the frost beneath our feet

by allsovacant

Summary

It was in the winter of 1895, I met Sherlock Holmes. It happened in one of those cold spells a week before Christmas. It happened so fast, it was too late when I learned what it was.

I fell in love.

And never did I regret it. Never.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
I hate cold spells as much as my younger half sister Harriet loves it for the Frost Fairs. Maybe because she wasn't born yet when my mother was taken away from me by a cold that only lasted for five days. It was too late before the cheapest doctor in town I could find diagnosed her with a severe case of pneumonia. My mother never recovered despite the several bottles of cold syrup I made her take. That medicine I worked for in the coal mines last summer was useless. When she slipped into unconsciousness one night when I'm still plowing the snow from Old Berty's garage, she left.

But her body remained there, tucked in bedsheets on her bed.

The next morning, she's as cold as ice.

So I never really understood the joy Harriet sees in the snow or the frozen lakes. Why one gets excited for the skating fêtes. When all I'm seeing was the horror of losing a parent.

"John!" Harriet's voice sliced through the air as she called out.

I breathed the cold air in and adjusted my worn-out scarf as I turn towards the source of the voice.

"John! Come here! Watch me skate!"

Harriet's voice echoed from the frozen river of our small town. It's still empty of crowds with only two fair-attendees from each corner with their families.

Christmas is really in the air with the smell of cookies being baked burnt and steamy hot casserole being fed to the people.

I pulled my scarf down as I watched Harriet circling and gliding on the ice. She's going faster every second that passed. So I decided to shout at her from across the river, for I know that not a minute or two she's gonna hurt herself.

"Harriet! Slow down! Or you'll slip! Your mum will get mad at me again!"

I know she heard me but she decided not to listen.

Her mum Cynthia is a kind woman though. She barely raise her voice so I doubt she'll get mad. Her daughter was the stubborn one anyway.

Father brought her home along with then six year old Harriet. Harriet was hers and a dead husband.

It was only when I turned fifteen that I came to understand the concept of live-in partners. And it was only then that I realised, my mother got replaced just like how Cynthia's dead husband got replaced.

But I know Father loved mother even though he wasn't there when the townsfolk had buried her. He said he was over Norfolk. He's my father so I believed. The next thing I know, I have a six year-old sister.

"Harriet!" I shouted again. We are biologically unrelated but her stubbornness can par of that a Watson.

A cold breeze blew and I shivered.
I huffed a breath and about to take a step in the frozen lake when a figure suddenly passed before me.

The figure was swift I thought it's an animal. But when I followed a look at what it was, I saw not an it, but a he.

And he... was beautiful.

The young man was definitely younger than me. He might be two or three years younger, for he looked just like the same age as my half-sister. Although I couldn't really tell because all I could see was his eyes. The only part of his face uncovered. Eyes of an unusually darkened grey colour. As if his eyes has sucked the colour that surrounds us.

He stared at me like I am an intruder on his personal space. He wore the usual upper class men attire hidden by his long trench coat and those silly designer button up boots.

And just like that, I couldn't get myself to look away. I even caught my breath when he stared back and raised an eyebrow. Well, then. He has attitude. I narrowed my eyes and was about to speak when Harriet shouted.

"John!"

My head snapped on her way and when I saw her arms flailing and feet unstable, I forgot the grey eyed young man.

"John!"

Harriet sounded so scared that I didn't know what to do first. Some crowd had gathered already the first time my half-sister screamed my name.

"Don't move! I'm coming!"
I shouted at her and she stopped moving.

"John, I'm scared."
Her voice trembled. But all I could do was to sympathize.

"I know," I said calmly. "I'm going to get you okay? Just stay calm, Harriet."

"Just Harry—not Harri—Oh!"
Harriet slipped and fell to the ice and immediately I braved myself and ran to the unstable ice towards her. If only a warm hand let go of my wrist.

I looked at the hand and at the owner of it. It was the young man.

"What do you wa—" I started but he cut me off.

"Observe the ice."
Came the baritone voice—low, full and deep.

"W-Wha—What?"
I couldn't help but stutter. His voice stirred something inside my chest. And I never really mean to stare at him but my whole being just seemed to be drawn to him. And the young man's pale cheeks
that are slowly being tinged with red wasn't helping.

"Snap out of it, if you want to save your sister." He muttered under his breathe.

"Right. Sorry." I countered.

The young man just rolled his eyes.

"Like I said, 'Observe.' Don't just look."

Surely, his attitude isn't as beautiful as his face but I watched and listened to him anyway.

"The ice on this part is much thicker than on that part where she's slumped. Make her move slowly farther, and then towards us or probably on the other side—wait. We need someone who'll help her to move slowly on the other end. Move very slowly John, we wouldn't want your sister to fall in the ice."

He said to me with much sincerity. And once again I couldn't help but be drawn to him again.

"John..." Harriet whinged.
I glanced at her and nodded. But before turning my full attention to her I braved myself to ask the most used pick-up question while clawing my hair with my fingers.

Harriet groaned behind me.

"What's uh... your name?"
I asked shyly while I bite my lower lip.
Somehow the young man found me amusing for I saw a small smile and a slight shake of his head.

"Sherlock. The name's Sherlock Holmes. And I believe you are trying to save your sister, John."

Even his name was beautiful and quite unique.

"Of course. Right." I said again to him before I turned to Harriet. "Stay calm, Harry."

And the way he said my name.

I turned to Harriet who was now shivering with a smug look on her face. Her wavy hair messed up.

After an excruciating ten minutes, Harriet was able to round the thin frozen part of the ice. The moment Harriet does, she went straight at me, teary-eyed and pounced like a dog. Only I was standing steady.

A round of applause sounded as Sherlock and I, and my half-sister cheered for me.

It was also only then that I remembered him. But when I turned to look, he's nowhere to be found.

"Don't tell mum."
My half-sister murmured against my jacket as she squeezed me and hugged me tight.

"We can't lie to your mum, Harry." I murmured back. As I wipe away the white soft balls of snow on the top of her head coming from the sky.

"But you can. You liked men or boys."
Harriet said while looking up at me in the eyes. Her hazel brown eyes boring into mine.
"And you liked him. Don't deