when I'd really prefer to be misbehaving." He shot her a glance, and was satisfied to see her blush.

"We kiss more at home," she pointed out, as they entered the room.

"I want to kiss you, love, but I feel like it would be hard to stop, once I got started, being in this nice, private hotel room."

"A compromise then, can we kiss once we get back in the car?"

Sherlock grinned at her. "I think we can do that."

They re-packed the overnight case and checked out of the hotel, then went to the car.

As soon as the case was stowed in the boot, and the couple got into the car, Sherlock leaned in towards Molly, who did the same, and their lips met halfway. He stroked a hand lovingly across her cheek, enjoying the sweet embrace, despite the less than ideal conditions.

Molly made a sigh of pleasure as they kissed for a few minutes, until their position became too uncomfortable.

Even so, it was a decidedly more contented pair that made their way north.

Sherlock found he was quite enjoying driving again. Being in control of a vehicle himself was a lot of fun. How many years had it been, anyway?

The last time he had been behind the wheel of a car before yesterday was probably during the Baskerville case a few years earlier. That vehicle had been a little more comfortable to drive - more leg room, he recalled.

The country road was not busy, and he was able to rest a hand lightly on Molly's upturned hand as he drove, stroking her palm gently in the way she liked, except on the occasions where he had to shift gears.

As hey neared the village, Sherlock remembered that Mycroft said the cemetery was a couple miles beyond it, and to the left. They passed through the quiet village and Sherlock said, "Keep an eye out for the cemetery. It will be on your side."

It wasn't long before Molly, who had been peering carefully out the window, made a gesture with her head, "I think that's it."

Sherlock glanced to the left and saw what appeared to be a long driveway. He turned the car to the left and sure enough, there was a cemetery to the right, with a small area for parking. He parked and turned off the engine, then took a deep breath. All of a sudden he was nervous.

Not surprisingly, Molly noticed. "Are you okay, Sherlock?"
"Just a little nervous," he admitted. "Visiting cemeteries is not something I do on a regular basis."

She reached over and squeezed his hand. "You don't have to do this, you know."

He looked over at her. "I do have to. Victor died because he was my friend, and my sister was jealous of him."

They alighted from the car and walked through the gate of the cemetery. It was not large by any means. He suspected it was owned by the church in the village, the steeple of which he had noticed as they passed through it. The gravestones looked pretty old.

It wasn't hard to find the newly laid grave and the shiny new gravestone, even if he hadn't had instructions from Mycroft. Molly was holding his hand and they stood there, just looking at it for awhile.

"Do you want some time alone?" she asked quietly at last, and Sherlock nodded. He could feel a soft breeze wafting through the air, ruffling his hair as he continued to gaze at Victor's grave.

Molly walked away, ostensibly to look at the other gravestones in the little cemetery, and Sherlock cleared his throat before clasping his hands behind his back in his customary manner of thoughtfulness.

"Hey, Victor," he said. "I don't really know why I'm here. I guess I just needed to see for myself that you were finally given the resting place you deserved. I'm sorry. I'm sorry I forgot you." He felt his throat burning, and tears forming in his eyes, which he tried to blink away. "I'm sorry for what my sister did to you. You never even had a mum or a dad, while I took mine for granted. I wish...I wish you had been given the chance to grow up, to have a family of your own." He swiped at a tear that had forced its way down his cheek, then bent to slide his hand along the marble of the gravestone, gently tracing the letters that had been etched on it.

"My memories - they are still so fragmented from that time. I feel as if I should remember more about you. I know we liked to play pirates together, but I don't remember enough about what you were like. Did you come to our house for dinner? Did we ride bicycles together or do other things? I just can't remember. All I do know is that you were denied the chance to love and be loved, to have a career, to have a life of meaning. Why did my sister take it out on you when you were innocent?"

He knelt down and picked up some of the loose earth that covered the burial plot, running it through his fingers. "I'm sorry you were in that well for over thirty years. I...should have been able to figure out what happened, and I should not have forgotten you." Tears were trickling down his cheeks now and there was no point in wiping them away. "I failed you as a friend, Victor," he finished miserably.

He felt a soft arm laid over his shoulders, and heard the compassionate words of the woman he loved. "Sherlock, Victor would not have blamed you. I'm sure you made his life brighter because you were his friend. You can't hold yourself responsible for someone else's actions."

He turned to her and said sorrowfully, "But I can hold myself responsible for completely forgetting his existence."

"Sweetheart, you were, what - eight years old when that all happened?"

He nodded. "Something like that."

"Obviously the trauma created a defense mechanism for you, to help you cope," she said
practically, and he knew she was trying to reassure him.

Sherlock stood, wrapping his arms around Molly and resting his chin on top of her head. Her arms came around him as well, holding him tightly.

"What makes me so special, Molly? Why have I escaped death on so many occasions, yet Victor couldn't escape just once from its clutches?"

"Only God knows the answers, my love," she told him. "Just think of all the lives you have changed for the better, because you have survived. Think of the people you have saved. God had a reason, a purpose for you. He is not done with you yet. There are always going to be things we wonder about, that we won't know until we get to heaven."

She was right, he knew she was right, but oh, it was so hard to let it go, the guilt. "I didn't even realize until we got here how guilty I feel over this," he told Molly wretchedly. "How do I move past it?"

"You pray about it," she said simply. "Let God carry you for awhile. There's this really beautiful Christian story called "Footsteps." Would you like me to tell you about it?"

She had lifted her face up to his and was looking at him earnestly. "Tell me," he said softly.

"It's the story of a man who had a dream. He saw his life as it had unfolded in the way of scenes as he walked along a beach. For each scene he saw footprints in the sand, two sets - his and the Lord's. Then he noticed that at the lowest points of his life there was only one set of footprints.

This was pretty upsetting, so he turned to the Lord who was next to him and asked, 'Lord, I see you were walking with me throughout my life, but I noticed that at the lowest points of my life there was only one set of footprints. Why did you abandon me?'

And the Lord said to him, 'You are my child and I would never leave you. During these times, the lowest points in your life, those were the times I carried you.'"

Molly stopped speaking, and Sherlock understood what she was saying. "So, even in my darkest hours, when I thought I deserved to die, God was with me, carrying me through, right?"

"Right," Molly affirmed. "You have to realize you are still here for a purpose and that God has always been there with you, even when you didn't know it." She looked so beautiful, and so earnest, that he couldn't help himself.

He bent his head enough to close the distance between them, kissing her tenderly, showing his appreciation for her. Then he raised his head again and said, "Thank you, darling. I needed to hear that."

He looked back at the grave, and the slight shadow of guilt that he had been feeling faded away as he suddenly felt a peace settle over him.

He had closure and was ready to move forward. Sherlock took his fiancée's hand, thanking God silently for her always wise words and unfailing support, and together they walked back to the car.

Chapter End Notes
I felt it was important for Sherlock to confront those shadows of his past, those distant memories, and make peace with it. I imagine he would have felt an immense burden of guilt over it.

The Footsteps story is one of my favourites, and it's such a beautiful way of describing how God never leaves us. I felt this was an appropriate time for Molly to tell Sherlock about it.

Are you familiar with "Footsteps"?

Thanks to Sherlollylocked for mentioning that Sherlock drove in the Baskerville episode. That is my least favourite one because it has no Molly, so I have only watched it two or three times, as compared to dozens of watches of Sherlock/Molly scenes or other parts I reference. So I added the driving reflection as a nod to her sharp eyes ;)
Musgrave and Memories - Molly (Saturday)

Chapter Summary

Molly gets to see Sherlock's early childhood home. Later, a visit to the village brings an interesting revelation about what he was like as a young boy.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

As they returned to the car, Molly could see that Sherlock's whole demeanour had changed. When they had arrived at the cemetery, she had noticed the tension in him, and had given him some space to sort through his emotions in regard to his friend.

She only returned to him when she saw him kneel at the gravesite. She wanted Sherlock to know she was there for him, supporting him in whatever way he needed.

The "Footsteps" poem had unexpectedly come to her mind, and she had felt led to tell him about it. He had responded, and she knew he had finally understood he was not alone, had never been alone.

In the car, Molly dug through her handbag and found a sealed antiseptic wipe. "For you to clean your hands," she explained at his look of inquiry. He had been running the dirt through his fingers, after all.

Sherlock offered her a slight smile. "You really do keep everything but the kitchen sink in there, don't you?"

She grinned back. "I'm always prepared - antiseptic wipes, breath mints, sticking plasters, headache tablets - you name it, I have it."

He chuckled, used the wipe, then put the car into gear and they were off to his childhood home, another fifteen minutes away, very close to the moors.

Whatever Molly had been expecting, it was not this. Musgrave Hall looked abandoned, a burnt out shell of what had obviously been a mansion of sorts. The moors were visible in the distance as well as they got out of the car.

"Do I see horses over there?" Molly shielded her eyes and pointed to a spot in the distance.

"Probably," answered Sherlock, looking to where she was pointing. "They live on the moors, but I never saw one come close to the house - at least not that I can remember."

Molly looked around her with interest. "How big is this property?"

He shrugged. "I really don't know. A square mile, maybe two? I just know I used to like playing by the lake. I have vague recollections about playing pirates there with Victor." He gestured in the opposite direction of the moor, where she could see vegetation and a shimmer of water in the distance.

"And where...where was the well?" asked Molly hesitantly. She hoped she wasn't prying.
"It's on the other side of the lake, with dense underbrush surrounding it. I didn't even know it existed until..."

His voice trailed off and Molly finished for him. "Until Eurus told you where to find John."

Sherlock swallowed and nodded, and she knew he was recalling that terrible night once again. "Yes."

She took his hand. "I hope you realize it was God who gave you the words to say to your sister, that caused her to reveal John's location."

He looked at her in surprise. "I never thought about it before, but you are right. It was like I just knew the right thing to say."

Molly squeezed his hand gently. "With all that happened that night, God still worked it for good, in many ways."

He squeezed back and smiled at her. "I certainly know that, and realizing I was in love with you was the most important result - well, with rescuing John a close second," he added hastily, as if she might think less of him for not considering John's rescue the most important.

She giggled. "Let's just say the best emotional thing was your breakthrough, and John's rescue the most important physical thing to happen."

He nodded solemnly. "Do you want to take a look inside the house?"

Molly hesitated. "Is it safe?"

"Oh, yes. It's all burned out and anything that could fall in has already done so in the past thirty odd years. I'll show you where I found my sister."

They walked into the mansion and climbed stars that were dusty. Some of the dust was displaced, obviously from the night Sherlock had last been there.

He opened a door on the first floor and Molly could see a burned out mattress frame in a small room. Light filtered through a hole in the roof. It was rather surprising the room was not completely destroyed.

"Where did the fire start?" she asked curiously.

"I don't remember the specifics, it's still part of my blocked memories from that time. Mycroft said Eurus started fires in several of the rooms, including her own. Due to the house being so far from any fire station, by the time help arrived, it was too late. Apparently we were lucky to escape with our lives. It is still frustrating not remembering that at all."

"Perhaps that is a good thing," remarked Molly. "Not remembering, I mean. How would remembering that help you in any way? I wouldn't be surprised if Mycroft still has nightmares about it."

He nodded thoughtfully. "You could be right. Anyway, let me show you the rest of the place. I'll show you where Eurus had a big screen set up too. Her plan was incredibly elaborate."

"Do you think..." she paused, hating to even mention the name of her kidnapper, "...Moran was the one who set this up, in the absence of Moriarty?"
Sherlock, as if realizing why she had hesitated, put a comforting arm around her shoulders. "I'm sure of it. He seems to have been the one who planned everything after Moriarty's death."

Molly shuddered and put an arm about her fiancé's waist. "He was such an evil man, they both were. The world is well rid of both of them."

They picked their way around the burned wood and debris strewn floors, Sherlock pointing out this or that, then they returned outside, where he indicated the gravestones that made no sense, that weren't real anyway.

"Do you want to know something interesting?" Sherlock asked, as Molly peered at the funny gravestones.

She looked at him questioningly. "What, honey?"

"These gravestones - many have the name Holmes, but Musgrave was not a Holmes legacy. It was inherited by my mother. Her lineage traces back to King Henry the VIII, but she was the last in her family line. I believe my great-great grandfather was even an Earl, or some such nonsense."

Molly looked impressed. "I had no idea I'd be marrying into a royalty bloodline." Then she added with a grin, "But it does explain those aristocratic cheekbones of yours."

"Very distant royalty, sweetheart," he responded, obviously choosing to ignore her comment about his cheekbones.

"So, how did these gravestones with the name Holmes come to be here?"

"I must admit, I'm not exactly sure. I have a vague notion Mummy may have had them placed for my father's benefit. I think he has always felt a little like he was beneath her. The gravestones make it appear Musgrave Hall comes from the Holmes line, rather than my mother's."

"Well, I think that is a perfectly lovely thing to do," declared Molly. "Thank you for the tour and talk. It has been fascinating. It seems such a shame that the house lies empty though, now."

"Unfortunately, it wasn't worth the expense to rebuild, so my parents moved to Sussex. I'm sure they will want to have us over this Christmas, so you'll get to see where I spent my teenage years." He smiled at her, and she thought how wonderful it would be to celebrate the holiday with him, and to see the home he did remember.

"Oh, I can't wait to see the house where you spent the rest of your childhood!" exclaimed Molly. "I'm sorry that you don't really have memories from here, and the few you do, are not good ones."

"Maybe you can give me one good memory from here," he murmured, putting his arms around her and giving her a long, lingering kiss that was very satisfying for both of them. There they stood, only a few feet from the house that had been the site of such trauma, and Molly put her arms around Sherlock's neck, threading her fingers through his dark curls, kissing him until they both forgot where they were for several minutes.

Finally, their lips parted and they smiled at one another. "Thank you, Molly. I really like that new memory."

"Glad to oblige," she responded a little breathlessly.

He took her hand and they returned to the car to head back the little village and have lunch.
*The Dog and Duck Inn* was a quaint little pub and the food, though simple country fare, was quite delicious. The owner of the pub, an elderly man, came up to their table to talk to them.

"Aren't you Sherlock Holmes, the famous London detective?"

Sherlock smiled at the man. "One and the same." He indicated Molly. "And this is my fiancée, Doctor Molly Hooper."

"Pleased to meet you both. It's an honour to have you in my humble establishment. What brings you to these parts? Did you come to see the old place, Musgrave Hall?"

Sherlock looked at the man in surprise. "Well, yes, as a matter of fact I wanted to show my fiancée my childhood home."

"I remember you when you were a young lad. Such a sweet boy you were, not that I saw you much. Your family mostly kept to themselves. But I saw you at church a couple times, and you were so polite. I still remember you coming to a Good Friday service one year - you must have been around six years old, and you were so upset about Jesus dying on the cross. I've never seen a little boy so heartbroken. I still remember thinking if you had a faith like that at such a young age, you'd be unstoppable later."

Molly looked over at Sherlock, whose mouth was hanging open in utter astonishment. At last he spoke. "Unfortunately I have few memories from my childhood. I don't remember that at all."

Molly spoke to the elderly man. "Well, Sherlock may have had some ups and downs throughout his life, but he has recently committed his life to the Lord."

The old man nodded sagely. "God's hand was obviously upon you, young man. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, after all. He will leave the safe 99 sheep to seek out the one lost sheep to return it to the fold."

"I am discovering that more each day," agreed Sherlock. There was a note of awe in his voice as he said the words.

"Well, God bless you and your fiancée. When are you getting married?" asked the proprietor.

Sherlock still seemed rather bemused, so Molly spoke up. "In four weeks, actually. Thank you so much for sharing your story about Sherlock. It's lovely to hear something about his childhood."

"You're most welcome. My best wishes for your happy day." The elderly man smiled and left them.

When he had gone, Sherlock said slowly, "I was not expecting this short trip to bring me so many revelations, and validation for my faith as well."

"It really is remarkable to see God at work in such a profound manner," agreed Molly. "Seeing as we are here and we have time, do you want to explore the village, maybe see the church that the owner of this pub was talking about? I assume there's only one church in a place this small."

"That sounds good. I think I know where to find it. I saw the steeple from a distance when we passed the village earlier," Sherlock responded.

After leaving the inn, the couple walked along the Main Street towards the church, the steeple of which had also been visible from the pub..
It was a quaint white church, with impressive stained glass windows.

"Does it look familiar at all?" asked Molly, glancing at Sherlock, whose brow was furrowed in concentration.

"I'm not sure." He shut his eyes for a few moments, as if to search his mind palace for memories from his distant past. When he opened them, he said slowly, "This church does seem familiar somehow. I think there may be a stained glass window with an angel on it?" He sounded uncertain.

Molly tugged on his hand, "Well, let's look at the windows on the other side."

They walked together around the other side of the church. Molly was excited to see there was a window with an angel depicted on it. "You were right, honey - look!"

A smile spread over Sherlock's face. "I wonder if this is the church I was baptized in?"

"We'll have to ask your parents, but I'd say it's a pretty strong possibility, if this was where you spent your early childhood. Why have you not visited before now?"

"Mycroft advised against it. He told me the house was a burned out shell and dangerous. Of course that was quite a few years ago, and I just never bothered to visit it afterwards, there was no point. When Eurus had John and me sent to Musgrave, I remembered it, just barely. I'm glad I'm here now - with you."

Molly reached up and kissed his cheek. "Me too. Shall we walk for a bit before we head back to Selby?"

Sherlock didn't answer, just took her hand, and they walked along the street, noting the small general store, a cozy looking restaurant, probably the only one in town, and several scattered houses, as well as a petrol station with two pumps.

"I love the countryside," commented Molly, as they reached the end of the main street. Shortly past the dead end was a pasture. "Oh, look! There are some cows. They have such lovely big eyes and long eyelashes. I remember a school excursion growing up when we went to a dairy farm and watched cows being milked. They were so docile."

"Cows are not my idea of docile. I prefer domesticated animals like dogs. Even your former cat would be preferable to those huge beasts."

"Those huge beasts provide you with the milk you put in your tea, Sherlock," Molly informed him with a laugh.

"Not my coffee though, I drink that black," he replied solemnly, and Molly laughed again.

"I guess we will not be visiting a farm anytime soon then," she teased.

"Definitely not," he assured her quite seriously. "I guess we should head back to the car now. Do you want to drive back to Selby?"

Molly was surprised that he had offered. "No, that's okay. I like watching you drive. Besides, I prefer to keep both hands on the wheel, and I like the way you hold my hand when you drive."

"I think I'm in the mood for more than hand-holding. How about a kiss so I have another nice memory from this village?"
Molly giggled and lifted her face to his, receiving a most welcome, tender kiss from the man she loved.

Then they turned around and headed back to the car.

Chapter End Notes

So here we got to see some background for Sherlock. The royal lineage I added, because BC is related to Henry the VIII on his dad's side. My head canon says Sherlock's mum was moneyed, though. What do you think?

Here we see more validation for Sherlock's faith as well. Can you imagine finding out something like that? Childlike faith is amazing!

Oh, and if you got a kick out of the cow conversation, I recommend a one-shot by Ashblood, where she describes Sherlock and Molly taking a walk and running into a herd of cows. It's really cute!
Sherlock and Molly return to London after their revelation-filled overnight trip. As Sherlock put on his sunglasses and drove back towards Selby, keeping Molly's hand in his as much as possible, he thought about what had happened that day.

Molly seemed content to just look out the window at the countryside rather than talk, so he was able to reflect on how he had felt seeing his childhood home for the first time since Sherrinford. Surprisingly, he had not felt distressed, instead pointing out what he remembered about the property. Musgrave Hall was still owned by the family, but he wondered if maybe it should be sold. He had no desire to restore it and live there again, his parents were content in Sussex, and Mycroft would never want to leave London. It was a relief there was no longer any mystery surrounding the place.

Their experience in the local village though, that had been quite eye-opening. It had been fascinating to hear about himself as a boy, of the faith he had had which he no longer remembered having. Sherlock felt as if God had just been biding His time, waiting for Sherlock to come back to the fold, but eventually going out actively to look for him, when he took too long.

Remembering the stained glass window had been rather exciting, and he was very curious now to see if he had been baptized there as an infant. It seemed very likely. He resolved to call his parents soon and ask.

Molly had the window down on her side of the car, and Sherlock could see out of the corner of his eye the way the breeze captured her hair and made tendrils fly in her face. She was smiling. The fragrance of the countryside wafted in as well, the smell of hay and green pastures. All too soon, the Couple arrived back at Selby and the car rental place.

Sherlock returned the car and they walked to a small café that was on the way to the train station. They ordered and sat at an outside table, and Sherlock took off his sunglasses as he thought again how beautiful Molly looked, with her hair a bit untidy from the breeze. That wind-blown look suited her, he thought, smiling.

"What are you smiling at?" Molly inquired, smiling back at him as she sipped her tea.

"How beautiful you look," he responded honestly. "I love that your hair is a bit messy from the wind, and that it is hanging loose today. You look happy too."

"I am," she responded, as her lips curved upwards once again. "Amazing how rejuvenating an overnight trip can be."

"Just think how much more fun it will be when we have a whole week of it on our honeymoon," he said, stroking her hand where it rested on the table.
"I don't think we will be seeing much outside our room for the first day at least," she told him, with what he thought was an adorably shy smile. It was amazing how she had so many facial expressions that he loved.

"Definitely not," he agreed, bending forward to kiss her hand. That prompted another of her lovely smiles that made his heart turn over. He would never be able to express enough how much he loved her.

"My sweet Molly, I am so utterly in love with you," he told her, unable to prevent himself from uttering the romantic words.

She stood then and he did too, it was time for them to head to the train station. Before he could move further though, Molly stepped close to him, stood on tiptoe and pressed her lips against his briefly. "I'm just as in love with you, Sherlock Holmes."

Sherlock picked up the overnight case from the ground near the table where he had put it as they ate, and they walked to the train station.

This time the first class carriage was almost full, so there was no opportunity for Sherlock and Molly to have any privacy. Unlike the Dartmoor journey though, Sherlock wasn't bored, because he was with the woman he loved.

"You know, I don't even know why I brought my laptop on this trip," he remarked.

"I don't know either, force of habit, maybe? Perhaps you thought you'd get bored just being with me?" Molly grinned at him, and Sherlock knew she wasn't serious.

"You know I could never get bored with you," he said in a low voice. "I'm not looking forward to you being on nightshift again this coming week."

"Maybe you can start reading that *Mere Christianity* book?" she suggested. "C. S. Lewis was an atheist who came to faith. I'm told he has some great things to say about Christianity in general."

"I think I will wait to read that until we can do it together. I liked that other book, the one with the lion," remarked Sherlock.

"I love that one too, but it's fiction - *Mere Christianity* is not. But that is fine, we can definitely wait to read it together. We can do some more Bible reading tonight when we get home too, if you like. The days seem to get away from us."

Sherlock nodded. "Your turn to read a chapter."

"I'd much rather hear you read, please?" Molly batted her eyelashes at him.

"Fine," he huffed, "but only if we take showers first and get comfy in dressing gowns on the sofa."

Molly leaned her head against his shoulder. "Works for me." She yawned, then said, "I'm so glad we made this trip. It helps me to understand a bit more about what life must have been like for you as a child. I still find it remarkable you ended up there that night, and that you were able to find out John's location. God is good." She yawned again.

Sherlock looked at her in amusement. Apparently the day had taken its toll on her as well.

"Sherlock, do you mind if I listen to some music with my earbuds, while I lean against your shoulder? I'm a bit sleepy for some reason."
"Of course," he said agreeably. "Are you going to listen to some Paramore?"

"Actually, I'm going to listen to the soundtrack of a musical Kaitlyn told me about, that I bought yesterday. It has some pretty cool songs."

"What musical would that be?" he asked curiously.

"It's called "Dear Evan Hansen," and it is a pretty recent show."

'Oh." He watched indulgently as Molly lifted her head from his shoulder, set the earbuds into her ears and began to listen to her music, leaning against him once more. He was quite content, with his arm around her, thinking about life in general and how blessed he was.

Within ten minutes, Sherlock noticed she was asleep, and she spent most of the journey leaning against his shoulder. She made a little sigh at one point and he wondered if she was dreaming about something.

Shortly before they were due to arrive at the train station, Sherlock gently stroked Molly's cheek to awaken her. As he did so, he noticed the slight smile on her face and wondered what it meant. "We're almost home, love," he said softly, looking lovingly into the face of the woman who held his heart in her keeping.

She blinked and seemed disoriented for a moment. "Where-"

Then her face cleared. "Oh my goodness, I was dreaming."

"What about?"

"It was funny. There's this one song from that soundtrack that I think has rather interesting lyrics, ones that quite fit the way you were with me when you came to see me after Sherrinford. I just had a dream that you came to see me, and I was using a lot of those lyrics while talking to you."

Sherlock chuckled. "That is indeed strange. I must hear this song of yours - may I listen to it?"

"Sure, you can have an earbud, and so can I."

They leaned in close, sharing the earbuds. Well, this is something new, Sherlock mused to himself. After listening to the song, he conceded, "Yes, that song certainly does express the way I felt. So, what was this dream version of me like?"

"Well, you didn't wait three days to come and see me." Then she added, "Then again, you also didn't propose, although you pretty much intimated it would happen at some point. The cute part was when you kissed me and told me how you learned your technique so well."

He quirked an eyebrow and listened as Molly related the rest of the tale.

[To see what happened in the dream, I refer you to my new one-shot "Only Us". Love to get your feedback on that, it is my first song-inspired one-shot, and I recommend you listen to the actual song on YouTube.]

Shortly after her explanation, the train pulled into Kings Cross Station on time at around quarter past nine. They were about to exit the lobby when Sherlock noticed something he hadn't seen the previous day. How had he missed that?

"Molly, look." He pointed at a shop.
Molly gasped. "Platform 9 3/4," she read, then tugged at his hand excitedly. "Can we go in and take a look? It says it is open until ten."

Sherlock chuckled. "I would not have pointed it out if I did not think you would wish to explore it."

He followed Molly into the shop and had to smile at her enthusiasm over all the trinkets that were available. She exclaimed over a plush Dobby toy, wands of various shapes and sizes, mugs and a plethora of other Harry Potter merchandise. He even spotted a chess set that he thought would be nice to own. Does Molly even play? he wondered.

In the end, Molly decided to purchase just a souvenir pen, because she had spent so much time browsing that the shop was getting ready to close. When he looked at her inquiringly, she explained, "There are just too many things to choose from. Maybe we can come back some day when we have more time?"

Sherlock smiled at her. "Of course, love." He would have gladly paid for the little trinket, but Molly was too fast for him. No matter, he thought. At some point I will ask Molly if she plays chess, and if so, I will come back here and buy that chess set as a surprise for her. At £60, it was a bit pricey, but that wouldn't matter, if she liked the strategy game. He made a mental note of it and filed it away in his mind palace.

Due to their little detour in the Harry Potter shop, by the time the couple arrived home it was almost ten-thirty.

Molly headed straight for the shower while Sherlock unpacked the suitcase. He had his shower immediately after Molly left the bathroom.

They settled comfortably on the sofa in dressing gowns. Sherlock noted that Molly really seemed to have a thing for his blue one, to the point where she rarely wore her own, but he did not bother to comment. Instead he put on his reading glasses, which he had found after five minutes of searching, in between the sofa cushions.

Then he read aloud Galatians 6. After he finished, Sherlock commented, "There's yet another one of those sayings we take for granted - "You reap what you sow". he glanced back at the text and said, "Verse 10 really speaks to me - 'Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers'."

"You've been doing good for people already for years, so it's not such a stretch," Molly pointed out from her relaxed position, curled beside him.

"Maybe so, but I wasn't doing it with the right motivation before. It was to please myself, to make myself feel good, rather than to please God," he said seriously.

"The foundation was there though, sweetheart," Molly told him. "And in the future you will be solving cases for God's glory. You know, the best witness you could give is to acknowledge God when you do it. As a person who is well known, you have the capacity to spread the message to a large audience, if and when you choose to do so."

I'm not saying I don't want to do that, but I feel too new in my faith, too unschooled to talk about it until I have studied the Bible further and can speak with confidence."

"And that's perfectly fine," she said, taking the Bible and putting it on the coffee table. Then she gently removed his reading glasses and set them also neatly on the coffee table. "Actions speak louder than words anyway, you can live your faith by the way you act. You're doing it already."
she wrapped her arms about his waist.

"Is that a Biblical saying as well?"

"Actions speak louder than words? I don't think so, but I am ready to enjoy at least a little action before bed. It has been a long day."

"That it has," he agreed, placing his hands on either side of her face and kissing her reverently, moving his lips over hers, savouring their sweetness as he thanked God over and over for his wise little pathologist. He really enjoyed their sweet kisses, when their passion was not raging like an out-of-control fire, but instead glowing with the light of their love. Focussing on spiritual matters before kissing his fiancée was an effective way of keeping their ardour under control, he reflected.

When they drew apart, Molly tucked her head under his chin, so she could feel his heartbeat. It wasn't beating erratically, the way it so often did, it was strong and steady. He was feeling very content.

He could smell her shampoo and the jasmine vanilla on her skin as he held her close, just luxuriating in their embrace, not wanting to let her go.

Eventually though, they separated. They had a church service to attend in the morning. Molly would be needing a rest in the afternoon, before she started nightshift.

Sherlock remembered her fall from weeks earlier, and the days that followed in Dartmoor without her. He was so glad they would not be separated again that way before the wedding. Only four weeks now.

Together the couple made their way to the bedroom and Sherlock put away the dressing gowns in the wardrobe.

This time, when they got into bed, Molly kept her chemise on, but she lay against him with her head on his shoulder, and her hand was upon his chest as he lay on his back.

With his right arm, Sherlock held her close, with his left, he linked their fingers and they slept peacefully, after one final kiss good night and sweet words of "I love you."

Chapter End Notes

Safely back home again, virtue intact, are you proud of them for behaving?

I encourage you to read my new one-shot mentioned in this chapter and let me know what you think of it. After I heard that song, I felt it was such an appropriate one for Sherlock and Molly, I just had to use it in a story - now, if only someone would do a Sherlolly YouTube video using it - any takers?

The Harry Potter scene towards the end was inspired by reader simwhitbourn who pointed out there is a shop in King's Cross Station. I couldn't let the opportunity pass me by, so I added the visit to the shop - thanks Sim!

Don't you find it amazing how so many of our sayings are direct quotes from the
Bible?
Responding to God's Call - Molly (Sunday)

Chapter Summary

Sherlock and Molly attend a most illuminating church service.

Chapter Notes

Please read the author's notes at the end.

When the alarm went off, Molly yawned and stretched. Her body had shifted overnight but she could still feel Sherlock's warmth. She nudged him. "Time to get up, honey."

He blinked his eyes open and pulled her against him for their usual good morning kiss.

After getting dressed and eating breakfast, they headed to church.

As soon as they arrived, Molly saw that Kayla was there holding Rosie on her hip, as John stood there also, looking a little lost. Molly immediately walked over to Kayla while Sherlock engaged John in conversation with a joking, "Fancy seeing you here, John."

"Oh good," responded his friend, "I was waiting for you. Can I have a private word?"

The men moved a short distance away and Molly commented to Kayla, "I wonder what that's about?"

"I don't know," responded Kayla. "He picked me up for church this morning and was saying he hoped the two of you would be at church, because he wanted to talk to Sherlock - very mysterious."

"Interesting," mused Molly, before giving her goddaughter a kiss on the cheek. "So, how are things going between you two?"

"Really well," replied Kayla, smiling. "We are spending time together. I've been getting to know Rosie a little more too. We are just taking it very slowly. I don't want things to move too fast and have him get scared off again, and I think he realizes we need to learn to be friends first. He really is a fascinating man."

"He is a good man too. He really helped Sherlock in the early days. He was his friend when nobody else would put up with him. Well, except for me of course. John holds a special place in both of our hearts."

Kayla smiled warmly. "John has told me a few of the things he and Sherlock have done together over the years. He also told me about what happened at Sherrinford, what he had to deal with as well as Sherlock. I mean - what he was asked to do to the governor and stuff, and then later about being in that well. He went through hell."
"You know," said Molly thoughtfully, "Sherlock told me everything that happened, but I never really thought so much about how difficult it was for John too, and Mycroft for that matter."

"From what John tells me, your future brother-in-law is quite the honourable man. He was willing to make himself out to be a self-serving jerk so he would be sacrificed."

Molly suddenly realized she had never talked to Mycroft about that. She resolved to thank him the next time she saw him. She felt ashamed that her sole focus had been on Sherlock, to the exclusion of understanding what his brother and best friend had been through. "My gosh, Kayla, I am such an idiot. How could I have completely ignored what John and Mycroft went through?"

Kayla patted her arm reassuringly, as Rosie looked from one woman to another, seemingly fascinated by their conversation. "I'm sure they don't think badly of you. In fact, John speaks very highly of you and what he's noticed especially since you and Sherlock got engaged. You've had an awful lot on your plate with all the wedding arrangements."

"Even so, I definitely need to tell John how much I appreciate him and how thankful I am for his friendship with both Sherlock and myself."

The men returned at that moment, having finished their private conversation.

Impulsively, Molly gave John a big hug. "Thank you."

The doctor looked confused. "For what?"

"I am so sorry I didn't tell you this before, but I should have been more sympathetic to all you went through at Sherrinford with Sherlock. I've just spent so much time thinking of Sherlock and what he went through that I completely disregarded the pain and suffering you and Mycroft also endured. I most humbly apologize."

"That's fine, Molly," John assured her. "You weren't to blame for what happened."

"But I should have been sympathetic to what you went through. I feel just terrible. It has been over six weeks. So let me say now I'm sorry and also, thank you for being with Sherlock, for helping him get through it, in fact, for everything you've done over the years."

"I think you did more for him than I did," noted John.

Sherlock stepped into the conversation then. "You both have done so much for me. I could not imagine my life without either of you."

"We should probably head inside," suggested Kayla. "Church is about to start."

Molly suddenly noticed that they were the last people still outside. "Oh, you're right!. Want to sit together?"

"Absolutely," replied her friend as they headed inside.

Instead of going to her usual pew, Molly followed Kayla and John to where Kayla always sat. They were seated just before the service began.

When the worship songs began, the first was You are My Shepherd. It had a lovely chorus which started with -

You are my Shepherd in the wilderness.
Whom shall I fear?

You are the God who goes before me,

My Rock and my Shield.

Molly and Sherlock exchanged glances. The fact that they had been talking with that man the previous day who had mentioned that Jesus was the Good Shepherd was very interesting.

When Pastor Briggs began reading the scripture, Sherlock squeezed Molly's hand and then continued to hold it. It was the parable of the lost sheep.

"Our first reading today is Luke 15:3-7," he said.

"(3) Then Jesus told them this parable: (4) 'Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? (5) And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders (6) and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, "Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep." (7) I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."


"(11) 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (12) The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. (13) The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

(14) 'I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— (15) just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. (16) I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. (17) The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. (18) No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

The pastor concluded with, "This is the Word of the Lord."

"Thanks be to God," responded the congregation, even Sherlock, who had attended enough services to remember that as well, but not John, of course.

Then he began his sermon. "If you were a shepherd in the field, watching over 100 sheep, and you saw that one had gone missing, how many of you would leave the 99 to go and find the 1?"

A chorus of murmurs in the negative came from the congregation, and Pastor Briggs nodded. "Of course you wouldn't. You'd take the loss. Why risk the 99 in order to find one runaway sheep that has misbehaved? On the other hand, if you had 100 children and 1 of them wandered off, would you search for the missing child?"

This time a chorus of affirmatives came from the congregation and vigorous nods of the head. Molly nodded too. The idea of not looking for your child was ridiculous.

"I can see you are all in agreement," said the pastor. "So if we replace sheep with children, doesn't it make more sense to you?" More murmurs of assent.
"Aren't you glad that our Lord loves every one of us enough to keep looking for us? We are all lost sheep, or have been. None of us can say we have always been righteous and done what the Lord commands. Jesus wants each of us to repent, to turn to him. He will call you unceasingly. Some will choose to ignore him, but if your heart is open, you will answer that call and be saved. When Jesus died on the cross, it was to save us all, not just some of us. He does not want anyone to die in their sin. Yes, people's hearts are hard, and only God knows the heart. But the Holy Spirit can work on hearts to soften them."

"That was me," murmured Sherlock in Molly's ear and she smiled at him. He was living proof of someone who had been lost for many years who had recently been found.

Then the pastor went on to talk about the second passage. He talked about the individual verses and how Jesus was the shepherd who laid his life down for his sheep, his children. The pastor continued to explain that Jesus was talking about laying down his life voluntarily, and then being resurrected. It was a powerful message and Molly was amazed at how fitting the sermon was, even more-so after the conversation of the previous day.

It was a communion service again. John of course did not take communion, but held Rosie quietly on his lap. He seemed interested in what was going on, which was a good sign. Molly knew that it would be a mistake to push him into anything he was not ready for. The Lord would have to work on his heart too if he were to come to faith and a proper understanding of Jesus. As a Catholic, he at least understood some of the tenets of faith.

After the service, everyone went outside into a lovely summer's morning. Molly spotted some friends, an older, middle-aged couple named George and Roxanne. She tugged on Sherlock's hand to introduce him to them. They were also coming to the wedding, and Molly wanted to make sure Sherlock knew who they were before the wedding day.

"Hey George, Roxanne, I wanted to formally introduce you to my fiancé, Sherlock."

George clasped Sherlock's hand warmly. "It's a pleasure to meet you. My wife and I have been fans of your work for some years now. How delightful it is to know you will be marrying such a wonderful woman as Molly."

"Yes, we are looking forward to the wedding," said his wife.

"Roxanne used to work at a hospital herself, in the pathology lab," remarked Molly to Sherlock.

"Ah, very nice," he said with a smile.

"Oh, and that book I just bought for you, *Mere Christianity* was recommended by George."

"It's a wonderful book. There is a lot of stuff in there that will help your faith walk," said the bearded man.

"I'm sure it will," agreed Molly. Then she spied another couple she wanted to introduce to Sherlock. "Excuse us," she told George and took her fiancé's hand again, directing him to a blonde woman who was standing with a tall, dark-haired man with a touch of silver in his hair.

"Sheila!" Molly exclaimed. "I am so sorry we haven't had a chance to talk in weeks. I wanted to formally introduce you to my fiancé, Sherlock."

The older woman extended her hand. "It is very nice to meet you. Like most people, I'm a fan of your work over the years. God has moved you in mighty ways. That Silver Blaze case recently was amazing too. May I introduce you both to my friend, Jake?"
Sherlock shook hands with the other man, who murmured, "Nice to meet you."

Molly was pleased to see her friend looking happy. Sheila had suffered following a rather acrimonious divorce after many years, from a man who had betrayed her. It was nice to see her with someone new. She was glad she had added a "plus guest" to the woman's invitation, and the response for two acceptances had come in the previous week. This presumably was her new man, and Molly sincerely hoped Sheila would fare better this time around. Jake looked to be Sherlock's height and he had a deep voice that sounded cultured and as rich as the detective's own voice.

"It's nice to meet you too, Jake," she said to the man. "I'm guessing you are the guest who will be coming to the wedding with Sheila?"

"That would be me," smiled the man. "I'm rather honoured that she would have asked me to come with her when we have been seeing each other for such a short time." Then he glanced at the older woman and winked. "It gives me hope for a future with her."

Sheila coloured slightly and said coyly, "We'll see."

"I'm so glad I got the chance to introduce you to Sherlock today." Molly hugged her friend.

They said their goodbyes and returned to John and Kayla, who was once again holding Rosie. The infant had slept through the service, but was now quite awake and starting to fuss. "Kayla, do you want to come back to my place for awhile? I have a feeling if I drop you home first, Rosie is going to fuss," John asked her.

Kayla hesitated. "I can take a taxi home..."

"Let me rephrase that. I'd like you to come for a visit. I'll even let you feed Rosie." The doctor grinned hopefully.

"Well, okay. I do love spending time with Rosie," teased Kayla, as John gave another smile, of relief this time.

"Well, we'd best be off," remarked Sherlock. "Molly starts nightshift tonight, so she is going to need a rest this afternoon."

"Oh, that's right, you told me that earlier," said John, and Molly wondered why they had been talking about her schedule. Curious.

When the pair arrived home, Sherlock had no sooner closed the door when he said in a voice of wonder, "How about that sermon, Molly?" It's unbelievable that the old man yesterday was talking about the lost sheep and then today the pastor was doing the same. You have even talked to me about Amazing Grace, and being lost, then found. I have so much to be thankful for."

The grin on Sherlock's face was infectious, and Molly grinned as well.

"It really is eye-opening when you see so much evidence to confirm your faith." She kissed his cheek.

"If it weren't for you, my love, I would not be here now, knowing all this in my heart, believing it," he responded earnestly.

Molly shook her head. "I believe you would have come to faith, one way or another, Sherlock."

"No," he said stubbornly. "It was your influence, and I thank God for that, and you." Without
further ado, he slid his arms around her waist and kissed her, gently at first, but deepening it at her response. Her arms crept about his neck and she drifted her fingers through the curls at the nape of his neck. She could have kept kissing him all day, but Sherlock eventually pulled back reluctantly, then traced her lips with his finger, which made them tingle.

She looked into his beautiful eyes. *He is such a beautiful man,* she thought, as she had often done. Perhaps he didn't like the idea of being thought beautiful, but it was true. Just the curve of his lips as he smiled at her made her melt.

"I suppose we should have some lunch, and then I had best try and get some sleep before my shift tonight," she told him.

"Are we going to ride the coffin lift tonight?" he asked hopefully.

Molly had the idea her fiancé was not going to let the matter rest, so they might as well get it over and done with tonight. "Fine. But only if we are there half an hour before my shift. I do not want to take any chances about it going haywire and not letting us out." She shuddered at the thought. She really did not care for confined spaces.

"That's fine. Oh, we should probably decide on a time to go out for dinner with Mike and his wife so I can book a table at Angelo's."

"Let's do Friday night. I'll take a nap after my shift in the morning so evening should be fine. You should have shares in Angelo's by how often we go there."

"When Kaitlyn books the function room for your hen night, I'm sure you'll get a discount. I'll put a word in his ear about it if we see him on Friday," Sherlock responded with a grin.

Molly sent off a text to Mike asking if six o'clock on Friday night at Angelo's would suit. As she waited for a response, she and Sherlock ate lunch, some Cornish pasties Molly popped into the oven.

When Mike's text response came back, it was in the affirmative, so Sherlock called the restaurant and booked a table.

"Well, I guess I'll try and have a nap now," said Molly.

"Alright," her fiancé said agreeably. "I have a few things to take care of. Do you want me to wake you at eight?"

"That sounds good." She headed to the bedroom. She wasn't really tired, but knew she needed to get some sleep in or she'd be no use at work later. Stripping down to bra and knickers, she got into the bed and took out her diary to make her latest entry to Sherlock. This seemed to be a weekly thing. She hoped he wouldn't mind her reflecting on the events of each week that brought them closer to their wedding. After returning the diary to its place in the drawer, Molly took out her devotional to catch up on her reading which once again was several days behind.

Sherlock poked his head in while she was still reading. "Can't sleep yet?"

"Just catching up on my reading, I'll get there."

"Do you want me to hold you until you fall asleep?"

Molly smiled. "I'd really love that, if you don't mind."
"Why would I mind holding you? I'll take any excuse for it. Besides, I don't need to leave the flat, and I have to take a shower later anyway, so I can just stay in my dressing gown once I get up." So saying, he stripped down to his boxers and slid into bed.

Molly put down her devotional, She was almost caught up. Sherlock held out his arms to her and she snuggled into his embrace. His warmth and steady breathing soon soothed her and she slept.

Chapter End Notes

Yet again, we see more validation for Sherlock in his turn to faith.

What do you think about the parable of the lost sheep? Are you familiar with the song you are My Shepherd?

Are you intrigued to find out what John was talking to Sherlock about?

seeking a response because your opinion matters.

A voice crying in the wilderness...that is how I feel at the moment.

Today my heart is burdened with self-doubt. I am contemplating my future on this site. When I begin posting this story, I was excited to bring something new to the fandom. I did not expect to be writing a novel. I fear that the length of this has put some people off, and I apologize for that.

I do not know how many readers of this story are crossing over to read any of my other stories, and I am considering finishing this one and then discontinuing posting here.

I feel I am not able to compete favourably for readership here where there are several authors who have large and vocal followings, and other authors who are more concerned with their E-rated stories. Sadly, those stories also seem to get a lot of enthusiastic feedback.

I find myself excited about posting certain chapters, then disappointed when I find little or no reader response. So I question whether my original idea of being an encouragement is even being successful. My issues with tendonitis do not make it easy either.

So my question is - do you wish to continue the Journey past the story? I am not certain if people will wish to read about the wedding night and beyond as the content will be M-rated (still a conservative M, but well, for obvious reasons, I feel it necessary to change the rating for that.)

Do you follow my work beyond this story? The dream realizations of love, or the song inspired one? I can't tell, because people just are not leaving any feedback from which I can determine WHO is reading them. These are the ones I am especially considering
not posting here. Some of these upcoming stories have Christian value undertones as well.

Your responses (or lack thereof) will help me decide my future here.

Either way, please rest assured, I will continue posting this to its conclusion, which is the end of the wedding reception. Several small time skips are coming soon to speed the story along.

Final note: The longest Harry Potter book (The Order of the Phoenix) is approximately 200,000 words. By its conclusion, my story will likely double that. I had no clue I could write so much!

Thanks for reading to the end if my monologue.
As Sherlock lay in bed with his fiancée, waiting for her to fall asleep, his mind drifted to the conversation he had had with John earlier that day at church.

**Earlier**

As soon as they were out of earshot of their women, John said, "Sherlock, I was wondering if you'd like to go in with me on something special for the girls."

Sherlock raised an eyebrow, "What do you mean?"

"I wanted to do something nice for Kayla, but not make it just about us. We are taking things slowly."

"Go on," said Sherlock, intrigued.

"Well, in one of our conversations, Kayla mentioned she has never been on the Eye, and I said I had not been on it either."

"Nor have I."

"Well, I was wondering - there's a special package you can buy to reserve one of the capsules. It's a few hundred pounds though. You can have over 20 people if you want, but a minimum of three. I was wondering if you'd be interested in splitting the cost?"

"Hmmm," said Sherlock thoughtfully. "I think that would be a nice, romantic gesture. Maybe too romantic?"

John laughed. "For the new Sherlock? Hardly. Don't forget, you proposed to a woman you had never even gone out with."

Sherlock huffed. "That may be true, but we had been friends for years - and I did kiss her first, before I proposed." He grinned. "In any case, when I was questioning if it was too romantic a gesture, I wasn't referring to myself." He glanced towards Kayla, who was engaged in conversation with Molly, then returned his gaze to John, raising an eyebrow.
John flushed. "I'm not planning on snogging her, if that's what you're thinking."

"Well, I admire your restraint, because if I am to be a part of this, I have every intention of kissing Molly. It will be part of the whole experience."

John chuckled. "Good for you, mate. I'll make sure to allow you plenty of privacy. Those capsules are pretty big."

Sherlock nodded solemnly. "That sounds good. How would you feel about potentially splitting the cost three ways?"

"I'm open to it - what did you have in mind?"

"Well, Lestrade has a new girlfriend, Lori. I could see if he wants to do this too."

"Oh really? Well, sure, that would be fine with me. Next question - when can we do it?"

Sherlock thought a moment. "Molly is on nightshift this week, and she works this coming weekend. She'll be off the following Monday and Tuesday though."

"How about next week Monday then? The website says the latest time you can book is six o'clock. The rotation takes a half hour."

"So we book for six o'clock and then go to dinner?"

John looked at Sherlock a bit dubiously. "Are you sure you are up to conversation with five other people at once, Sherlock?"

Sherlock shrugged. "Molly and I have already done the double date thing with both you and with Lestrade, so making it a party of six should be okay - well, I hope so."

"Well, if you're sure. Why don't you contact Lestrade and let me know once you have found out if next Monday works for him?"

Sherlock nodded. "I'll do that this afternoon while Molly is having a nap before work."

"Okay," John agreed.

The men had then returned to their ladies.

Now

Sherlock could hear by Molly's breathing that she was asleep. He gently disengaged himself from her embrace and got dressed.

After he left the bedroom he went into the sitting room, put on his reading glasses and sent off a text to Lestrade with his idea. Then he sat patiently in his chair, steepling his fingers and waited.

It wasn't long before his text alert sounded with Greg's response.

*Oh, Lori has been talking about wanting to go on the Eye. Let me see if she is free next Monday, and I'll text you back once I know.*

*You know where to find me,* Sherlock texted back, pushing the reading glasses back onto the top of his head.
Half an hour later Greg responded. Sherlock spent five minutes looking for those reading glasses before he realized they were still on his head. He was very glad Molly wasn't awake to see his absent-mindedness, but then, she probably would have told him the darn things were still on his head! Greg wrote that all was good for doing the Eye and dinner afterwards.

Good, we'll meet up here. I'll see if I can get a car from Mycroft to take us together, then we can figure out where to go for dinner.

How about Troia? It's close. It's a Mediterranean restaurant but there are fish and chips too if you prefer it - and I know you do.

Actually that sounds rather nice. I'll suggest it to John. He is booking the Eye capsule. I'll get back to you later.

By the way, Sherlock, if you have time, could you stop by the Yard soon? I have a couple of open cases I could use your help on.

Sherlock smiled to himself. He would welcome the distraction. I will have time this week when Molly is sleeping after nightshift. I could spare some afternoon hours.

Great. I'll talk to you soon then, responded Lestrade.

Sherlock texted Mycroft next, asking if he could have the use of a limo for the following week on Monday to transport six people.

Mycroft's typically dry response came back soon afterwards. What, am I not invited?

Sherlock smirked to himself and wrote, There's room in the Eye capsule if you really want to come along with your girlfriend, Lady Smallwood, and for dinner afterwards.

He could almost hear the huff in his brother's response when he responded with, Lady Smallwood is a good friend I spend time with occasionally. She is not my girlfriend. Therefore I respectfully decline your offer. You may have the limo - what time?

A quarter past five if that is okay. We will probably all go our separate ways after dinner.

Very well. Still on for Sherrinford on Saturday I gather? I hate texting.

Sherlock grinned at the usual complaint by his brother. Yes, two o'clock. I'll be waiting with my violin.

Excellent. I will talk to you then.

Sherlock texted John once again, confirming that Greg and Lori would come, and the suggestion to eat at Troia.

John responded in the affirmative and Sherlock breathed a sigh of relief, taking off his reading glasses, and putting down his phone. For once he understood Mycroft's attitude about texting. He flexed his thumbs. Constant texting was rather tiresome.

He returned to the bedroom. Molly was still sleeping. With nothing else requiring his attention, he undressed and got back into bed, putting his arm over his fiancée who stirred and shifted slightly to accommodate his embrace.

He slept for a couple hours then got up again and took a shower.
Sherlock kept an eye on the clock and at a quarter to eight, he drew a bath for Molly, pouring in some of her black current body wash to make it a nice bubble bath. When it was ready, he leaned over to kiss her awake and her eyes opened.

She gazed at him sleepily, then smiled. "Hi."

"Hi, yourself. You had a good sleep, love. I've drawn a bath for you."

"You have? That sounds lovely, honey."

While she took her bath, Sherlock searched the fridge for food. He was surprised to hear a knock at the door and find Mrs. Hudson standing there.

"I made far too much food for myself for dinner," she explained. She was holding a casserole dish with a lasagna.

Sherlock quirked an eyebrow. "You made a whole lasagna? Why do I get the feeling you made it to share?"

The landlady grinned. "Okay. Guilty as charged. How was your trip?"

Sherlock suddenly realized the woman was hoping for the inside scoop about their overnight trip. No wonder she had brought food.

"It was very nice," he told her. "I showed Molly where I spent my childhood before moving to Sussex."

"It must have been nice having a night away together from here - just the two of you." She waggled her eyebrows suggestively and Sherlock couldn't help laughing.

"Mrs. Hudson, please keep your less than pure thoughts to yourself. Things have not changed as far as my fiancée and I are concerned." He took the dish of lasagna from her, then said firmly, "Thank you for the lasagna. I am sure it will be delicious, as always."

The landlady, by now very well acquainted with the detective's method of dismissal, retreated to her flat.

The lasagna was still warm, so Sherlock put some on two plates. He decided it would be fun to play a joke on Molly when she exited the bathroom.

As soon as Molly was finished with her bath, Sherlock told her, "Dinner is ready. I made lasagna."

He was a little disappointed when Molly narrowed her eyes at him. "No, you didn't."

"See for yourself," he insisted, leading her to the kitchen table where the plates of lasagna lay.

"Oh, this looks good. I'll have to thank Mrs. Hudson."

Sherlock pouted. "Why can't you believe I made it myself?"

Molly laughed. "Do you need me to explain all my reasons why I know you didn't make it?"

"Please do," Sherlock said gravely, folding his arms.

"Fine. First off, you can't even manage making fried eggs and bacon without making a mess."
Sherlock shook his head. "That is not valid. For all you know I could have been watching cooking shows when you were at work and teaching myself how to cook."

"Have you, then?" asked his fiancée.

Sherlock uncrossed his arms to run a hand through his hair. "Well, no. I probably could learn to cook that way but," he coloured slightly, "I rather like how you take care of me."

At that, Molly put her arms around his neck and pulled his head down to hers for a tender kiss. "I like taking care of you too. Let's sit down. I'll explain my other reasons while we are eating."

They sat and began to eat.

As they ate, Molly explained. "So, there are three other reasons I know you didn't make the lasagna. One, the time it takes, although I suppose you might have had time. Two, we don't have the ingredients."

"Perhaps I borrowed them from Mrs. Hudson?" he suggested.

Molly shook her head and rolled her eyes. "Third, and most importantly, if you had cooked the lasagna yourself, I'd be able to smell it in the flat."

Sherlock smiled at his clever fiancée. "Well done, my love. Of course you are correct. Now that I've been found out, can I make it up to you?"

"In what way? Some non-verbal communication of the kissing type?" asked Molly with a smirk. "She knows me too well."

He had of course been going to suggest exactly that, but decided to suggest something else. It wouldn't do for Molly to always be right in her assumptions. "I like the sound of that, but I was going to suggest I braid your hair for you. I need to improve my braiding technique."

Molly gave an adorable giggle. "Sounds good to me."

After the dinner dishes were done, Molly settled onto the floor in front of Sherlock who was on the sofa. He brushed her hair gently, enjoying that sweet strawberry scent of her shampoo combining with her lovely body wash. Then he proceeded to braid Molly's hair, once again requiring assistance to get the braid nice and tight. Afterwards, she felt it and said, "This is even better than the last one, Sherlock. Thank You!" So saying, she got off the floor and settled herself on the sofa next to Sherlock.

He put his arms around Molly, giving her long, lingering kisses. He felt within himself a rising of the passion that he had been keeping under control more successfully of late. Because he was listening for it, this time he heard the still, small voice that warned him when his kisses began to grow a little too ardent, and he could feel his and Molly's breathing get faster. He gently withdrew and kissed her forehead. "I could kiss you much longer, but I'm going to do my part better at knowing where to draw the line." He held her against him, just making the most of their closeness.

After awhile, when their breathing settled to a more regular rhythm, Molly suggested they watch an episode of *Downton Abbey*.

Sherlock agreed and they did so, remaining cuddled close together on the sofa, with his arm looped over Molly's shoulders.
When eleven o'clock had almost arrived, Sherlock remembered he wanted them to leave early for the hospital.

"So, love, are we going to ride the coffin lift, then? We can make sure to be there a half hour before your shift starts."

Molly sighed. "Seeing as it means so much to you, I guess tonight is as good a time as any."

Sherlock smiled and kissed her cheek. "Then let's get ready to go."

They gathered their things and were soon on their way to St. Bart's.

Chapter End Notes

How do you think Sherlock will deal in a social setting with two other couples? Are you familiar with The Eye? It is pictured in the Sherlock credits at the beginning of each episode.

Did you enjoy seeing Molly being the clever one for once in relation to the lasagna? Are you enjoying my little running joke with Sherlock and his inability to find his reading glasses? I kind of thought it would be funny, because his mother complained about his dad losing them too - did you catch that?

**Special note following my request from the last chapter.** Thank you to those of you who responded with encouragement. I was not surprised to see it came mostly from readers who have been regular supporters of my work with comments and encouragement. Thank you. Without you, I would probably have left the site much earlier in defeat.

After prayerful consideration I have peace in my decision that it is time to move on and restrict my future stories to . I started there and am more comfortable at that site. I feel I have been partially successful in bringing something new here for people like me who uphold certain values. I believe in the stories I am telling and have realized that if people care enough about them, they will continue to follow my work and support me elsewhere. I do hope my decision does not make you feel it is not worth commenting anymore on this story, however. There are readers out there who begin stories based on how many comments they see, and perhaps that alone will bring a seeker who may be convicted of the truth of faith. That is my hope.

In the meantime, please continue to enjoy the story as the wedding draws closer.
The Coffin Lift - Molly - (Mon-Fri)

Chapter Summary

Passion and fear combine during a rather eventful ride on the haunted lift at St. Bart's.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Upon arrival at the hospital, Sherlock immediately asked Molly where they could find the coffin lift.

Molly really was hesitant about it, but she figured if anything happened, she'd be safe with Sherlock, so she directed him to the corridor with the oldest lift in the hospital.

"Well, here it is," she informed him a little timidly, standing in front of the door to the old lift.

Sherlock looked at her enquiringly. "So, what do we do? Just press the button to call the lift?"

Molly shrugged. "I guess so. I've never been on it." The corridor was empty and dimly lit and Molly bit her lip, feeling unaccountably nervous.

As if sensing her agitation, Sherlock took her hand and said, "It's just a bit of fun, Molly. We have plenty of time before your shift starts even if we get stuck in there for a bit."

Stuck. The word reverberated in Molly's mind. The idea of being stuck in a lift with the man she loved wasn't the problem, it was being stuck in a confined place for any extended length of time. "Well, let's get this over with," she muttered, pressing the call button with her free hand.

She could hear the sound of clanking as the lift moved to their level. She couldn't tell if it was coming up or down. Soon, it opened and the pair went in.

Sherlock confidently punched the button for the floor where the pathology lab was, and the doors clanked shut. Then the lift began to move.

Unfortunately, as Molly had warned Sherlock, it began to go down, instead of up, and Molly felt her heart beat increasing, not from anticipation, but with fear. The lift moved agonizingly slowly but eventually stopped. They had reached the basement level, where the morgue was.

And then the lights went out and the lift was pitch black. Molly gave an involuntary scream.

"Hush, love," soothed Sherlock, "I'll protect you." He chuckled, and Moly could feel his breath on her cheek as his lips sought hers in the darkness. He kissed her in the pitch blackness and Molly didn't know whether her heart was hammering so hard because of the touch of his lips or because she was frightened of the confined space.

"You see?" he murmured, as he placed a hand behind her back and another behind her head, before deepening the kiss. It was strangely thrilling, kissing in the darkness, until she began to panic.

Why aren't the lights turning on? The dark began to get oppressive, despite the presence of the man
beside her and Molly started to breathe rapidly in fear. Misunderstanding, Sherlock whispered, "See, isn't this fun?"

Molly struggled out of his embrace, "No, it isn't fun, Sherlock. Get this bloody lift door open - now." She felt her voice rise in panic at the last word as fear overwhelmed her. What if they were stuck in the dark for hours? This lift wasn't used very often. Why had she allowed Sherlock to convince her it would be fun?

Finally, he sensed her agitation. "I'll feel for the lift door and just pull open the gate manually, then pull the outer door open."

Molly continued to feel claustrophobic as Sherlock searched in the dark for the gate door. She heard as he finally swung it open, then managed to get the outer door open as well, allowing light from the basement to spill into the lift.

Molly felt such a sense of relief at being safe that she burst into tears. She wasn't sure why it happened, just that her legs were trembling as well.

Seeing her distress, Sherlock was immediately apologetic. "Darling, I'm so sorry. I would never have done this if I knew you suffered from claustrophobia."

"I told you I didn't really want to do this," she said, in a voice that was thick with tears.

Sherlock put his arms around her comfortingly. "I just thought it was the haunted thing that worried you. Not a fear of confined spaces." He stroked her hair, holding her as she cried into his Belstaff. "I'm sorry," he said again, moving his hands in soothing circles along her back, until she felt calmer.

Finally, she sniffled and said, "What time is it?"

"It's quarter to twelve," he replied, after a glance at his watch. The whole experience and her subsequent anguish had taken less than fifteen minutes?

It had felt like hours. She lifted a tear-stained face to Sherlock.

"Oh, God, Molly. I'll never do anything like that again, I promise. Will you forgive me?"

She nodded mutely and his lips descended on hers again insistently, this time in the light of the basement where she did not feel terror, but instead the warmth of his embrace, his strength, his masculinity. She clung to him, reaching up to touch his curls. She felt so silly. He would always protect her.

His lips moved to her throat, and this time her pulse was beating fast from his embrace, rather than fear. She gasped at the sensations he was causing in her. Her Sherlock. He was so perfect.

But he stopped suddenly, resting his forehead against hers. She could feel his breath coming quickly between his lips as well. "I'm such a fool. I should know better than to put us in these types of situations. You're a constant temptation to me, Molly. Thank God you are not going to be around at night this week. At least it brings us closer to the wedding." He stopped, then added in a low voice filled with emotion, "I ache for you."

"Me too," she whispered.

"Are you feeling better now, my love?" he asked.
"Aside from my raging hormones right now? Yes," she told him with a wobbly smile.

He chuckled. "You're usually the one who keeps me in line."

"It always works out, Sherlock, every time. Are we going to take the stairs upstairs to the ground floor and take another lift?"

"Sweetheart, you are never riding that cursed lift again. There's obviously an electrical fault that causes it to act that way. Let's go."

Molly wiped her eyes and took Sherlock's hand. They went upstairs. Eerily, the lift followed their ascent. When they reached the ground floor, the lift doors were invitingly open, but they walked past them to find a regular lift.

Upon reaching their destination, Molly checked her watch. *Silly how I asked the time when I'm wearing a watch myself, she thought,* somewhat amused. It was nearly time to start. She'd be in Mike's office again. With him having had the week off, he would be there only the following day, when he would relieve her. Molly went straight to his office. It was going to be another week of paperwork. No post-mortems were done at night. She sighed.

Sherlock followed her into the office. "Are you sure you'll be okay?"

"Of course," she assured him. "It was just the combination of the confined space and the dark."

He shot a worried glance at her. "You won't feel claustrophobic on a plane when we head for our honeymoon?"

She gave him a reassuring smile. "I'm sure I'll be fine."

"Ah, there's something else. It was going to be a secret, but now I'm worried you might have a problem with it claustrophobia-wise."

"Does this have something to do with what you and John were talking about so quietly at church?" she asked shrewdly.

"I think you need to quit being a pathologist and become a detective, my love."

She giggled. "Well, what's the secret then?"

"John is booking a capsule on the Eye for the four of us, and I invited Greg and his girlfriend too, to make it six."

"Oh, that sounds lovely!"

"You wouldn't feel claustrophobic in the capsule?"

"Of course not," she scoffed. "Those capsules are huge and bright. The lift was tiny and dark, big difference."

Sherlock pouted. "So I spoiled the surprise for nothing."

"That's okay, honey. It will give me something to look forward to. When are you planning to do this?"

"Next Monday, when you are off."
Molly put her arms around Sherlock and brought his head down to hers for a sweet, lingering kiss. "I love you, Sherlock. Nobody could ask for a better man than you."

She felt his arms go about her to hold her close. "Even though I made you cry tonight, because I'm an idiot?"

"You also comforted me, sweetheart, and you didn't know I get claustrophobic. I should have told you."

"Well, I suppose I had better leave and let you get on with it. By the way, Greg has asked me to go to the Yard to help out with a couple cases, so I'll be heading there tomorrow."

"I'm glad you will have something to keep you busy."

"Me too. I need distraction from you."

She kissed him again. "I'll see you at home. Sleep well."

"I'd sleep better with you in my arms, but this is probably a good thing for us. I love you, baby."

Molly smiled, that sweet endearment again. "Love you too, honey."

Once Sherlock was gone, she settled down to a long, boring night of paperwork.

The next few days followed much the same pattern of Sherlock taking Molly to work, spending a few minutes with her, and leaving. She would come home to an empty flat and she would follow her usual routine before sleeping in the afternoon. By the time she woke, Sherlock would be back and they would spend time together. He would bring dinner, or she would cook something. They would watch an episode of Downton Abbey and cuddle together on the sofa. They were still working their way through Galatians in the Bible too.

The two cases Greg Lestrade had enlisted Sherlock's help on turned out to be a little more difficult than he had anticipated, but the one did involve a decent reward for finding the person who had committed a jewel heist.

With one case solved, and being hot on the trail of the jewel thief, Sherlock spoke to Molly on Thursday evening.

"I won't be able to go with you to work tonight, darling. I promised Lestrade I'd accompany him on a stakeout. We're pretty sure we've discovered the jewel thief's hideout, but we need to trail him and make sure we have enough evidence."

"Okay, Sherlock. Just be careful. I don't need you getting hurt so close to the wedding."

"I'll be careful, love. After this, I'm telling Greg I can't commit to any more cases that could entail me doing this type of thing. I only took it on because I knew you wouldn't be around at night, and I wanted to have enough to do during the day so I could fall asleep at night without you."

"It seems to have worked," she commented. "You haven't sent me any middle of the night texts this week."

"There has been a lot of leg work, so yes, I've been pretty tired. I'm hoping to have this wrapped up tonight, however long it takes. If I'm done in time to get you from the hospital, I'll text you." He
checked his watch. "I had better go, I'm meeting Greg at the Yard again and we'll be going in an unmarked car from there."

He pulled Molly into his arms for a last lingering kiss that left her breathless. "Have a good night at work, love."

"And you be careful, like I said. Don't take any unnecessary risks."

"You know I won't," he promised huskily. "I have much too much to look forward to, to risk losing that." One more kiss and he was gone.

When Molly arrived at work, she greeted Mike, who was getting ready to leave. His office looked clean again, now that the microscopes had been removed, and he had done the paperwork necessary to show the one had been donated.

"We're still on for six tomorrow at Angelo's, right?" asked Mike, poking his head back into the office the moment he had left it.

"Of course," said Molly, nodding.

He left and Molly settled down to her last nightshift before the wedding. Two weeks of working in Mike's office had meant she had almost gotten him caught up on his inbox items. That was good, she thought. It would probably pile up again while she was gone.

At around six in the morning, Sherlock texted her that the case was solved. The jewel thief had been apprehended and was on his way to jail. He had been caught red-handed doing another heist. The best part was that Sherlock would be getting £10,000 in reward money.

Do you think I've earned enough this month to take it easy for awhile and enjoy a month or so off to spend with you? Sherlock texted.

I definitely think so. Only two more weeks of work for me and I'll be a lady of leisure for a few weeks too.

I have a feeling we will be busy with last minute wedding preparations. We need to get our final numbers done for the wedding reception too and do seating arrangements.

Are you going home now? she asked.

We have a few things to finish up at the Yard and I'll come by the hospital to pick you up. Then we can go home and go to bed.

I like the sound of that, she responded, adding a wink emoji.

You know what I mean, sweetheart. Don't tempt me. I'll see you soon.

Okay, sorry for teasing. Love you XX

Love you too XOX

Molly continued with her work and was startled when she heard the knock at the office door. Sherlock entered without waiting for an invitation. He looked a little tired, having been up the whole night. "Ready to go?"

She stood and walked to him, giving him a warm hug, before lifting her head for his kiss. "Yep, I just need to grab my handbag."
She returned to the computer and turned it off, grabbed her bag, then, linking arms with her fiancé, they left the hospital.

Chapter End Notes

So, it seems Molly suffers from claustrophobia. Did you see this coming, with the little hints of her anxiety about it? Do you ever feel claustrophobic? I'm glad to not suffer from the affliction myself.

Thanks to Ashblood for informing me about the coffin lift. It is an actual lift at St. Bart's, and you can look it up online. Ashblood has often given me ideas for this story and I need to give her a huge, thankful shoutout. Check out her writing as well.

Here you can see my first time skip. This story has become so long, and I felt it was time to move the pace along a little more as the wedding grows closer.
Chapter Summary

Dinner with friends, followed by a night of baking Sherlock's favorite treat.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

As soon as they got home, Sherlock headed straight for the bedroom. He was definitely ready to sleep.

"Just washing my face and I'll be in too," Molly informed him.

He stripped down to his Union Jack boxers and slid under the covers. He was just drifting off when Moly joined him. She too had stripped down to her knickers, not bothering with her chemise. He was too exhausted to think much more of that than how he liked feeling her skin against his when he pulled her close, kissed her and they slept.

A few hours later, Sherlock was vaguely aware of Molly getting out of bed, but he went back to sleep immediately, only waking when she leaned over him and he could smell that she had showered and washed her hair.

"Time to get up, honey," she told him. "I'm guessing you'd like a shower before we go to Angelo's."

He sat up and blinked a few times to clear his vision, then yawned. His stomach rumbled in protest, and Molly heard it.

"Did you want me to get you something to eat to tide you over till dinner? You have probably not eaten since last night, have you?"

"No, it's fine. I can wait a couple hours." He got out of bed and collected his things for the shower.

When he re-entered the bedroom, clean-shaven and feeling much better, he saw Molly putting something away in her drawer. "We're you catching up on your devotional again?" he asked.

"Among other things," she said mysteriously.

At his raised eyebrow, she told him, "It's something I want to give you as a wedding present."

"Sweetheart, you don't need to give me anything. Your virginity is the most wonderful gift I will receive, and I hope you feel the same way."

She got off the bed to put her arms around him. "That is the best gift we are giving each other, but this is something I want to do. It isn't costing me anything either."

What could it be? he wondered curiously.

Oh well, he would find out soon enough. Besides, he had those earrings for her as well. He'd have
to give them to her before the wedding though. Perhaps she would want to wear them on their wedding day.

They arrived at Angelo’s a few minutes early and were shown to their table. Mike and his wife Emily arrived shortly afterwards.

"Hi Molly, Sherlock - thanks for inviting us," said Mike, smiling. "Molly, this is my wife, Emily." He indicated the attractive, red-haired woman beside him.

"It's lovely to meet you," said Molly, with a smile.

"Nic to see you again, Emily. It has been a long time," remarked Sherlock. He had met her only once, almost twenty years before when Mike had asked him for a favour in exchange for providing him with some body parts for experiments. That had been a rather disastrous "double date" set up by Mike with Sherlock and Mike's sister Stella, so the man could get a date with Stella's best friend, Emily. Sherlock cringed inwardly at the thought, but at least there had been a happy ending for Mike and Emily.

After the foursome ordered their meal, Sherlock said to Mike, "Thanks sginfor the microscope. It will certainly be most useful."

"You're welcome. I'm guessing you won't be using it for awhile though," grinned Mike. "Your wedding is quite close now."

"I'm looking forward to being at it too," remarked Emily. "I still find it hard to believe you are getting married, Sherlock, you are definitely not like the man I met almost twenty years ago."

Molly looked at Emily in surprise. "You've known Sherlock that long?"

Emily grinned. "Not really. I was definitely more interested in getting to know Mike," she gave her husband's arm a gentle pat.

"Just as well," Mike said with a fond smile.

Sherlock felt a little guilty. He and Mike had known each other for so long, yet he had not bothered to know him beyond the surface level. "You made a good choice," he told Emily.

"So, are you all ready for the big day?" questioned the Bart's supervisor, looking at Molly.

"Almost. We need to do the seating arrangements for the reception and let the caterer know the final count. That's about it," she responded.

"I wanted to thank you for your hard work in my office the last two weeks. I've never seen my inbox so empty."

Molly laughed. "I'm sure it will pile up while I'm gone for three weeks."

"We'll certainly miss you at the hospital, but you've definitely earned a nice long holiday from work." He turned to his wife and said, "I don't know what I'd do without her. Hiring her was the best decision I ever made."

Molly blushed at the compliment and answered, "Well, I couldn't ask for a better boss, either."

"I hope you will allow Molly to not work over Christmas this year," Sherlock interposed. "I think she has more than put in her share of working that particular holiday. I know my parents will want
us to spend Christmas with them."

"I agree, Sherlock. Molly has earned several Christmases off," Mike said with a nod.

During the meal, pleasant conversation ensued. Sherlock let Molly do most of the conversing. He had always thought her to be shy, but she certainly was not, when she was with people she knew, and he had seen that several times recently. Not that she knew Emily, of course, but she and Mike had a good rapport that came from years of working together.

When Sherlock paid the bill at the end of the meal, Mike said, "Thank you both for this evening." He put a hand on Molly's shoulder. "Molly, it's nice to see you looking so relaxed. I don't think I've ever seen you look so content. You two are good for each other."

Sherlock chuckled. "Well, she's certainly good for me, and you're welcome, Mike. Nice to see you again, Emily."

The two couples parted and Sherlock and Molly returned to Baker Street.

Once they were in the flat, Molly said, "Well, Sherlock, you've been behaving so well, I think you deserve a treat."

Sherlock wrapped his arms around her. "I hope that means some delightful non-verbal communication is about to ensue." Before Molly had a chance to respond, he kissed her. Her mouth opened to his and he drank in her sweetness, kissing her until she placed a hand on his chest and pushed him away.

"Why did you push me away?" he asked, pouting.

"Much as I love kissing you, that was not the reward I had in mind."

"What could be a better reward than kissing the woman I love?" he asked, then smirked. "Unless you are talking about..." he gave her a seductive smile.

Molly laughed. "Be serious, Sherlock. You'll be getting that particular reward 22 days from now."

"It sounds a long way away when you put it like that," he complained. "Just say 'about three weeks.'"

"Alright, about three weeks," Molly said, with a playful tap to his backside.

He grabbed her hand. "So if it isn't that, or kissing, what else could it be?"

"I thought I'd bake some ginger nuts for you," she informed him.

Sherlock brightened. "Okay, that would come in as third - a distant one of course, but third, nonetheless."

"Well, do you want to help me to make them?" she asked, her hand squeezing his.

Sherlock hesitated. "If you think I won't be in the way."

Molly grinned. "I think it will be fun, something we can do together. Really, they are ridiculously easy to make."

She took her phone from her handbag and pulled up the recipe from where she had bookmarked it. "See? Easy."
Sherlock peered at the screen and grunted. "Can't you use your iPad? The screen would be bigger. Otherwise I'll have to put on my reading glasses."

Molly giggled. "Sherlock using an iPad, or Sherlock looking hot in reading glasses. I think I will take option B."

He huffed. "Fine, but you have to find them. I don't remember where I put them."

Molly rolled her eyes. "You need to hang them on a chain around your neck, Sherlock." She went into the sitting room, automatically checking the sofa cushions where he had left them before. "Aha," she said triumphantly. "Here they are."

Sherlock put them on reluctantly and picked up Molly's phone. To his surprise, she took the phone back from him and set it down on the kitchen counter. Then she pulled his head down to hers for a sizzling kiss.

Sherlock felt his heartbeat accelerate, responding to her inviting lips. After a few moments, he pulled back and asked, "Well, what was that for, then?"

"I can't even kiss my fiancé for no reason?" she asked playfully.

He just looked at her blurry countenance through the glasses, quirking his eyebrow.

"Oh, all right," she confessed. "You look so studious and adorable with those glasses on, I couldn't resist."

Sherlock shook his head. "You are always surprising me, my love."

"I hope I can always surprise you. I don't ever want you to become bored with me. I know you have had a problem with boredom in the past."

"But not when I'm with you, Molly. Never with you," he told her earnestly.

She kissed him again, lightly. "Well, let's make these biscuits or it will be too late for you to eat any before bed."

That was enough motivation for Sherlock. He took a look at the recipe, committing it to memory, then removed the reading glasses, this time placing them on the coffee table in the sitting room.

He and Molly worked together to get out the ingredients, mixing bowl, and measuring cups.

When all was assembled, he asked, "What does it mean to cream together the sugar and butter?"

"The butter should be softened first, which is why I got it out of the fridge first. Then you use a spoon and slowly add the sugar, mixing it with the butter. Do you want to try?"

"Alright," he said a bit reluctantly. With a little help, he managed.

"Okay, Sherlock, you keep stirring while I add the golden syrup."

He did so obediently, then Molly added the ground ginger, baking soda and finally the flour. Sherlock mixed with the wooden spoon as if his life depended on it. It got more difficult as the mixture got thicker. "I think I'm going to have to buy you one of those electric things."

"You mean an electric mixer?"
"Yes. This is entirely too much work for my arm muscles." He let out a mock groan.

Molly squeezed his bicep playfully. "Oh, I don't think it will kill you. If I can manage to do it by hand, you should be able to as well."

"But my arm is getting tired," he complained, even as he continued stirring desperately to get those ingredients properly mixed.

Molly peered at the mixture. "It looks good. Now we get to roll them into balls and put them on the trays for the oven."

She showed him how to do it, leaving enough room between the balls for the biscuits to spread and flatten without them touching any other biscuit.

Task accomplished, Molly said, after putting the biscuits in the oven and setting the timer for 15 minutes, "Now for the best part."

"We kiss until the timer goes off?" Sherlock suggested hopefully.

"No, silly. We get to lick the spoon, and get those last little bits from the bowl." She held out the spoon to him.

Sherlock took the spoon and ran his teeth along the edge, tasting the raw dough. (Surprisingly good,) he thought, tasting a bit more. In fact, it was really very good. He helped himself to the rest of what was left on the spoon.

Molly looked at him, grinning. "Didn't you ever lick the spoon when you were a kid?"

"Definitely not. I thought it was most unsanitary to eat raw ingredients. I see now I missed out on something quite delicious."

Molly put some of the remaining mixture from the bowl onto her nose, and then his. Then she playfully sucked it off his nose, waiting for him to do the same.

Sherlock did so and thought baking biscuits together was definitely a fun activity. "Experiment time," he murmured, capturing Molly's lips with his own, teasing open her mouth with his tongue so he could taste that delicious ginger, allowing her to do the same for him. Thus satisfied, he kissed her even more, savouring the sweetness of her lips as he always did.

They stood there kissing, not touching in any other way because their hands were dirty from rolling the biscuits into balls. It was rather an interesting sensation, to be using only their lips, rather than their hands to hold each other, feeling each other's mouths with closed eyes. So incredibly sweet.

He drew back from his fiancée and looked at her. She gazed at him steadily, her breath slightly uneven. Pupils dilated, of course, as his own surely were, but shining eyes that showed her love for him so clearly; this wonderful woman of faith, who loved him so completely. "You are such a gift, Molly. I can't wait to unwrap you."

She blushed and smiled. "The feeling's mutual, Mr. Holmes."

They looked at each other, for a few more seconds until Molly said, "I guess we should wash our hands now."

They did so, and then Sherlock put his hands on his fiancée's face and kissed her again, until the timer for the biscuits went off.
Their lips parted and Molly took the trays out of the oven. The smell in the flat was delicious, thought Sherlock. Almost as good as his Molly tasted, he thought with a slight smile.

Of course, she noticed. "What are you smiling at?"

"Just thinking those biscuits smell almost as good as you taste, my love," he said honestly.

He slid an arm around her waist. "We did pretty well. I think we make a good team."

"Yes we do, Sherlock," She responded, leaning her head against his shoulder.

As the biscuits cooled, Sherlock, at Molly's request, read Galatians, chapter 6.

"(1) Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. (2) Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (3) If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. (4) Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, (5) for each one should carry their own load. (6) Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor."

He stopped. "That verse...if someone thinks they are something they are not, they deceive themselves - that was me. I looked down on people I considered inferior. I was so wrong, Molly. Instead of tearing people down, I should have praised them for the things they did well."

"Sherlock, I think you are, or were, no worse than anyone else. Even as Christians, sometimes I think it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking we are better than someone else. But we have to understand that people without faith are not going to have the same ideas and values. For example, you can't condemn a couple for sleeping together and telling them they should wait for marriage when they don't have the Bible as their 'guidebook.' Same with forgiveness. The Bible tells us to forgive. Non-Christians may not feel they need to do that. They are looking out for number one, protecting themselves. As Christians, we are commanded by Christ to forgive others as He did. To lead lives that reflect Jesus to others."

Sherlock asked curiously, "Molly, have you forgiven Mary? I know that was something you said would take time."

She looked at him. And her eyes were clear, untroubled. "Yes, I have, Sherlock. I forgave her some time ago, before you picked me up from the hospital on the day you finished the Irene Adler case. Like you said at the time, she is gone, and being angry wasn't hurting anyone but me, causing a wound to fester in my heart. The bottom line is - you are still here, and we love each other. That DVD from her, it showed me that she cared about you too. She could not have known the exact path you'd take. God saved you then, and we have a future to look forward to now."

"I'm glad, my darling. I knew you would find that forgiveness, it is just your nature. You only took a week to forgive her too. That is a true testament to your nature." He kissed her gently, then finished reading the chapter, which was the last one for the book of Galatians.

Not long afterwards, they ate a snack of ginger nuts. Molly had one, Sherlock had three, and then another because he liked to eat an even number of biscuits.

They retired to bed and slept soundly until the alarm went off in the morning.
Author's note: I hope you enjoyed seeing Sherlock once again enjoying a social outing with another couple. For the backstory on when he met Emily, I referred you once again to my one-shot "Titanic 20th Anniversary." The one-shot itself takes place in November, though, so it is a little into the future. It contains spoilers, in case you have not read further than this story, so it is up to you if you prefer to read chronologically to avoid confusion.

Did you enjoy watching them bake together? Did you lick the batter spoon when you were a kid? I used to love doing that. These days, it seems everyone is scared of getting salmonella from raw eggs, but that still doesn't stop me from licking the spoon of my batter!

What did you think of Molly's talk after they read the Bible together? Do you find it hard to sometimes not hold others up to your own standards? I must admit, I'm guilty of that myself.

In case you are interested, here are the ingredients and directions for the version of ginger nuts that I used:

**GINGER NUTS**

200 g butter (7 oz)
1 cup sugar
1 cup golden syrup
3 cups flour
1 tablespoon ground ginger (heaped)
1 teaspoon baking soda

**DIRECTIONS**

Preheat oven to 350F (180C).
Cream the butter and the sugar.
Add the golden syrup and the dry ingredients.
Mix everything together and roll into little balls. Put onto a greased baking tray, pressing the balls down very slightly with a fork.
Bake at 350F (180C) for 15 minutes.

Cool on a wire rack and keep in an airtight container once cold.

This is just one of many versions of the recipe. I have not tried it myself, but intend to at some point. Golden syrup is not available in America generally, but molasses can be used instead apparently. I myself have some golden syrup that I brought over from Australia two years ago, which I have not yet used!

So, there you go, I am more than just a writer, I aim to provide my readers with extra facts!
Seating arrangements – Molly (Saturday)

Chapter Summary

Molly and Sherlock sort out where the guests will be sitting at the reception, then take some time to relax.

Chapter Notes

Quick note to readers. If you like to follow all my stories, I have started another short dream one over at fanfiction.net. If you wish to read it, you will have to do so there. I hope to see your reviews on that site!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The alarm went off at five-thirty. These two days Molly had the early shift. She turned off the alarm and slipped out of bed carefully, not wanting to disturb Sherlock. He still needed to catch up on his sleep. She was surprised then, when his voice came from behind her. "Good morning, Molly."

She quickly fastened her bra and turned. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to wake you." Her breath caught at how gorgeous he looked, even as he blinked the sleep out of his eyes.

"I've had enough sleep. I had that long nap yesterday," was his response, as he put his hands behind his head and stretched languidly, exposing his chest as the covers slipped downwards.

She couldn't help admiring that exposed flesh as she pointed out, "But you were up the whole night before; you were catching up from then."

He sat up, seemingly unaware of the way he affected her. "I've had cases where I only had a few hours of sleep over a number of days. I'm more well rested lately than I've ever been, thanks to you."

"So you're saying you don't really need a lot of sleep?" she asked, deliberately looking away from him as she posed the question while continuing to dress for the day. Down, girl, she told herself sternly, willing her heartbeat to slow down.

"I can get by with very little sleep for days on end." His voice was matter-of-fact, and she glanced back at him with a sly smile.

"Good to know. I guess that means when we have a baby, you'll be doing night duty," she said, completing the buttoning of her blouse and smirking at him.

Sherlock frowned, tapping his fingers idly on the duvet. "Are you saying you are not planning on breast feeding any babies we might have? Because if you are, I can hardly supply the milk for night time feedings."
Molly giggled. "Of course I'm planning to breast feed. Haven't you heard of breast pumps?"

"Breast pumps?" Sherlock stared at her, then asked with a note of horror in his voice. "Do you mean you could be milked - like a cow?"

Molly laughed as she reached for her trousers and began putting them on. Sherlock was so good at being unintentionally funny. "Essentially, yes."

"That does not sound comfortable at all," her fiancé asserted, with that same note in his voice, that matched his expression.

Molly shrugged as she walked to a drawer to pull out a fresh pair of socks. "From what I've heard by some of the women with children at work, it isn't particularly comfortable, but it is a necessity, if they want their baby to have breast milk when they have to be absent from them for an extended period of time." She turned back to Sherlock and addressed him, even as she put on her socks. "Anyhow, I don't think that's a conversation we need to have until such time as I get pregnant."

Sherlock ran a hand through his hair. "But now you have me all curious about these breast pump things," he declared with a pout. "I want to know how they work."

Molly giggled. "First women's monthly visitor, now breast pumps. I'll bet you never expected to have these types of conversations." She sat back down on the bed and extended her fingers towards him linking them with his.

He looked down at their linked fingers then back at her with a wry smile. "You are absolutely correct on that assumption."

Molly leaned towards him for a quick kiss. She gave her a little squeak of surprise when he pulled her down onto him to give her a long, sensual kiss. She thoroughly enjoyed it, but finally, very reluctantly, pushed him away. "Much as I love kissing you, if I don't get a move on, I am going to be late for work. I need my coffee."

"You could always kiss me and just have your coffee at work," he suggested playfully, giving her a seductive look which he knew always tempted her.

She batted at his arm, refusing to be drawn in. "I hate the hospital coffee, and you know it."

"I guess a good cup of coffee is more important than I am," he said in a mock offended tone, folding his arms over his chest.

Molly gave him an amused look and scuttled off the bed and out of reach. "You are utterly ridiculous, Sherlock, but I love you. If you get up now, I will permit you five more minutes of my precious time. No more bedroom kissing. You know our rules."

Sherlock huffed out a sigh and nodded his acquiescence, and Molly headed for the bathroom to do her morning routine.

When she entered the kitchen a short time later, she was pleased to find that Sherlock already had her coffee ready, as well as two crumpets with butter and honey, the way she liked.

"Thank you for the crumpets with honey, honey," Molly said with a grin at her own little joke. She sat and ate while sipping her coffee, then looked at Sherlock, who was patiently standing there next to her spot. "Not eating?" she queried.

"Nope. I'll wait till you're gone. Now hurry up," he commanded in that sexy voice of his that
always made her anxious to do his bidding. "I want that five minutes you promised me." He moved until he was leaning languidly against the counter, looking incredibly handsome - strike that - incredibly sexy. Molly wasn't sure if he was doing it to be deliberately provocative, or was completely unaware of what he was doing to her.

She gulped down the rest of her coffee, almost burning her tongue in the process and stood, then walked into his waiting arms.

He kissed her slowly, sweetly, and Molly luxuriated in it for that precious five minutes, until she had to leave.

As they drew apart, Sherlock looked at her. "I love you, Molly. I'll miss you."

"I love you, and I'll miss you too, Sherlock. Have a good visit with your sister." At his nod, she picked up her things and made her way to the hospital.

At around nine-thirty, Molly heard a text alert from Sherlock. She paused in her examination of some slides through a microscope and picked up her phone to read the text. *Mycroft had to cancel our Sherrinford visit due to some urgent government business.* Her brows lifted in surprise that.

*I'm sorry to hear that. Did he reschedule?* she texted back.

Sherlocks answering text came back almost immediately. *Not as yet. He said whatever he was working on might take some time. It was rather mysterious.*

Molly stared at the text, wondering what could be so urgent that Mycroft would have cancelled the visit. It had to be important, that was for certain. She responded with, *Your brother is always mysterious. Maybe he'll tell you later. Must get back to work. I love you; I'll see you at home.*

*Okay. Love you too XOX*

After a fairly routine day, in which she did one post-mortem on an elderly man, Molly returned home.

She went upstairs to the flat and looked for Sherlock, but he wasn't there. He hadn't texted her since that earlier conversation, so she was a little worried and decided to head downstairs to see if Mrs. Hudson had seen him. As soon as she opened the flat door, however, Molly heard Sherlock's footsteps ascending the stairs.

"Oh, you're home!" he exclaimed with a lopsided grin, leaning in to give her a kiss.

She backed away, holding her hands out in front of her as well to stall his advance. Sherlock was looking decidedly the worse for wear, wearing, of all things a t-shirt she had never seen him in before. Where had the t-shirt even come from?

He did not look like himself; she was used to him looking neat and elegant in his suits. His face had smudges of dirt on it and his hands were also dirty.

"What on earth have you been up to?" she asked.

"Working on cleaning up 221C," he replied. "Mrs. Hudson gave me a broom and some old cloths to use on the walls."

Molly looked at him in surprise and dropped her hands to her sides "She had the electricity put back on?"
He nodded. "She came upstairs this morning and told me. Seeing as I had no other plans, I thought I'd start cleaning it up."

Molly was impressed by Sherlock's actions in immediately setting to work on restoring the basement flat to a useable condition. "I was going to help you with it."

He shrugged. "No need. I got it done. It took most the the morning and afternoon, but it's useable. No way to get rid of the mould in the corners though. Definitely not somewhere you'd want to sleep, but fine for experiments. I took the microscope down there already."

The microscope had been sitting on a corner of the kitchen table, so Molly was quite pleased about that. She looked again at his dishevelled status and advised, "You should probably take a shower now. I'll make us some dinner and then we can work on our seating for the wedding guests."

Sherlock pouted. "No kiss first?"

Molly grinned and shook her head. "Not in that condition."

He huffed and strode past her, and Molly soon heard the water running for his shower. She prepared a meal for them, then pulled out the guest list of acceptances she had already compiled, setting it to the side of the kitchen table so it would be ready for them to look at after dinner was finished.

When Sherlock returned to the kitchen, looking decidedly cleaner and clean shaven as well, he was in his red dressing gown, and his legs were bare.

"Not wearing your suit then?" Molly asked in surprise.

"Decided not to bother - we're having a night in, aren't we?" he responded, taking his seat at the kitchen table.

"Yep. Like I said earlier, we have to get the seating arrangements done. I need to call Eileen with the final numbers for the catering." She set a plate in front of him, then put her own plate of food on the table, and they ate their dinner with a minimum of conversation.

Following the meal, Molly took the list and she and Sherlock spent some time on deciding who was to sit where. It wasn't too hard really. It was just a matter of putting the church people on two tables, two tables of work colleagues, and one with the family members and friends consisting of the parents, Lady Smallwood, Greg Lestrade, Lori, Philip Anderson and Mrs. Hudson, who would also be watching Rosie during the reception.

"What about David, Kaitlyn's boyfriend?" asked Sherlock with a questioning look at Molly.

She considered the question, then replied, "We can put him with my other work colleagues. He probably knows a couple through Kaitlyn anyway. Oh, and Meena can go on the same one too with Mike and his wife, because she knows him."

Sherlock nodded, making the notations. Having done seating arrangements before, for John and Mary's wedding, he had insisted he should be the one to write things down, and Molly had gladly acquiesced. "Oh, what about Billy Wiggins?"

She thought again. That was a little tougher. Billy did not know anyone from work or from her church, and she felt he should be placed with somebody he knew. Finally she responded. "Let's just squeeze him in with the family table so he has someone to talk to, whom he has met. Eileen did say
we could have up to ten people per table."

Sherlock nodded and wrote his name down. "Good idea." He then counted all the names. "So, forty-seven people including us," he commented, looking up at Molly as he spoke.

*Good,* Molly thought with satisfaction. *Everyone is accounted for.* 47 was also the number she had come up with. "Yes, I need to let Eileen know. It's a nice, small number."

"I'll only have eyes for you anyway," Sherlock said, placing the back of his hand against Molly's cheek and caressing it. "Only three weeks to go."

She pressed her cheek more firmly against his hand and gave him a loving smile. "I know." Then she reached up to clasp his hand. "I think everything is almost done, besides our fittings. Oh, and I have to write my vows. I'll give Eileen a quick call now."

"If you give me her number, I'll take care of that while you take a shower." he suggested. "I need to write my vows too. Maybe I'll do that while you are working tomorrow." He flipped his hand around so he was able to kiss Molly on her wrist, and her skin tingled at his touch.

Nevertheless, she pulled her hand away from his and pouted. "No fair. You'll be done first."

"It's not a competition, sweetheart," he responded with a smirk that suggested otherwise. "Now hurry up and take that shower so we can have some time to cuddle before bed."

Molly found Eileen's business card and handed it to Sherlock, then headed off for her shower. When she was finished she put on her dressing gown and returned to the sitting room.

"I left a message for Eileen," he informed Molly, as she walked towards him.

Sherlock sat back on the sofa, resting his legs on the coffee table, while Molly sat curled up against him. His phone rang and he picked it up from the coffee table.

"It's Eileen," he told her, looking at the caller ID before answering.

He listened for a few moments, said, "I'll do that," then hung up.

Molly looked at him questioningly. "What did she say?"

"She asked us to send the list of names for each table, listing each table number in order of importance, one obviously being the family table closest to us and so forth. They will take care of making out the place cards with table numbers."

"Oh, that's great," enthused Molly. "It will save me another round of writer's cramp. We should probably do that right now and send it. Her email address is on the business card too, isn't it?"

Sherlock picked up the card from where he had deposited it on the coffee table, and looked at it, then nodded. "Yep," he said, popping his "p" as usual. He stood to retrieve his laptop, then returned to the sofa and carefully inscribed all the names from their list with the table to which they would be assigned. "Done," he said with a sigh of relief, once the email had been sent.

Molly laughed as he snapped the lid of the laptop shut with a little more force than necessary. "I thought you were the expert when it came to this, having done so much with John and Mary's wedding."

Sherlock stood and returned the laptop to his desk then returned to the sofa, settling his arm around
Molly. "Well, yes, I did help a lot, but they did do some of the work themselves. Mary had to write out the place cards herself."

Having finished with all they needed to do for the night, Molly snuggled into Sherlock's embrace as they watched another episode of *Downton Abbey*.

"Oh, I do so like Matthew," she commented, after the episode ended. "But really, I think he is too good for Mary."

"Matthew, Matthew, Matthew," grumbled Sherlock, with a note of jealousy in his voice.

Molly laughed at her pouting fiancé and traced his lips with her finger. "Oh, Sherlock. I wouldn't be jealous if you said a woman was attractive."

He quirked an eyebrow, while taking her hand and setting it against his chest. "Oh really? So you'd be fine with me saying Janine was attractive, or Irene?"

Molly frowned and pulled her hand away from his. "That is different. That would be like me saying Greg Lestrade was good-looking."

Now it was Sherlock's turn to frown at her. "Is that what you think?"

Molly rolled her eyes before responding. "I think some women would find him handsome for an older man. Lori obviously does."

Sherlock glowered. "I'm not asking about some women, Molly. I'm asking about you."

Molly put her arms around her fiancé. "Greg is a good friend. But I have always only had eyes for you. My heart has always belonged to you." She leaned in to kiss him tenderly.

Sherlock put a hand behind her head to kiss her more fully. Molly resisted the urge to thread her fingers through his hair and surrender to the embrace. She still wanted to talk before bed. It was too easy to lose herself in him.

She pulled back and changed the subject, wanting to focus her mind anywhere but on the fact that Sherlock's presence was making her heartbeat quicken as usual. "So, do you think you'll go to church tomorrow while I'm at work?"

Sherlock considered a moment, then nodded. "I think so. I'm starting to know a couple people now. They are really nice, and I like that people aren't always acting like I'm some sort of superhero detective. I mean, some of them have made comments in passing about my work, but it's like now I'm just part of the family."

Molly squeezed his hand. "You are - part of our church family and part of God's family."

"I wonder if John will be there tomorrow with Kayla?" he mused, looking down at their joined hands.

"I guess you'll find out." She responded, resting her cheek against his shoulder. She was proud that he wanted to go to church even without her.

"Yep," he agreed, turning his head to kiss her hair. "I'll miss you though. I like holding your hand when we are in church."

Molly smiled. "I like it too, especially when you rub your thumb on my palm that way, it feels so
"Like this?" he asked, changing the positioning of their joined hands and tracing lazy little circles along it with his thumb.

'Mhm," she sighed in contentment. "You could do that to me all day."

He continued to stroke her palm as they watched one more episode of Downton Abbey before bed. "Ugh, that O'Brien and Thomas Barrow are such shady characters," he remarked afterwards. "I do like Bates though - and Anna. She's rather attractive," he added, with a side-long glance at his fiancée.

Molly knew he was testing to see her reaction, so she refused to take the bait and merely responded with, "I think Anna is very pretty too."

Sherlock huffed. "Why is it you don't feel jealous when I say another woman is attractive?"

Molly giggled at her ridiculous man. "Because I know you love me. I'm glad that you are able to acknowledge beauty in a way you didn't in the past. You just didn't seem to appreciate it before."

"You're right," he agreed thoughtfully. "I never did recognize beauty the way I do now. Since becoming a Christian, I see the beauty of God's creation in a way I didn't before. To me though, you are still the most beautiful woman I've ever seen."

Molly laughed. "Those are heavily rose-tinted glasses you are wearing, honey. But I'm glad you think I'm beautiful. That's all that matters. Ready for bed?"

"Definitely," he responded in his deepest baritone.

Molly glanced at him, observing the smirk on his face. Oh he always has to put on that sexy tone. "I know what you are thinking, Sherlock, so stop it with the sexy voice."

He threw up his hands in mock innocence. "Molly Hooper, I have no idea what you are talking about."

Nevertheless, he pulled her close for one last, lingering kiss, knowing it would be the last one like that for the night.

In bed a short time later, Molly tucked herself into Sherlock's embrace and was soon sound asleep.

Chapter End Notes

And thus ends another day. From experience, I can tell you that seating arrangements for weddings are a pain. Thank goodness Molly and Sherlock have gotten that out of the way and can relax.

Did you enjoy the Downton Abbey conversation? Have you watched the series? I highly recommend it.
Plans for Monday – Sherlock (Sunday)

Chapter Summary

Everything is organized for the following day, then goes on Amazon to buy things for his new 'lab' space.

Chapter Notes

Apologies if you missed seeing my last chapter. For some reason, I have to change the publication date every time as it defaults to January 2nd, and I forgot, so it did not show the last chapter on the day it was posted. I suggest you bookmark it if you want to make sure you don't miss a chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

1. Sherlock hated that alarm clock. He'd been having a lovely dream where he was kissing his fiancée, caressing her breasts and kissing her neck. Oh hell, he thought, opening his eyes to the beeping sound, the dream was a little too close to the truth. A hand was definitely holding her breast, rather than resting over it. He quickly released it as Molly stretched beside him, then reached over to turn off the alarm. "Why did you take your hand away?" she murmured sleepily. "It was nice."

Sherlock groaned. "Molly, you know why, and I don't want you returning to sleep in the other bedroom because I can't control my dreams." He shifted his body slightly so she would not be able to feel just how much he wanted her at that moment.

He knew Molly understood, because she turned to him and said softly, "I know you can't, Sherlock. I punished myself as much as I punished you when I did that. I was too quick to jump to the conclusion that you wouldn't be able to stop yourself from doing those things. Or perhaps I was worried that I wouldn't want you to. And really, you could not have done anything like that to me anyway that morning."

"Huh?" he asked, a bit confused.

"I had my, you know, my period at the time," she told him, blushing.

"Oh." He flushed a little at the word himself. It still took a bit of getting used to, discussing women's issues. "Speaking of that, um, when is it supposed to come again?"

"Around Tuesday next week," she responded.

Sherlock made some quick mental calculations. Molly's cycle, was 28 days, That would make this about day 19. Wasn't that past her fertility point? "Well, we did it then, Molly," he told her, somewhat proudly.

"Hmm?" No it was her turn to give him a confused look.
"Regardless of what happens now - and believe me, I am not trying to imply I would try anything, we don't need to worry about you getting pregnant before the wedding." He raised his hand towards her for a high-five.

Molly giggled and slapped her hand against his. "Guess you can throw away Mycroft's 'gift,' then."

"What I really should have done was make a very big bet with him, seeing as he was so sure we'd need them," he said, rather dryly. Then he continued seriously, "You had better get out of bed now, though, or I might just lose control."

Molly leaned into him and he felt the touch of her breasts against his chest. *Little temptress*, he thought, enjoying it, despite himself.

"You won't do that, Sherlock. We've come too far to give up now, and anyway, you're right, I need to get up for work." She pressed her lips to his briefly, then turned her back on him and got out of bed.

As usual, Sherlock watched his fiancée in fascination, the state of his body being what it was, he probably should have averted his eyes, but he was nothing if not a sucker for punishment. Soon he'd be able to do all those things he was longing to do with her, when she was his wife.

Satisfied with his observations of her body, Sherlock closed his eyes and drifted back to sleep. He had time before he needed to get up for church. He vaguely felt the touch of Molly's lips against his once more just before she left.

Two hours later, Sherlock's internal alarm went off and he opened his eyes. He had learned years earlier to be able to wake at a certain time. It had come in handy when he could only spare a short time to rest on dangerous missions.

He mentally catalogued what he needed to do that day - go to church, speak to John, text Molly at some point, buy furniture for 221C, write vows. That would keep him busy, so he wouldn't miss her too much.

Sherlock got ready for church, ate a quick breakfast and left the flat.

At church he went inside and searched for Kayla. John was not with her this time. He walked to her pew. "May I join you?" he asked. "Molly's working today."

"Of course you can," responded Kayla, with a welcoming smile. "It's always better when you don't have to sit alone."

"Where's John today?" he asked, looking around, just in case his friend was somewhere else with Rosie.

Kayla leaned over and whispered in his ear, because the service was about to start. "He texted me this morning, said Rosie had a rough night. John says she has another tooth coming in."

"Ah, I see." He wondered if John was being truthful about Rosie or just trying to get out of coming to church. Sherlock knew John was Catholic and that he went to church approximately twice a year to make his confession. That was pretty much the extent of his friend's religious activities, at least until he had met Kayla. John did have a habit of saying "Christ," or "Jesus" a lot, not a typical expletive for a Christian, he thought, although he had limited experience in that area. Of course, he himself said "God" or "for God's sake," a lot, so he was not one to throw stones.

The service was good, but not quite as interesting to Sherlock as in previous weeks, as Pastor
Briggs was having the week off and the layperson doing the sermon did not have quite the fire and fervour of the other man.

Afterwards, a couple people came up to say hi to Sherlock. They were a friendly bunch for sure, he mused, as he took a taxi back to Baker Street.

Back home, Sherlock sent Molly a quick text. *John wasn't at church. Gotta get some stuff, buy some furniture for 221C. How is your day going?*

She didn't answer immediately and Sherlock made himself a sandwich for lunch, thinking it would have tasted better if Molly had made it. Probably because she made everything with love, he thought somewhat romantically, then shook his head in silent amusement at his own whimsy.

He sat at his desk and opened his laptop. He spent an hour browsing Amazon, looking for furniture and lab paraphernalia to recreate his old lab space. A few hundred pounds later, Sherlock had purchased all he could think of to equip his new lab, including workbenches, a chair, a bunsen burner, beakers, test tubes and the like. He was glad that the most expensive piece of lab equipment, the microscope, was not a necessary purchase, thanks to Molly and Mike Stamford.

After checking through emails and updating things, Sherlock sent off a couple quick emails to potential clients. His phone pinged with Molly's text alert as he was finishing the last email.

Now where had he put his reading glasses again?

Sherlock hunted between the sofa cushions for a minute, then remembered they were on the shelf under the coffee table. He really needed to find a permanent place for them. He put them on and looked at Molly's text.

*Sorry, I was in the middle of a difficult post-mortem. Only taking my lunch now. Are you going to text John about tomorrow then?*

Sherlock groaned when he read what Molly had written. He had completely forgotten he still needed to finalize arrangements for the next day with John. But then again, John hadn't texted him either.

*Thanks for the reminder, love,* he texted her back. *Got everything bought for my new lab downstairs. See you when you get home. Love you XOX.*

*You're welcome. Glad you've had something productive to do. Love you too XX.*

Sherlock, after reading Molly's final text, sent one off to John. *Missed you at church this morning. Is everything booked for tomorrow with the Eye? Still meeting here at a quarter past five?*

John soon texted back. *Yeah, decided to sleep in after a rough night with Rosie. More teeth coming in. Sorry I forgot to confirm. We are booked for six tomorrow. Kayla and I will head over to Baker Street. See you then.*

Sherlock dashed off a quick confirmation text to Greg as well. *Remember, you and Lori, my place tomorrow at quarter past five.*

*It's in my calendar, We'll be there,* was the response.

Satisfied, Sherlock turned his attention to the next thing on his list, a very important one - writing his personal vows to Molly.
He opened a blank document on his laptop and thought for awhile what he wanted to say. He spent a lot of time thinking, writing, re-writing, and trying to make it perfect. He knew he wanted to include his new faith as part of it, and the way the woman he loved had helped him come to a place where he was ready to believe. Finally he was done, and then he suddenly had a thought. *How am I going to print it out? I need a printer!*

He had not needed the use of a printer since the explosion which had destroyed his last one. *Oh well, back to Amazon,* he decided. Maybe he needed to buy shares in it. Sherlock was very grateful to not have to go out and shop for things. Amazon was truly a Godsend. He found a printer that met his needs and bought it. Phew, it was going to be a hefty credit card bill.

This accomplished, Sherlock decided to practice his violin for awhile. He took up the instrument and first did the song he had composed for Molly, then he moved on to other music, just playing random classical tunes he knew from memory. He was quite surprised to see the flat door open as Molly walked in.

He stopped playing, but she said, "Please play a little longer for me, Sherlock. I love hearing you play."

Sherlock nodded and resumed playing for another few minutes as Molly sat on the sofa, watching him. When he stopped, she clapped and said, "I hope I get to hear you play with your sister one day."

"As long as Eurus wishes to join me when I play, you will," he responded, looking at the woman he loved.

As he put his violin away, Sherlock couldn't help smirking at his fiancée. "I got my vows done today, and I ordered a printer too."

Molly stood and pursed her lips. "I was hoping you'd forget about writing them today. Now I feel like I'm behind because I haven't gotten to doing mine yet."

Sherlock laughed and put his arms around her. "I can't wait to tell you how much I love you on our wedding day, and how much you have blessed me with your love." He bent his head and kissed her. He kissed her tenderly at first, then, feeling her response, kissed her with more passion, expressing his love for her as his hands moved to caress her back, then massage her shoulders.

Molly made a little moaning sound against his lips and he pulled away to look at her.

She pouted at him. "Why did you stop? I adore a nice massage, and you are very good at it."

"You know what those little moans do to me, Molly. They make me want to do more than massage your shoulders," he told her, as he removed his hands from them.

"You are such a tease," she huffed. "I've had a long day at work and a massage would be wonderful."

"I'll make it up to you once we are married," he promised her, brushing her lips with his. "I'll be your personal masseuse."

"Well, I do very much like the sound of that, but that doesn't help my poor overworked shoulders right now." She flexed them experimentally, then peeked at him from beneath her lashes.

He sighed and gave in. She had been working hard, after all. "Fine, Molly. You win. But if you want a massage I have to not be kissing you at the same time. If you are sitting on the floor in front
of me facing away from me, that will make it easier."

"Works for me." She pulled Sherlock to his chair, then plopped herself on the floor in front of it. She sat cross legged and waited.

Sherlock smiled to himself. His Molly was getting to be quite assertive these days. He sat in his chair then bent forward, With his legs splayed on either side of her, to massage her shoulders. Molly's hair was in a side braid that day, so it was not in the way.

"You know," he remarked, "I could massage you a bit better if you took off your blouse and cardigan. She was wearing the cute cherry cardigan he remembered from years before during that time when he was under duress as Moriarty tried to discredit him.

She swiveled her head around to look at him. "You're not going to try and seduce me if I take them off, are you?" she asked playfully.

_You have no idea how much I'd like to do just that_, he thought silently, wishing he could press a button to fast forward the next three weeks. Aloud he only said, "Molly, I have no intention of seducing you. I just want to ease away the tension in your shoulders."

"Alright then, honey." Obligingly, she took off her cardigan, tossing it beside her on the floor, then undid a couple of her blouse buttons. She pulled it over her head, and it joined her cardigan.

She still wore her bra of course, but Sherlock really enjoyed feeling her back and pressing his thumbs more firmly into her shoulders. Oh, those sounds she made, and the way she told him how good it felt - it was no wonder Mrs. Hudson had thought they were up to something a couple weeks earlier. He patiently massaged her for fifteen minutes, working his thumbs down her back as well, until finally Molly turned around to kiss him. "Thank you," she breathed. "My shoulders and back feel so much better." She was on her knees in front of him as she pulled him down to her level, pressed her lips against his, and he felt that all too familiar ache to be with her rise within him again.

"Put your clothes back on, please," he begged, keeping his eyes on her face to rid himself of the image of her presenting herself to him in just her bra.

She looked at him in puzzlement, as if she didn't know what he meant, then suddenly realized she was only wearing her bra, and blushed. "I'm so sorry, honey, I wasn't even thinking." She quickly slipped her blouse back over her head, but didn't bother with the cardigan, and he gave a sigh of relief. Much better.

"I'm going to make us some dinner," she announced, and Sherlock nodded. He decided to take the opportunity for his umpteenth cold shower. When he was finished, he dressed in his boxers and dressing gown. It was not worth getting dressed in his suit again when he was not going out that night.

After dinner, Molly took her shower as well, and also opted to just wear her chemise and his dressing gown.

When she came into the sitting room she took the dressing gown off and held it out to him. He stared at it, not quite sure what she was doing, then raised his eyes to give her a questioning look.

"Can we swap for a bit?" she asked him, pushing the dressing gown into his hand.

"Why?" he asked, puzzled, taking the blue garment automatically.
She gave him a grin. "Because I want it to smell like you again. I've been wearing it so much it is starting to smell like jasmine vanilla instead. I want it to smell of you again."

Sherlock shook his head and rolled his eyes. "You should probably hold onto this while I take mine off," he said, thrusting the blue dressing gown back at her. He took of his dark red one and handed it to her, then took the blue one from her and put it on.

He sniffed appreciatively. The blue dressing gown had indeed started to smell of her fragrance.

They spent another quiet night together, cuddled up on the sofa. It was very domestic. Sherlock recalled the words he had taunted Molly with all those years ago, when she had been going out with "Jim from IT." He repeated them to her now. "Domestic bliss must suit you, Molly," he murmured to her.

She smiled up at him. "Apparently it suits you too, Sherlock."

He caressed her face tenderly, then kissed her lovingly, before saying, "Indeed it does, my soon-to-be wife." He nuzzled his nose against her neck and she giggled.

When they went to bed, he realized how true it had become. Although he would always love his work, he loved doing the commonplace, domestic things too, because they Were with Molly and for her. He held her close to him and slept the sleep of a contented man.

Chapter End Notes

Nothing better than a good massage! Doesn't it make you want a Sherlock of your own?

How did you like the little dressing gown swap?

I know my Sherlock is a far cry from the reserved man he has always been in the show, but I hope you find his evolution and transformation believable in the context of his newfound faith.

Could you see faith changing a person as completely as he has changed? As always I'd appreciate any thoughts you want to present about it, even if they differ from mine.
Chapter Summary

Molly looks forward to the evening, and is proud of Sherlock by the way he deals with two other couples.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Molly woke with a sense of excitement. Today she would be going on The Eye. She didn't feel bad that Sherlock had "ruined" the surprise due to the coffin lift experience. Now she had a whole day of anticipation for the experience.

She had enjoyed going on Ferris wheels as a child, but had never experienced one that was anywhere near the size of The Eye, and she couldn't wait to see the view of London from it. She was also looking forward to interacting with two other couples at once, and to see how well Sherlock would handle it.

She turned in Sherlock's embrace and pressed her lips against his in a kiss of sweet affection. Sherlock opened his eyes and gazed into hers for a moment, then pulled her tighter to himself. "You are a very tempting sight in the morning, and you feel too tempting as well, so just one more kiss, then we should get up."

He gave her a lingering kiss, then kissed her forehead. "Hurry up and get dressed before I change my mind," he told her fondly, running a hand along the length of her arm, before releasing her reluctantly.

After breakfast, Sherlock fetched his reading glasses and returned to sit at the kitchen table, then perched the glasses on his nose as he texted Mycroft to make sure everything was still on for the limo.

_The limo is required elsewhere_, was the response soon afterwards.

Sherlock frowned and showed the text to Molly. "I can't believe he would do this to me," he complained.

"I don't think he would," she told him thoughtfully, after reading the short response. "I think he is just trying to irritate you. At least, that's my guess."

"Hmm, perhaps," responded Sherlock. He texted back, as if he were the one questioning the veracity of his brother's statement. _I don't believe you._

Mycroft's response was, _Well, of course you can still have the limo. I do try to keep my word. So, have you used my gift yet, brother mine?_

_Absolutely not_, Sherlock returned, rolling his eyes at his brother's complete lack of propriety, as Molly, who was by now peering over his shoulder, laughed.

"Your brother is such a character," she told him, as her hands rested lightly on his shoulders and
"Always interfering in my private business, you mean," he grumbled, placing his phone on the table and removing his reading glasses.

Molly removed her hands from his shoulders and he stood, moving away from the kitchen table to stand in front of her.

She looked up at him and clasped her hands together in excitement. "Well, at least we know everything is good for the limo. I can't wait, Sherlock!"

He grinned at her enthusiasm. "I don't really get what is exciting about going on a big Ferris wheel myself, but I'm glad you are looking forward to it. I only ask one thing from it." He put his arms around her waist as he spoke, drawing her closer.

"And what is that?" asked Molly playfully, quite certain about what he was going to ask.

"That I get to kiss you when we reach the top - like this." He kissed her tenderly, deepening it only when Molly threw her arms about him. The embrace lasted some time, much longer than they would possibly dare to do in public, Molly thought as their lips parted, and she dropped her hands from around his neck.

She giggled when he remarked, "I hope you are not expecting me to kiss you for quite that length of time in front of our friends." His hand came up to caress her cheek.

"Of course not," she assured him. "I'm actually quite surprised you are willing to kiss me at all in front of them."

Sherlock snorted at that. "They might conceivably be doing the same thing."

Molly smirked. "You do realize such an overtly romantic gesture is going to tarnish that reputation you had for being above such things as romantic entanglements?"

He quirked an eyebrow at her., trailing his hand lightly along her shoulder. "Seriously, Molly? You think they are still ignorant of the fact that I adore you? I've come to terms with that. The only who needs to be kept in the dark about my romantic side is my brother."

Molly burst out laughing. "I rather think you've already lost that battle. Don't forget why he was here last time, besides giving you that 'gift.' It was that rather romantic picture of us kissing."

"Ah yes, but that was just a picture," Sherlock responded. "Photos can be doctored."

Molly just shook her head in amusement. He was getting more ridiculous by the minute. "I beg to differ, Sherlock. You kiss me like any romantic hero would kiss his woman. - passionately. Not like a chaste kiss between friends. That is the very definition if romantic in my opinion."

Sherlock pouted at her in a way that made her want to trace a finger along this beautiful cupid's bow lips. "I can see I am not going to win this argument. Nevertheless, I forbid you to tell Mycroft I am romantic."
Molly raised an eyebrow. "You forbid?"

"Alright then," he said in an aggrieved tone. "I respectfully request that you refrain from spilling your thoughts about my romantic nature to my brother."

Molly smirked. "On one condition - kiss me now like the romantic hero you really are to me."

Her fiancée grinned and complied, kissing her until they were both left with heaving chests and longing for more.

As the time grew closer to five o'clock, Molly felt even more anticipation. She just could not sit still, changing her outfit three times, changing the way her hair was styled from a braid into having it down, then deciding to braid it again.

"You are acting as if you have ants in your pants," remarked Sherlock dryly, shaking his head in amusement at her antics.

She grinned. "I can't help it, I can't wait to see the view of London."

Sherlock pouted and folded his arms in mock disappointment. "And here I was, thinking you couldn't wait for that sexy kiss at the top of The Eye, which I plan to give my lovely fiancée."

"That too of course," she grinned, then said cheekily, "but shouldn't it be that lovely kiss you are going to give your sexy fiancée?"

She was rewarded with a very seductive look from Sherlock has he murmured in his own sexy voice, "I am quite prepared to accept the substitution of your adjectives."

Just then the doorbell rang, and Molly headed downstairs. Mrs. Hudson had of course, gotten there first and John and Kayla stood in the downstairs hallway. Rosamund was with Harry apparently.

"Do you know where we are going?" Kayla asked in a low voice as the doorbell rang again.

"I know, but I'm not telling," Molly told her with a secretive smile, as Sherlock, who had followed her downstairs, opened the outer door to admit Greg and Lori.

Molly noticed that Mrs. Hudson had opened her front door, but closed it again when she realized she didn't need to open the door to the street this time. No doubt she would be curious as to what was going on.

Lori immediately greeted Molly, who then introduced Kayla to her.

"What is going on?" Lori asked. She darted a glance over at Greg, before returning her attention to the other two women. "Greg wouldn't tell me."

Kayla shrugged helplessly as Molly smirked. "You'll find out. Mycroft's limo will be here shortly."

"A limo?" squealed Lori, clapping her hands together enthusiastically. "I've never been in one!"

"Me neither," admitted Kayla, as her mouth dropped open in astonishment.

Other introductions were made and the three couples were talking amiably when the limo pulled up outside the open door to the street.

"I'll just lock up," Sherlock told Molly, before energetically bounding up the stairs to do so, returning with her handbag and phone.
And off they went, in a merry little group, as the men exchanged secretive glances and Molly looked on in amusement.

There was champagne in the limo, which Sherlock insisted Mycroft must have arranged, as there were also six glasses.

He opened the bottle, being careful to not make a mess, then poured out the champagne for all.

Holding out his glass, as everyone else held theirs, Sherlock said gallantly, "A toast to the ladies," and they all drank. Molly tucked her hand inside Sherlock's elbow, leaning her head against his shoulder, as they sat together in the vehicle. She was so proud of him and the effort he was making.

When they alighted from the limo, a short distance away from The Eye, and John led the way to it, the other two women were stunned and excited, while Molly just squeezed Sherlock's hand.

He squeezed hers in return and leaned slightly to kiss the top of her head.

After a short wait, they were ushered into a capsule at six o'clock exactly.

The little group peered out of the observation window in fascination as the huge wheel moved slowly upwards.

Sherlock slid his arm around Molly's waist as they looked out at the view. John was pointing out to Kayla different landmarks and places he and Sherlock had been involved in cases. Molly slid a glance to the other side where Greg had his arm around Lori's shoulders. The three couples had automatically drifted to different parts of the capsule.

At three quarters of the way up, Molly noticed that Greg and Lori were no longer watching the view, but kissing. John was still pointing things out to Kayla, who was absorbed in all he said. Then she looked at Sherlock. He was looking at her with a hooded gaze and devastatingly handsome smile.

"I don't think I want to wait till we get to the top to kiss you," he murmured softly.

Before she had a chance to say anything, he lifted her chin and kissed her. Vaguely Molly could hear the sound of John still talking animatedly, but even that faded as Sherlock's lips made her forget everything but him. Not caring if anyone could see them, although it was unlikely as the other two couples were otherwise occupied, she gave herself up to the wonderful feeling that swept over her, the surge of love she felt for the man who held her.

They only broke apart when John's voice could be heard saying quite clearly to Kayla. "Why am I not surprised that those two use every opportunity to kiss in public? Same goes for Greg."

Kayla laughed, and Molly turned to John and Kayla, with a rather embarrassed smile. They were holding hands chastely. It was obvious they were still taking things slow, which was a good thing, she reflected.

Then she looked back at her fiancé, who was gazing at her with a smile on his full lips. "That kiss alone made coming on this big Ferris wheel definitely worthwhile," he told her in a low voice.

She returned his smile with one of her own, then took his hand and they went back to gazing out at the city.

Greg and his girlfriend had finally resumed looking outside as well.
The half hour ride was soon over and the six made their way to Troia for dinner.

During the meal, Greg and John took over most of the conversation, recounting John and Sherlock's first case together, the one John had called "A Study in Pink."

"Sherlock was a bit of an arse back then," confided Greg to his girlfriend. "Even made an off comment about a lady's dead baby."

"Yeah, I remember that well," put in John. "After I glared at him, he said, Not good?"

"And you responded, A Bit Not Good, yeah, remarked Sherlock, flushing slightly. "To this day, anytime I say or do something not quite right, I get the 'That was a Bit Not Good.' I've even taken to asking the question myself when I realize I've erred in some way."

Everyone laughed and Molly added, "Even I've used that on Sherlock. It's rather a cute turn of phrase." She gave him a kiss on the cheek. "But you don't act like that anywhere near as often as you used to. You think before you speak more often nowadays."

"I, for one, have seen nothing from Sherlock but completely appropriate behaviour," remarked Kayla to the group in general.

"Same here," agreed Lori, giving Sherlock a friendly smile.

"But you've never lived with him," grinned John, nudging Sherlock, who happened to be sitting next to him.

The friendly banter continued throughout the meal, John and Lestrade occasionally poking fun at the old behaviour Sherlock had exhibited in the past. To his credit, the detective took no offense, but accepted the ribbing good-naturedly, even at times poking fun at himself.

When the couples parted afterwards and Molly and Sherlock were on their way home in a taxi, she squeezed her fiancé's hand and voiced what she had been thinking earlier.

"I am so proud of you. You didn't get all huffy about the teasing. It just goes to show the tremendous strides you've made recently."

"I can't very well dispute the fact that I've acted in an inappropriate manner in the past, when it is absolutely true." he responded matter-of-factly.

Once they arrived home, the engaged couple spent the remainder of their evening cuddled together on the sofa, doing some Bible reading and discussion, then watching another Downton Abbey episode. Molly leaned her head on Sherlock's shoulder, enjoying the feeling of togetherness. Their lips met several times, and she suddenly realized she was no longer having to control her desire for Sherlock. Yes, she still felt that passion rising when they kissed, but instead of the need for immediate surrender, she felt instead a greater anticipation for their wedding night.

She looked into Sherlock's eyes after one bout of kissing that left them rather breathless. "Do you feel this shift in focus too?" she asked. "I feel it has become easier to control these feelings of wanting to be with you, because we are getting so close to the wedding."

He nodded solemnly. "I agree. Whenever we are kissing, my thoughts go to the future that awaits, rather than the here and now. It doesn't make me want you any less, it is just a shift of focus, as you said."

They smiled at one another. It seemed they had finally come to terms with their desires, and could
now look forward to their wedding day and night without needing the instant gratification they had struggled to avoid for the past two months.

As they lay in bed later, Sherlock’s arm curled over her protectively and possessively, Molly felt that same contentment and went to sleep easily, with a peaceful smile on her face.

Chapter End Notes

Did you enjoy reading about The Eye? I did the research on it and even watched YouTube videos of people who were riding on it. It is definitely something I would want to do if I ever went to London. How do you find romantic Sherlock? Hasn't he come along way?

Did you enjoy the "Bit not good" conversation? That little phrase makes an appearance in so many stories, that I just had to address it in a fun way.

I hope you also liked seeing the way Molly and Sherlock seem to have come to terms with their desire for one another. Is it a permanent attention shift or will they slip up? Time will tell.

Remember, I love to hear from my readers, so keep those reviews/comments coming!
In the morning, Sherlock lay for awhile in bed, holding his fiancée after they woke. It was nice to not be in a rush to get anywhere. He did not try to kiss her, aside from a good morning kiss, just enjoyed their closeness.

When they did venture to rise from the bed, Sherlock commented, as he buttoned his blue shirt for the day, "The furniture from Amazon should be arriving after lunch. When it does, I think I will go downstairs and try to assemble it."

Molly looked at him over her shoulder, as she buttoned her own blouse. "Sounds like a plan. I thought I might head to the shops after lunch. We need to get a few things, and I thought I'd make you my famous pasta sauce with spaghetti for dinner."

Sherlock walked over to stand beside Molly and move her hair aside so he could kiss her shoulder, eliciting a little murmur of pleasure. "If it is anything like that alfredo sauce you made when your mum was here, I'm sure it will be excellent," he declared, following his statement with another kiss, to her cheek this time.

Molly tilted her head and beamed at him. "I hope so. I like cooking for you."

Sherlock felt that flutter in his chest. It always felt so good to be looked after by Molly. He wrapped his arms around her waist and murmured in her ear, "You spoil me. Your own spaghetti for dinner and ginger nuts for dessert. Add a little kissing and cuddling, and it will be the perfect night."

Molly giggled, then turned and lifted her lips to his to give him a little taste of the kissing to come, before they both returned their focus to finishing getting dressed properly.

While Molly did some cleaning in the morning, Sherlock checked his emails, deleting the spam as usual. There were a couple responses from emails for which he had required further information, and he proposed a couple appointments for the following day, knowing Molly would be at work. There was another case for which he would need to travel to Hackney in order to investigate it. He sent off an email asking if Thursday would be suitable.

Soon after the couple had eaten lunch, the doorbell rang. "That will probably be the stuff from Amazon," Sherlock remarked to Molly, who was reading her devotional on the sofa.

She lifted her eyes to his in acknowledgement of his words, as he rose from his position beside her, then grabbed the key for 221C. "I'll just have them take the stuff right into the flat downstairs." By the time he got downstairs, Mrs. Hudson was staring wide-eyed at the conglomeration of packages that were being brought from the Amazon truck.
"Stuff for my new lab," he explained to the elderly landlady.

"My goodness," she exclaimed, shaking her head in bemusement. "You are going to have your work cut out for you, putting those together."

"It is my afternoon mission to take care of it," he told her, indicating the way to the men, who hauled the stuff into 221C for him after he unlocked it.

Once everything was situated, Sherlock headed upstairs. If he was going to be assembling stuff, he was going to need some music to listen to, otherwise he would be rather bored. First though, he needed to change into some old clothes.

He went to his bedroom and found another old, rarely worn t-shirt in the back of a drawer, a relic from his long ago uni days, before he had begun to wear his customary suits. He donned it, along with a pair of also rarely worn shorts from the bottom of another drawer. Those were so old he didn't even remember the last time he'd worn them. He noted both shirt and shorts were a little tighter than they had been previously; apparently he had gained a few pounds since he and Molly had been together, because he had been the same size his entire adult life, except for the occasions when he had lost weight during times of drug use or cases - or after he had been shot, when he was so obsessed with thoughts of how to get at Magnussen that he rarely ate, except for when Molly brought him meals or invited him for dinner at her flat.

He picked up his phone from the charger in the bedroom, then realized he had not inserted the cord properly and his phone was almost dead. He let out a groan.

"What's wrong?" Molly asked, coming up behind him. He turned to her and saw the expression of surprise on her face at what he was wearing.

"I was just going to put on some music downstairs to keep me company while I work on putting together the furniture I bought, but I didn't put my phone on the charger correctly last night and now it is almost dead." He returned his phone to the charger, making sure the cord was inserted properly this time.

"You can use mine," Molly offered, reaching to take her phone from where she had left it to charge overnight on her own nightstand. "I'm not sure if there is anything on there you'd be interested in, but at least you can listen to something until your phone has charged." Her gaze travelled over him. "That t-shirt um, hugs your chest quite nicely."

He lifted her hand to his lips, before releasing it. He forced himself to return his attention to what he needed to do, and took the phone from Molly's hand, bending down to give her a soft kiss on the lips.

"Thank you, my love. Are you sure you don't need it?"

"It's fine," she answered, and he saw she too was trying to remember her own plans for the
afternoon. "I'm just going down the street to get those groceries. After I get the pasta sauce on, I'll come down and help."

Sherlock nodded and tested her phone experimentally. Of course he knew her passcode from weeks earlier. She had still not changed it. "I'll see you soon, he said, turning and leaving the bedroom to head downstairs.

Once inside 221C, Sherlock went to Molly's playlists. She had several. One was the wedding playlist she had apparently put together of the songs she had chosen for the wedding. Perhaps he'd listen to that. Then his eye caught on another playlist called *Unrequited*. Intrigued, he looked at the song selection - "Hopelessly Devoted to You," "I Can't Make You Love Me," *Those two seem a bit depressing*, he thought; "Dum Dum Diddle," "Hello," "Missing," "Say Something," and finally, "Over You."

Curious, Sherlock selected the playlist and hit the play button. Then he set to work on the first workbench. It was much easier to assemble than the cot-bed had been, he decided. He listened with half an ear to the music as he worked, noting that all the songs were rather depressing. *Goodness, why would Molly want to listen to music which had lyrics like those?*

*Say something, I'm giving up on you,* was particularly heart-breaking, as was the tone of "Hopelessly Devoted to You," although it was a very pretty song.

He had been working at his task for about an hour and was starting to feel rather thirsty, when Molly came downstairs. The second workbench was almost done. He looked up at her with a smile of greeting, then returned to placing screws in the right places and tightening them with the screwdriver he had borrowed from Mrs. Hudson.

"Got my sauce going on the stove," she announced brightly, coming to stand by where he was on his knees working. "What are you listening to?"

The playlist was on repeat, so it was well through the third time. Sherlock finished tightening the screw he was working on and paused in his efforts, rubbing the back of his hand over his rather sweaty forehead. Manual labour had never been his thing. He put down the screwdriver and looked up at Molly. "Something a bit depressing you apparently made as a playlist," he explained, with a casual wave of his hand.

He was surprised to see Molly put her hands to her mouth and blush. "I had entirely forgotten that was on there!"

He quirked an eyebrow. "What is with the playlist title *Unrequited*?"

"Good Lord, Sherlock, I would think you, of all people, would understand. I've added a song to it every now and then over the past few years." She waited for him to process that.

Sherlock thought about the songs for a few moments then let out a soft "Oh," of understanding. Say something, I'm giving up on you. The title Unrequited. "Did you listen to these songs when you thought we would never be together?"

Molly blushed again. "Yes," she whispered, shifting her gaze from him downwards, to the floor.

"Oh, my poor darling," He stood then and held out his arms. Molly immediately raised her head and walked into his comforting embrace. "I put you through so much. I'm sorry, love."

He put his hands to either side of her face then and kissed her, reassuring her that those sad songs no longer applied to her, never would again. He deepened the kiss, feeling her response as she put
her arms around him tightly, as if she was afraid he would let her go, opening her mouth to his exploration. Then he kissed her cheeks, tasting the salty tang of tears, her eyes and finally settled back on her lips, offering his love to her, his passion. He moved a hand to stroke her back gently and finally released her.

Sherlock saw the residue of tears still on her cheeks before she rested her head against his chest. "At times I still find it hard to believe that you love me, Sherlock, that this isn't some fantastic dream I'm having."

"Well, my darling," he responded in a deep voice, "if this is a dream, it is the longest one either of us has had. But it isn't a dream, love. I love you. I'll say it again and again if I have to, I love you, I love you, I love you. I don't fear those words anymore. You, Molly Hooper are the love of my life."

She drew her head back and looked up at him. He saw the answering love in her eyes before she said anything. "You know already how much I love you, Sherlock. I wish everyone had a chance to experience this."

"I don't think people would necessarily want to go through what we did before getting together though," he commented, kissing her gently. "So, are you going to distract me all day or help me with this?"

"Actually, I think I need to stir the sauce. But I'll be right back," she responded. "You also look like you might be in need of a drink. Your kisses tasted a little salty from the sweat on your face."

He grimaced. "Sorry about that." He suddenly felt a little self-conscious. He hoped his deodorant was still doing its job and turned his head to give a surreptitious sniff in the general direction of his armpit. Still okay, he decided with relief, his nose taking in the citrus scent that was quite similar to his usual aftershave.

He was embarrassed and a bit pleased when Molly giggled and informed him, "You might be a little sweaty, but don't worry. You don't smell bad, just like a man who has been working out. It's kind of - sexy." She reached out to give a quick squeeze of his biceps, then added, "I'll just go stir the sauce and bring you that drink."

By the time Molly returned a few minutes later, the second bench was done. Sherlock accepted a cold bottle of water from her and gratefully gulped down the entire contents.

Thanks, sweetheart," he told her, setting the now empty bottle onto the floor. "If you wouldn't mind helping me move the benches to the correct positions, then you can unpack the little things while I put the chair together."

"Sure thing," agreed Molly easily, walking to one side of the bench as he went to the other. For a petite woman, she was certainly no slouch when it came to lifting things, he thought admiringly, as she helped him arrange the benches to his satisfaction without complaint. Yet another thing to love about his woman.

Within a half hour, everything was in place, the microscope in its new spot on one of the work benches and Sherlock looked around in satisfaction. "This is great," he pronounced.

"It is," agreed Molly, surveying the flat as well from her position beside him.

"Now I just need a reason to use my new lab," he said, placing an arm around Molly's shoulders. "Thanks for your help, love. I must check my email again and see if I have a response about that
Together the couple went back upstairs. Sherlock smelled the air appreciatively, as he opened the door. "That smells wonderful. I can smell the garlic."

"I hope I wasn't too heavy handed with it. I do love garlic in my pasta sauce," she commented, looking at him a little apprehensively.

He grinned and reassured her. "Smells just right to me. Fortunately we will both be eating it, because we will undoubtedly have garlic breath afterwards."

Molly giggled. "Does that mean you are planning another taste experiment after we eat?" She leaned into him as she spoke and looked up, and his arm, which was still around her shoulders, tightened.

"Possibly," he said, with a seductive look. "For now though, I had better go and take a shower before you decide you would rather not participate in any such experiments due to the excessive nature of my perspiration."

Molly laughed again as he removed his arm, and she headed into the kitchen to stir the sauce.

Sherlock went to the bathroom and took his shower, allowing the hot water to soothe the aching muscles he hadn't realized he had been using.

Once he was clean and dressed again, he returned to the sitting room and sat at his desk in front of his laptop to check for emails. There was one saying Thursday would be convenient for him to go to Hackney. **Excellent,** he thought. He might even get the chance to test out his new lab equipment if he needed to do any analysis. Of course, that would mean he did not need to use the hospital equipment and thus have the opportunity to see Molly. It was a quandary. Conduct work from home or head to the hospital?

He gave himself a mental shake. He was getting ahead of himself. There might be nothing to analyze anyway. He rose from his desk chair and went to his favourite one to relax. Before long, he drifted off to sleep, tired from the physical labour of the day.

Shortly before dinner time, Molly shook his shoulder gently to wake him and asked, "Would you like some easy, homemade garlic bread to go along with the spaghetti?"

Sherlock yawned and stretched, wincing at his still slightly aching muscles. "The more garlic, the better," he proclaimed, rising to his feet With the kind assistance of his fiancée's hand.

"I'll show you a simple way to make your own," she told him, keeping his hand in hers and walking to the kitchen.

Sherlock observed from his position near the door as Molly turned on the oven. She softened some butter in the microwave, then added garlic salt to the butter. She placed four slices of bread on a baking tray and buttered the bread with the special mixture. "Voila, homemade garlic bread," she announced.

Sherlock watched with admiration as Molly put the bread in the oven at the right time so it would be ready when the spaghetti was also done, and they could be served together. He was amazed that she was able to time things so perfectly, but assumed she had years of practice in cooking for herself to know what she was doing.

Sherlock helpfully set the table, and once dinner was ready, Molly served the food, then put it on
the table in front of them. Sherlock looked hungrily at the spaghetti which both smelled and looked delicious. He had not realized how manual labor could really heighten the appetite. They had no sooner began eating when Molly suddenly picked up a long spaghetti noodle that did not have sauce on it and told him, "I want to do a Lady and the Tramp scene."

He looked from her to the spaghetti noodle questioningly. "Come again?"

"Haven't you ever seen the film?" she inquired in an incredulous tone. "Not even when you were little?"

"I do not believe so." He furrowed his brow. "Of course, as you know, I still have very little recollection of my childhood."

Molly gave him a sorrowful look. "I'm sorry, I keep forgetting just how much of your past is a blank." She paused a moment, then continued. "Anyway, it is about two dogs, a cosseted basset hound and a mongrel dog that likes her. There is this really cute scene where they are sharing a bowl of spaghetti take opposite ends of the same noodle. They are eating it and end up nose to nose. It is so adorable."

Sherlock arched his eyebrow and grinned at her. She was the one who was adorable. "Are you proposing we do the same and end up nose to nose?"

Molly giggled, holding both ends of the noodle and offering the one side to him. "More like lip to lip. Just don't bite the noodle or it will break," she instructed.

"Sherlock had to laugh at her. More and more he was discovering Molly's romantic side. She had hidden it so well from him for years. First, Barbara Cartland novels, now this. "Let's do it, then."

He took hold of the other end of the noodle she was still offering and put it in his mouth. Together they sucked the noodle, leaning in closer towards each other, until they were indeed nose to nose and their lips met in a lingering kiss, before they both chewed and swallowed.

They grinned at one another. "The things you make me do, Molly," he said, shaking his head in mock embarrassment.

Molly gave him a superior smile. "Sherlock, you know I can see you. You liked it as much as I did," she told him. "Wanna do it again?"

"If we must," he said, his grin putting the lie to his blasé words.

They followed the same pattern twice more. The best part was the kissing of course. It was a rather fun, flirty thing to do and he liked it, although he would not want anyone but Molly to know it or see them doing it.

They ate the rest of their meal the conventional way. The garlic bread was quite tasty too, Sherlock thought, then said the same out loud to Molly, praising her for her efforts. She gave him a dazzling smile. She was so easily pleased, he thought fondly.

At the end of the meal he patted his stomach and groaned. "Molly, I think I have gained two pounds with that meal alone."

Molly gave him an admiring look. "Sherlock, you are perfectly proportioned. If anything, you could eat more and still look devastatingly handsome."

He almost blushed at the compliment. Apparently he too was not immune to being flattered by a
complement, especially when it came from the woman he loved. "As long as you think so, that is all that matters to me," he told her, reaching across the table to take her hand.

After doing the mandatory taste experiment kiss, yep, garlicky but still good, and putting the leftovers in the fridge, Sherlock took it upon himself to do the dishes while Molly took her shower. They spent the rest of their night once again cuddled on the sofa in front of the telly and eating ginger nuts for dessert, after reading together more from Ephesians in the Bible.

Only eighteen more days, Sherlock reflected later that night as he held Molly in bed. He smelled her fragrance, burying his nose in her sweet smelling hair. Thank goodness he had some things to do while she worked for the next few days.

*In the morning I'll have to text John to see if he wants to go to Hackney with me on Thursday,* he thought drowsily before falling asleep.

Chapter End Notes

This was certainly a productive day for Sherlock, in getting his basement lab set up. What did you think of the scene where he was listening to mollies playlist? Credit for the idea goes to Victorianlady79, for suggesting that Molly might have listened to sad songs when she felt lonely.

What did you think of the little spaghetti noodle scene? Have you seen Lady and the Tramp? I just think that scene is so cute, and I thought it would be fun to incorporate it into my story.

I apologize if you think my chapters are getting too long. I have been attempting to improve my storytelling by turning it from a work of more black-and-white imagery, into full colour. Although this means a lot of extra work for me with a story I thought I had already completed, and just needed to do a last proof read of, I am trying to continue to develop my skills as a writer, and I hope it shows in your reading experience. A tree bears more fruit if it is watered regularly. A tree that receives no nourishment will wither and die. Please support my efforts with your feedback, and water my tree of creativity :)

Molly checked her watch. It was almost time for her to meet Meena downstairs.

The last two days had gone by quickly. She had been busy at work and Sherlock had had a few clients while she was at the hospital. Yesterday, he had gone out with John to Hackney on his case to find a blackmailer. Unfortunately he had discovered he would need another day to apprehend the culprit, whom he had already deduced to be an ex-employee of the woman who had contacted him. Molly was hoping he could wrap it up today so he wouldn't be out over the weekend.

Meena had texted her out of the blue on Wednesday, asking if they could get together for lunch. She wanted to hear all the juicy details on how "you finally landed your man." So Molly had suggested they meet for lunch on Friday.

Kaitlyn was in the lab with Molly and playing her favourite song again while she worked. That song was starting to grow on Molly. It really did have a very sexy beat to it. She wondered if she should see about it being added last minute to the list of songs for the wedding reception. Then she decided the DJ would probably play it anyway as it was a pretty current song.

"I'm in love with the shape of you. We push and pull like a magnet do," sang her friend enthusiastically, dancing around the lab tables in between doing various tasks.

Molly grinned at her always excitable friend, as she looked up from her microscope. She had given Kaitlyn the list of all the people she wanted to invite to her hen night and apparently everyone had already responded in the affirmative for the following Friday.

Molly completed her examination of the slide under the microscope, and made notes, giving the specimen to Kaitlyn to put away in a drawer. Then she stripped off her gloves and washed her hands at the sink. She turned her head towards Kaitlyn, who was still "in the zone" and had just finished putting the slide away.

"Kaitlyn, I'm heading downstairs now. Having lunch with my friend Meena. She's the one you
replaced when you started working here."

Kaitlyn stopped singing and nodded her acknowledgment. "That's great. I hope you don't mind I gave her your number when she replied to the hen night invite."

Molly took off her lab coat as she answered. "Oh, so that is how she got my number. I thought maybe she still had in on her phone from ages ago, but we haven't spoken on the phone in years. Makes sense now. Thanks for telling her. I'm looking forward to catching up with her." She walked towards the door of the lab.

"Have fun!" Kaitlyn said with a grin, beginning to sing again as she worked.

Molly stowed her lab coat in her locker, then headed downstairs and saw Meena was already standing in the lobby when she got there, as they had arranged.

"Molly!" exclaimed her old friend, offering her a quick hug. "It is so great to see you. You look so flipping happy!"

Molly grinned. "I am! Shall we go to our favourite café around the corner or stay here?"

Meena rolled her eyes and folded her arms. "Need you ask? Anything is better than the canteen food."

Molly grinned and they made their way to the small café, where they ordered their lunch, then sat down at a little table.

As soon as they had received their food orders, Mina burst out with, "Okay, Molly. So, out with it. I don't hear from you in like three years except for Christmas cards, and next thing, I see on the telly that you and Sherlock are engaged and a couple weeks after that I get an invitation to your wedding. You have to tell me what happened!" She leaned forward eagerly as she spoke, resting her elbows on the table.

Molly took a sip of her Coke then blew out a deep breath and began to speak. "I'll try. You left Bart's soon after the whole Sherlock thing where he faked his death. Well, I couldn't tell you, then, but I helped him."

Meena stared at her in open mouthed wonder, while Molly took a quick bite of her sandwich. "Oh, my God. No wonder you stopped mentioning him after that. I thought it was because it hurt too much, because he had died." She picked up her own sandwich and took a bite.

Molly finished chewing and swallowed. "Well, it was kind of like he did die. I didn't know if I'd ever see Sherlock again. He stayed with me for a few days after his supposed death, and then he left right after his 'funeral.' For me, it was easier to not talk about him at all. " she looked down in silent reflection, remembering that difficult time, then raised her eyes back to Meena's. "Then of course, you left Bart's."

Molly took another bite of her sandwich and chewed.

Meena nodded. Her elbows were still on the table as held her sandwich and looked at Molly in fascination. "Okay, so I get that. What I want to know is what happened when his name was cleared and he came back? Why didn't you get together with him then?"

Molly sighed, picking up a serviette and dabbing at the corner of her mouth. "Well, while Sherlock was gone, after a year and a half, I met someone else in a pub. At first I thought it was Sherlock, from the back, he had the same kind of curly black hair, but then he turned around and I saw it
wasn't. Anyway, we struck up a conversation and he asked me out. Tom and I went out for a few months and then he proposed. I said yes, because I cared about him and I felt my life was going nowhere. I wanted a family, Meena." She looked down at her sandwich, feeling embarrassed. All of a sudden she didn't feel hungry anymore. The memory of how she had hurt Tom and herself still left a bad taste in her mouth.

Meena put a hand to her mouth. "And let me guess, Sherlock came waltzing back into town and you realized you never got over him, right?"

Molly blushed, Setting her elbow on the table and resting her chin in her hand. "Kind of. Sherlock asked me to be his assistant one day. We had such a wonderful time, Meena. Everything between us felt like the way it had been before he left. We were really in sync." She smiled at the memory, then let out another heavy sigh, as she thought about what came next.

"Then, at the end of the day, he told me how much I mattered to him. After that, he saw my engagement ring. So yeah, that was pretty much it for a time." She paused again, trying to recall the sequence of events. "A few months later, Sherlock was best man for his friend John's wedding. He looked so amazing that day, Meena," she said wistfully, before continuing. "I was there with my fiancé but I couldn't take my eyes off of Sherlock."

She raised her chin from her hand and leaned back slightly in her chair. "After the reception was over, I broke off my engagement. Well, actually Tom confronted me after he saw me home. He said he could tell I was in love with Sherlock, by the way I'd been acting, and I admitted it, then returned his ring. I knew I wasn't being fair to Tom. I still loved Sherlock. I knew then that even if he never loved me back, that there wouldn't be anyone else." Tears pricked her eyes as she spoke, and she blinked them away. She forced herself to take another bite of her sandwich.

Mina shook her head in amazement, her own sandwich half way to her mouth. "So Sherlock did have feelings for you back then, on the day he saw your ring from someone else?"

Molly gave her friend a soft smile. "He tells me now that he had been having feelings for me for years, but just didn't recognize them. It took a pretty shocking event a couple months ago to make him admit it to himself and me that he loved me. It's a long story, and I don't really want to go into it. Let's just say that ever since then, we have been very happy. He proposed three days after he realized he loved me." Her gaze dropped from Meena to her engagement ring, twisting it around her finger. Then she looked up again with a smile. "It's like this incredible dream, Meena. You would not recognize him from the man he used to be."

Meena had finished her sandwich and took a sip of her diet Coke before responding. "Just as well. God, I still remember what he was like my first year at uni. He was so superior, even back then. I suppose I'm a bit biased, seeing as he refused to go out with me. But then, he didn't go out with anyone at all." She smiled wryly.

"Sherlock told me he had a hard time too because he was the youngest in his class," Molly explained, feeling she needed to defend her fiancé.

"Wouldn't you have been the youngest in your class if your dad hadn't gotten sick?" pointed out Meena.

"Yeah, because I did my A levels in one year," Molly agreed, folding her hands together in front of her on the table after pushing her plate away. "But then I ended up taking a year off before uni because of Dad. I wanted to spend time with him before he...died." Molly blinked quickly to stop tears from falling. It was always tough to talk about her dad.
"I'm so sorry, Molly," responded Meena, reaching over and patting Molly's folded hands. "I didn't mean to make you think about sad memories. I was thinking more along the lines of how, if you had not taken a year off, you would probably have met Sherlock back then."

Molly gave a wry grin. "I know. I would probably have fallen for him even back then and he would have ignored me. Instead of seven years to "land him" as you say, it might never have happened, or it might have taken me nineteen years instead!" She gave a convulsive shiver at the thought of pining for anyone for such an extended length of time.

Meena shrugged. "You never know, Molly. Maybe he would have noticed you."

Molly looked down, unfolded her hands and picked absently at the red and white checked tablecloth, then looked back at her friend's face. "Well, no point in thinking about that. I'm quite content to be with him now."

"I can't wait to see him on your wedding day," enthused Meena. "Oh, and I'm really looking forward to your hen night too!"

"Kaitlyn tells me it is going to be wild, but she won't tell me why," laughed Molly, relieved to be off the topic of Sherlock. "Not sure how playing board games will be wild."

"I know why, but I'm not telling," said Meena mysteriously, but Molly was unable to get anything more out of her than, "Let's just say Sherlock will really appreciate it. Yeah let me see that ring."

Molly dutifully extended her hand and Meena admired it. "I'll say one thing for Sherlock, he certainly has good taste. That heart shape is quite a romantic choice."

Molly grinned. "It is, isn't it? I love my ring and what it represents." She decided it was time for Meena to share about her own life. "So, what about you, Meena? We've been talking about me. What have you been up to? Do you have a boyfriend?"

Nina shook her head at waved her hand dismissively. "Nope. I'm quite happy to be single. When I want a good shag, I just call up my friend Daniel."

Molly knew Meena was not remotely like she was when it came to sex. Her friend had enjoyed it even in their uni days. She was still a bit shocked, however, by the casual way Meena had spoken. "So this Daniel is not your boyfriend, then?"

"Hell no," responded Meena positively. "He's a good friend, but I wouldn't want to live with him."

"Um, okay. So no love involved then?" Molly thought the whole idea incomprehensible, but she wasn't one to judge the way another person lived their life. She didn't really understand how a person could share themselves intimately with someone else, expose their innermost being, without being in love with that person, but the world was made up of many kinds of people. Obviously sexual purity was not a big issue for people who didn't have a faith background. The differences between the two women were really quite extensive, and that was probably why they had not kept up their friendship as much once Meena had left Bart's.

"Nope. But the sex is awesome. You don't have to love someone to have really great sex with them." She gave Molly a rather wicked smile.

"I have to admit I don't understand that myself. I wouldn't be able to separate sex and love that way," admitted Molly, phrasing her words carefully so as not to offend her friend.
"I know, Molly. I admire you for holding out for your Prince Charming. I'm glad Sherlock turned out to be that for you," responded Meena sincerely.

Molly gave her a soft smile. "He's more than my Prince Charming. He's my soulmate. God made us for each other."

Meena laughed. "To each their own. As long as we both are happy with our lives, what does it really matter?"

"Maybe one day you'll see it differently, if the right man comes along?" suggested Molly, thinking she really needed to pray for her friend.

Meena shrugged and took another sip of her drink before saying, "Who knows? I guess time will tell. I'll bet sex with Sherlock is mind-blowing then?"

Molly gave her a shocked look. "Meena! We are not sleeping together."

Meena stared at Molly in amazement. "Why the hell not? You pined for him for seven years. I would have thought you'd be all over him as soon as you got together."

Molly reached a hand behind her to bring her ponytail forward and twirl the end of it, biting her lip. She took a steadying breath. "If it wasn't for my faith, Meena, I can assure you I would be. And, believe me, it hasn't been easy. But no, we are waiting for our wedding night to make love."

Meena rolled her eyes and shook her head in disbelief. "God, Molly, you are still such a romantic - make love? You just need to have a flippin' awesome shag."

Molly felt a little cross, and stopped playing with her hair to fold her arms in annoyance. "Meena, I don't try to tell you how to live your life, so you should respect the way I live mine."

Meena held up her hands in apology. "You're right. I'm sorry, Molly. Good for you for waiting. I'm just glad it's not me. I'm surprised that any man would be on board with it, though."

Sherlock has become a Christian, like me, and he understands the value in waiting. Even before he became a Christian, he still respected my beliefs," Molly informed her proudly.

Mina quirked an eyebrow. "I'm assuming that means you and your ex never did it?"

Molly knew she should be annoyed with Meena for prying, but she didn't mind. She wanted to show her friend that some people still had moral boundaries. "You assume correctly." She gave a rueful grin, then continued, "Mind you, Tom wasn't particularly happy about it, but he didn't pressure me too much."

"Oh my God, Molly. You really are like one of those young virgins in those romance novels you used to read at uni, aren't you?"

Molly shrugged. "I'm not ashamed of still being a virgin, and I know it will be worth the wait, when Sherlock and I make love for the first time on our wedding night," she stated emphatically.

Meena looked at her watch. "Speaking of time, you probably need to get back to work. It has been good to catch up. Next Friday is going to be a blast!"

The friends parted soon afterwards and Molly returned to work. She thought sadly about Meena's attitude. It broke her heart that so many people these days rejected faith. Their hearts were hardened towards the truth of God and salvation. However, she couldn't change the world, only try
to be the best example of Christianity she could be, to encourage others to see for themselves what made Christians different. She would keep Meena in her prayers as well.

In the evening, as her shift was about to end, Molly was surprised to see Sherlock walking into the lab. She had just finished writing down some test results by hand.

"What are you doing here?" she asked, raising her head and looking at him.

He leaned against the lab table casually, giving her one of his heart-stopping smiles. "Wrapped up the case. John and I caught the blackmailer and got him hauled off to jail. John headed home, and I thought I'd swing by the hospital. How was your lunch with your friend?"

"It was great to catch up. She wanted to know all about how we got together. I'll tell you more about it at home."

He walked up to Molly then and put his arms around her, then gave her a long, lingering kiss. "I missed you," he murmured. "I'm sorry we didn't spend a lot of time together last night, thanks to me stopping over at John's to discuss our plans for today."

Molly smiled at him. "That's okay. I'm glad you and John were able to do the case together. Must have seemed like old times." She walked from the lab towards the locker room as she spoke, and Sherlock followed.

"Yes, it was rather fun. But I'm done taking cases for now. Our wedding is just over two weeks away and I am finding it rather hard to concentrate on working. At most, I might do a couple more client consultations," he informed her, watching as she stowed her lab coat and picked up her handbag.

She closed the locker door and turned to him. "What if Greg asks you to do a case?"

Sherlock shrugged. "Well, I guess I'd consider that if he really needed me over the next week, but in the last week you are not working either, so I am going to just finish any last minute details for the wedding with you."

"Like making serviettes?" asked Molly, grinning impishly.

"Definitely not," he responded positively, taking her hand.

The couple took a taxi, stopping off at Joe's Fish Shop for chips, then walking the remainder of the way home.

As they ate at the kitchen table, Molly told Sherlock more about her conversation with Meena.

"She brought up the fact again that if my dad hadn't gotten sick when he did, leading me to take a year off, I would probably have seen you around campus."

He looked at her seriously. "I really doubt you would have liked me. Look how you reacted when I was on drugs during the Culverton Smith case. You would have turned tail and fled the moment you knew I was using." He paused then, adding, "But hey, maybe you could have gotten me to clean up my act."

Molly stood and threw their now empty cardboard containers into the bin, then rested her chin on Sherlock's head where he still sat, putting her arms around around him. I guess God had His reasons for making us wait until now."
Sherlock placed his hands over Molly's where they rested against his chest. "To be honest, Molly. I don't know if I would have been ready to embrace Christianity at that time. I had to go through everything I've been through to see that God has been watching over me all this time. I think it far more likely that you would have had your faith weakened by me."

Molly thought about that. "You might be right. I don't think my faith was as strong back then, especially when Dad was dying. There were times I found myself asking God why it had to happen to him. I was definitely in a vulnerable place when I was eighteen." She pulled away from Sherlock and he stood, towering over her as usual.

"I happen to love the age you are now. You are strong, mature and very secure as a person and as a woman of faith." Molly was moved by the sincerity in his tone.

"Thank you, honey. It means a lot to me that you think those things of me."

He moved then to draw her closer. "Those things and so much more, my love." He bent his head to kiss her sweetly on the lips.

Instead of reaching her arms so her fingers could thread into his curls, Molly unbuttoned his suit jacket, then slid her arms around his waist holding him close.

He was so solid, so real. She felt so loved, so incredibly blessed to be loved by this man. They stood for some minutes, just holding each other. She could feel Sherlock's chest rising and falling against her own.

When they separated, Sherlock said, with a hint of laughter in his voice, "For a moment when you unbuttoned my jacket, I thought you were intending to seduce me."

Molly giggled and looked up into his eyes. "Not with only a couple weeks to go before our wedding. I just wanted to hold you a tiny bit closer.

He chuckled. "You know you can hold me closer when we're in bed and I am not wearing a shirt."

"I know. At times I'm not wearing my chemise either, but you know we've been careful about that, to not do too much in there. I like to feel you close, holding me just before we sleep. It's comforting being in your arms."

As the evening progressed, the couple discussed the case Sherlock had just finished and how good it had been to work with his friend again.

"So, has John said anything about your stag night?" asked Molly curiously.

"Yeah, he asked me for the list of pubs I had from his stag night. He said we are going to continue where we left off, seeing as we didn't get very far on his stag night." Sherlock rolled his eyes. "How original."

Molly laughed. "Just remember, the flat is mine for the night. We'll be going to dinner and coming here for board games. Apparently, Kaitlyn has something planned, but Meena refused to tell me what it was. She did say it was something you'd like, whatever that means."

"Intriguing," murmured Sherlock. "Perhaps it's..."

Molly put a finger to his lips. "No deductions, Sherlock. I want to be surprised, whatever it is."

Later that night, when they were in their usual spooning position in bed, Molly looked at her
engagement ring. She loved her ring, testament of the commitment Sherlock had made to her when he had come to her after Sherrinford. The fact that he had been ready then, still thrilled and delighted her. It was interesting though to wonder a little about how different things might have been if they had met all those years earlier. Would her younger self have been able to resist the temptation that was Sherlock Holmes if she was only eighteen years old? To be completely honest, she sincerely doubted it. If he had wanted her back then, she would most likely not have resisted him. She had been a very young, idealistic girl.

Even as she had these rather eye-opening, but also disturbing thoughts, she drifted off to sleep in her fiancé's arms.

Those fleeting thoughts then led to the most erotic dream Molly had ever experienced.

Her dream sent her back to her uni days, and this time she got to meet Sherlock. This time she dreamed of a relationship between them that might have been, a dream which culminated in a different way after Sherrinford.

Molly squirmed in her sleep, even as her unconscious body reacted to the passion of the last scene in the dream. Still in the realm of dreamland, she said quite clearly, "Make love to me, Sherlock."

Chapter End Notes

If you have been following this story and like to read things chronologically, this is the point at which another of my stories takes place. If you have not yet read it, and would be interested in reading it, it is called, What if We Met at Uni? Molly's Dream. Please note, it is M rated due to love scenes. These are sensual and not explicit, but I adhere strictly to this website's guidelines on ratings, even though I have seen some stories that were T-rated with more descriptive content. If you do read it, I would love to receive opinions on what you think of that story as well. It is quite a different one than this one, as you will see. There is a T-rated version as well on fanfiction.net, called, A Dream is a Wish Your Heart Makes.

How did you find this chapter? I thought it would be interesting to highlight the differences between Molly and Meena. I think too, that often, non-Christians tend to look down on people with different values. We may not be openly persecuted as Christians, but people still find ways of looking down on us for our faith, which is very disturbing. We should not be made to feel guilty for having our own values, just as we should not judge others for their own ideas on things. Judging belongs to God alone.

Are you willing to stand up for your faith in public, or do you hide in shame and fear of ridicule? Be bold and shine your light! Do you want to draw others to God, or do you want to just save yourself? Thoughts to ponder.
Sherlock's mind stirred into wakefulness, having vaguely heard Molly talking.

"Make love to me, Sherlock."

His eyes snapped open and he became fully awake. What the...?

Molly's body was moving against his in agitation and to his embarrassment, he felt his own body immediately responding to it. Hastily he pulled himself away from her, putting several inches between them.

He watched her for a moment as she moved again restlessly. His senses were fully aware of her, heightened by some uniquely Molly scent he could perceive. It was as if her body was calling to his, inviting his touch, and he had to use every ounce of willpower to stay away. He had to stop this, now.

"Wake up, Molly," he hissed.

She gave a little moan and then her eyes opened too and she looked straight into his own, from the several inches that separated them. Then she blushed profusely.

"Oh, dear God," she whispered. "My body is on fire. What is happening to me?"

"From the way you just asked me to make love to you a few moments ago, I assume you were having a rather erotic dream of your own this time," he said, a little dryly, still trying to control his own response to her invitation.

"Oh, Sherlock. I'm so sorry. This has never happened to me before. It was so...like you said...erotic." She blushed again, then closed her eyes for a few seconds. "I remember it so clearly too."

"I'd really like to know what got you into that state, and myself also as a result, but I don't think the bed is the best place to discuss it. Otherwise we will be throwing away all our hard work with only two weeks before our wedding."

He could see Molly's chest rising and falling rapidly, no doubt still affected by the dream, even as he too found himself agitated in the same way. He glanced at the clock. It was seven o'clock, so thankfully, a good time to get up anyway. His body was still burning with desire for her though, he'd need a few minutes to settle down, either that, or a cold shower. He closed his eyes and forced
himself to go into his mind palace. *Think about a case you've solved*, he told himself sternly. *Reassert control.*

He kept his eyes closed, feeling the bed move as Molly apparently got up to dress. He could not think about how alluring she undoubtedly looked topless.

He groaned. *Mind palace, mind palace.* Finally he found a memory that took him away from thoughts of Molly. Learning how to fold serviettes on YouTube for John and Mary's wedding. Now that had been rather fun. YouTube, useful for so much, instructions on assembling things, how to flirt, how to braid...oh, not again. Sherlock gave up trying to use his mind palace. *A cold shower it is,* he decided ruefully.

Fortunately, by this time Molly had vacated the bedroom and he could hear her in the kitchen, probably putting coffee on. He hastily got out of bed, grabbed a pair of boxers and dashed for the shower.

A few minutes later, decidedly chilled, but feeling somewhat more like himself, Sherlock exited the bathroom and returned to the bedroom to get dressed, then headed to the kitchen.

Molly had already placed coffee on the table and she was cooking eggs and bacon, the latter of which smelled delicious. *Ah, food, always a good distraction.*

"Are you, um, feeling better?" he asked tentatively, taking a seat.

"Yes. Cooking is a good distraction from those feelings that dream evoked in me. How about you?"

"The mind palace short-circuited on me, but the cold shower worked," he told her with a pained smile.

She looked at him. "I owe you a huge apology, Sherlock."

"For all these cold showers I have been taking for the past few weeks?" He grinned at her impishly.

"Well that too, but mostly for ever thinking you were responsible for your own actions from that dream you had a couple weeks ago. Now I have to admit to myself I'm just as susceptible. Oh, and when I tell you about the dream, you are going to know how far away from acting like a Christian my behaviour was during it."

"Really?" Sherlock was intrigued. His Molly, acting unlike the paragon of virtue she was?

"I can't wait to hear it."

As they ate their breakfast, Sherlock listened with interest to his fiancée.

She had dreamed that they had met one night when they were still at uni. He had met her at a nightclub and taken her back to his place.

Once she had explained what happened, Sherlock raised his eyebrows. "You dreamed we made love? How is that possible when it is something we haven't even done?"

Molly blushed. "Well, I'm not a saint, I've thought about what it would be like, pictured it in my mind. I guess those images transferred into action in my dream."
Sherlock was rather surprised. He had obviously had thoughts of it himself, rather more frequently than he’d like to admit, but hearing her say she too had thought about it was eye-opening. And it was turning him on again. *Stupid traitorous body.* "Er, perhaps we need to discuss something else for awhile," he suggested. "Don't you have your fitting this morning?"

"Yes, at eleven. I can't wait to try on my dress again!" she said enthusiastically.

He smiled at her. "I can't wait to see it. Don't forget to take your shoes." He placed his last mouthful of food in his mouth, thinking again what an excellent cook Molly was.

Molly looked at him in surprise. "How do you know about taking shoes to your fitting?" She too had just finished eating, and she started to collect their plates.

"It was a comment Mary made. She was telling John she almost forgot to take them, and had to rush back inside their flat to grab them while the taxi was waiting to take her to her appointment."

"You really did get involved in their wedding, didn't you?" she asked over her shoulder, depositing the dirty dishes in the sink.

Sherlock stood and walked behind her to wrap his arms securely around her waist, depositing a kiss on the top of her head."It was a good distraction. I think maybe it helped divert me from thinking about you and your own possible upcoming wedding. You were engaged for quite a few months, after all."

Molly turned in his arms and hid her face against his chest. "I know. And I made every excuse to not start planning the wedding. I'd say I was too busy with work, I was exhausted, that sort of thing. Tom was actually getting quite frustrated with me. Then of course, he realized at the wedding why I was making excuses." She sighed, lost in memories of that day apparently.

Sherlock stroked her hair and commented, "I'm glad we started working on our wedding plans the day after we got engaged. We certainly didn't waste any time." Then he added, in a slightly frustrated tone, "Although I think we could have done it in even less time."

She pulled back to look up at him, he lowered his head and kissed the side of her neck, and she gave a soft sigh of pleasure at the gentle touch.

"But now we don't have to be frantic about doing everything," she pointed out a bit breathlessly. "All we have is fittings, my hen night and your stag night, right?"

"True. But don't you still have to write your vows?" He smirked at her. "Mine, of course, are done," he said, rubbing his hands along her back.

Molly looked up at him and gave him a baleful glare. "Some people have to work regular hours at a job and don't have much free time," she huffed.

"You know I'm only teasing. Now kiss me good morning," he told her, putting his fingers under her chin and lifting it properly.

"Demanding, aren't you, soon-to-be-husband?" Now it was her turn to smirk.

"Very, soon-to-be-wife." He lowered his lips to hers, feeling her softness as she melted into his embrace. He didn't kiss her for too long though, aware that the desire he had been feeling for her was still simmering near the surface, threatening to erupt. He really wanted to hear the rest of her dream, but knew it would be better to wait until after she had gone to her appointment.
He raised his head, pulling away slightly to ask, "Would you like me to come along with you to your appointment?"

She looked at him askance. "No! You can't see my dress!"

He rolled his eyes. "Molly, I didn't say I'd come into the shop with you. I can walk around the shopping centre and you can text me when you're done."

Molly chewed on her lower lip thoughtfully for a moment, then said, "In that case, I'd love to have you with me. Maybe we can get some lunch afterwards, buy those button-down shirts for you for our honeymoon as well - you know, the ones we never got to buy after we bought the jeans that day."

_Ah yes, the day we had our first disagreement over finances, _he thought with regret. _Not the best day._ To her however, he said, "Sounds like a plan."

Sherlock booked a taxi for ten-fifteen and just before they were due to leave, Molly got the bag with her wedding shoes, into which she had added what he assumed was the bra she would be wearing with her dress. He caught sight of white lace. Then they went downstairs to collect the wedding dress from Mrs. Hudson's flat.

"Oh, you have your fitting today?" asked the landlady, clasping her hands together in excitement.

"I do," beamed Molly. "I just hope I haven't put on any weight."

"I estimate three pounds, Molly, since we've been engaged," supplied Sherlock helpfully, earning a glare from both women.

"What?" He lifted his hands and shrugged. "I've put on about eight, so three is very reasonable. They do say people who are happy tend to put on weight. Besides, I doubt three pounds is going to make any difference to the way your gown fits."

"I hope not," said Molly with a worried expression, biting her lip in a manner that made him want to kiss her.

By then, Mrs. Hudson had brought out the garment bag, which she held out towards Sherlock. "You're taller, you should carry it. Mind you don't try guessing the fabric or anything by feeling it."

Sherlock rolled his eyes. "It might surprise you to learn I actually want to be surprised when my bride walks down the aisle." He returned his attention to his fiancée. "Come on, Molly, the taxi is probably waiting." He took the garment bag from Mrs. Hudson.

They made their way outside and found the taxi indeed already there. By the time they arrived at Westfield, they had to hurry inside so Molly would not be late for her appointment. After he left her there, Sherlock walked around for awhile, eventually finding himself at the jewellery shop where they had purchased their wedding rings. _Why not?_ he thought to himself, heading inside.

He perused the different offerings, then noticed a section where there were different gold locket necklaces. One caught his eye. It was in the shape of a heart, with "Always in my Heart" engraved in beautiful cursive lettering on the front. On impulse, he bought it, deciding it could be another wedding gift. _Oh, I still need to set up the printer_, he reminded himself. Then he could find a couple of the selfies on his phone of them and print out miniature versions for the locket.

He had just paid for the necklace and put it into an inside pocket, when his text alert sounded. Molly was ready for him.
He walked back to the bridal boutique where she was standing just outside the door. "How did it go?" he asked.

"Really well," she said a little dreamily. "The dress still fits perfectly. They just have to lower the hem a tiny bit because my shoes give me more height. At least you won't tower over me as much as usual. You...you aren't going to wear a top hat are you?"

"The tailor asked me about that and I declined. It was a bit embarrassing," he admitted. "I started to say why, stopped, and then Mycroft and John made me finish what I was going to say."

"Which was?" she prompted, looking up at him curiously.

"That you are a little obsessed with my hair and probably would not like it covered." He grinned.

Molly tugged at one of his curls playfully as they walked towards a nearby café. "You're absolutely right. You wouldn't look the same with your hair covered."

He grabbed her wayward hand and held it tightly. "I think you should tell me more about your dream while we are here. That way I won't be tempted to have my way with you." He winked and she blushed.

As they ate their lunch, he listened as Molly explained more about her dream - the way they had met years later, how that kiss in the lab before "the fall" led to him remembering their previous encounter at uni, and another passionate encounter ensued.

"Lab table, eh?" he asked with a gleam in his eye. "Oh, once they were married, if she were there late at night... The idea was rather exciting."

"Don't look at me like that," pleaded Molly, obviously interpreting the gleam in his eye, and the directions of his thoughts.

He sipped his Coke and said innocently, "What way?"

"Like you want to ravish me here in public," she said, barely above a whisper.

"Not in public Molly, maybe in the lab after hours - one day." He gave her one of those seductive looks he knew she liked so well, and was rather satisfied by her sharp intake of breath, as she coloured again and looked away.

"Oh." She swallowed, still not looking at him. "Do you want to hear the rest?"

He leaned casually back in his chair, pretending to be unaffected by her. "Of course."

Then she explained about him returning from exile and discovering she was engaged, but only after they had had another sexual encounter. "Oh, my God, Molly, you cheated on your fiancé with me?"

She blushed. "Apparently my dream self was a very bad girl. But she at least was close enough to me in that she never consummated her relationship with Tom. Of course that doesn't make her - my - actions any less heinous."

"Molly you would never have compromised your values that way," he asserted confidently.

"I hope not, but that isn't the worst of what my dream self did," Molly said putting her face in her hands and peeping at him through spread fingers.

He leaned forward. Fortunately they were the only ones sitting at a table just outside the café. "Do
"Well, I, the other me I mean, lied and said I couldn't get pregnant, then did everything to make sure I did. When you found out, you thought I had had a one-night stand."

Sherlock looked at her in surprise. "Why on earth would the other me think that? This is getting extremely convoluted."

"Because you didn't think I'd lie to you. Also, you were still de-toxing from your drug induced state after the Culverton Smith case."

"So, there's a lot of truth in this dream as well as fiction?" he remarked with a twist to his lips.

Molly nodded, dropping her hands from her face and reaching over to touch his right hand with her left. "Yes, it even included the phone call."

"So what happened after the phone call?" he asked, turning his hand to hold hers properly.

In the dream, after you left Sherrinford, you came to me immediately and proposed without a ring."

Sherlock chuckled, playing idly with the engagement ring on her finger. "Perhaps your dream self was telling the real you that would have been better. What about the baby thing?"

"No, sweetheart, your real timing was perfect. As for the baby, I confessed it was yours and you were happy and not cross."

Sherlock nodded thoughtfully. "Makes sense. I mean, I am looking forward to having a child with you, so presumably dream me was modelled after the real me."

Molly smiled at him softly. "Well, anyway, that's the end of it. But Sherlock, it really makes me think. I'm not this perfect person. Different circumstances could have led to different consequences for us."

"I am quite content with this version of us," he told her gently, still twirling her ring around her finger.

"Me too, of course. I just want the wedding day to hurry up and get here though," she told him, and he heard the note of impatience in her voice, realizing that she really was just as anxious as he was for the time to arrive.

"Well, you had better get a move on with those vows then," he told her. With a superior smile.

Molly huffed at him. "Well, let's get this shopping out of the way, and I'll take care of that tonight."

They left the café and found a store that had a good selection of button down casual shirts. Sherlock reluctantly chose several plaid shirts of varying colours that Molly assured him would look good with jeans.

Task accomplished, they headed back to Baker Street.

That evening, as Molly went off to shower, Sherlock took the small jewellery box out of his pocket and tucked it into the bottom drawer of his bedside table, next to the earrings he had bought weeks earlier. That reminded him, he needed to set up the printer. It was on his desk, still in the box. He had to buy paper for it before he could use it anyway.
Molly seated herself at the kitchen table with a sheet of paper while Sherlock took his own shower. When he went through the kitchen afterwards, she was writing, and quickly turned the paper over.

"I'm not peeking, I promise," he assured her, going to his chair, Bible in hand. He leafed through the tome, looking at various pictures in the beautiful Bible, as he waited for Molly to finish.

After about fifteen minutes, he heard a sigh of relief coming from the kitchen.

"Done!" she announced a couple minutes later, presumably having put her completed vows away in a safe place. "It was harder than I thought. There is so much I want to tell you, that it was difficult to condense it all. It's going to be horribly sentimental, I'm warning you," she told him, taking a seat on the sofa.

"I may have not understood sentiment in the past, but now I understand and embrace it, my love. Whatever you say to me I will treasure because it is coming from you, my dear heart." He moved to sit beside her. "Besides," he added, "my vows will quite possibly exceed yours on the sentimentality scale. In fact, my brother will probably have a good laugh at my expense, thanks to my former attitude. So, shall we do some reading?" he asked, holding up his Bible and searching for his reading glasses. Molly found them first and handed them to him. "Thank you."

He read Ephesians 6 aloud, finding the imagery of the armour of God to be interesting.

"(13) Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. (14) Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, (15) and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. (16) In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. (17) Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

"We are in a battle with the powers of darkness," commented Molly. "I really love this too. We have so much we can depend on when it comes to our faith."

"It is a comfort that we are not doing this alone. So in essence, the last verse here, the Spirit is the word of God, as in the Bible, right?" Sherlock looked at her, hoping he had hit upon the right answer.

She nodded, looking at him proudly. "That's right, and the Bible is like a sword, in that it can be used to defeat everything that comes against it. At least, that's my perception of it. Nothing can stand against the word of God."

Sherlock finished reading the chapter and placed the Bible on the coffee table. "I really like reading this way with you. It gives me a chance to ask things I am not sure of. You are so knowledgeable, Molly."

"You're a quick learner, Sherlock. You've come so far in your faith in a matter of weeks." Molly squeezed his hand.

"I think that is because I was ready to embrace Christianity and everything it stands for. Perhaps the reason people turn away from God, even those who have been churched, is because they are looking at it with their brains and not letting the words speak to their hearts."

Molly beamed at him. "Honey, that is it exactly. Head knowledge versus heart knowledge."

Sherlock smiled back at his fiancée. He felt rather proud that he understood something and she had
validated it. "Isn't it strange? This year started so terribly, with my almost exile, Mary's death, nearly killing myself with drugs, and Culverton Smith's attempt on my life, plus the events at Sherrinford. Yet I can honestly say it is now the best year of my life as well. Not only did I realize I loved you, and I have a wonderful wedding to look forward to very soon, as well as honeymoon of course, but I found Jesus, or rather, He found me, and now I have the assurance of salvation and life beyond this one."

Even as he lay in bed later that night, his heart felt full of love and hope for the future.

"Just think Molly, in two weeks we will be celebrating our love in a new way," he whispered. He was holding her to himself, just enjoying the feel of her body against his.

Molly sighed happily. "I know." She lifted her face to his for one last goodnight kiss and they slept peacefully. This time no disturbing or erotic dreams interrupted their slumber.

Chapter End Notes

If reading my other works, like the uni dream is not your cup of tea, here at least you had a chance to hear what it was about. Of course, I would love for my readers to read beyond this piece and to leave feedback on other things I have written, but obviously the Christian theme of this story is what attracts some readers and they may not wish to look into stories that are not as immersed in the elements of the Christian faith. I will say though, that many of the stories I write have these faith elements, probably more than any other author in this fandom, and a couple upcoming dreams will actually be put in the spiritual/romance genre, (although not on this site), so perhaps they will appeal to some people who like this story for that content. So please, don't limit your feedback to only this story if you are reading my other works!

Anyway, the wedding is approaching – are you looking forward to seeing it after this epic journey?

Extra note - as pointed out by a reader. When I refer to faith in my story, I am referring to the Christian faith and the tenets of that faith. I am aware there are many different belief systems that involve faith as well - this is a story about having faith and trusting in the one true and eternal God of the Holy Bible, and in the salvation that we are offered through the perfect sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a belief which offers us everlasting life beyond this one in heaven.

I welcome discussion about faith, even if you are coming to this story from outside the Christian faith. My goal is to encourage people to seek the truth for themselves, and to provide support for what I believe as a Christian myself.
The End of the Journey - for now

Chapter Summary

A happy ending for Sherlock and Molly, at least for now.

Chapter Notes

I apologize for the abrupt conclusion to the story. It may only be temporary, but I prefer to have some resolution rather than leave it completely open and unfinished. I may at some point post the remaining 20 chapters. Please take the time to read the end notes for my explanation.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Two weeks later, Sherlock and Molly declared their love and commitment to one another in front of their loved ones and God.

After the wedding reception, on their way to the Ritz for their much anticipated wedding night, Sherlock took Molly in his arms. "Well, Mrs. Holmes, one journey has ended, and now, our new journey together begins. Are you ready for it?"

"I've been waiting my whole life for it, my love," said Molly passionately, putting her own arms around his neck and kissing him with all the love she felt for him.

Their new life together, sharing the same path was just beginning, and they had so much to look forward to.

THE END (at least for now).

Chapter End Notes

It is with great regret that I have decided to take a leave of absence from this site.
before finishing the story properly.

I have set myself a punishing schedule of posting four chapters a week and I simply cannot physically accomplish that any longer, due to the pain especially in my left arm. My issues with tendonitis are not improving despite occupational therapy. The only solution seems to take a break away from posting chapters and all the stress that goes along with it. I have also been revising and improving my chapters which is a significant amount of extra work and time consuming. I don’t know if those changes are even being noticed.

I feel mental exhaustion as well. I have always felt that writing and reading should be a symbiotic relationship, (I comment on what I read, and I also respond to comments), but I realize I am in the minority. I see now most people simply want to read for entertainment, to escape their real life for a time, and not to seek anything beyond that. But, the writer gives, the reader takes, and eventually the one-sided nature of it brings about discouragement to most authors. I understand now why so many people leave stories unfinished.

For me, it is time to take a step back and re-evaluate. I do not want my writing to be mere entertainment and escape. That is why I decided to try something inspirational, to make a difference.

I do very much appreciate those of you who have provided support and encouragement at different times during my story, and especially at times when I have been ready to quit. I don’t know how many people have been touched by this labour of love, I hope it is more than those who have commented about it.

I may resume the story at some point to finish it properly. If you do care about my work, please support me and let me know I am making a difference, that I am providing more than entertainment.

I will still be on FanFiction.Net for now under the same name. I would appreciate any support and encouragement you can provide for me to continue there. I may need to take it slower there as well due to my physical limitations.

Your prayers would be appreciated, and I will continue to pray that my work here has made a positive impact in some people's lives, even if they are not willing to publicly declare it on the forum.

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End Notes

This is the beginning of a very long journey. I aim for realistic fiction, meaning I research to be as accurate as possible with scenarios and believability.
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!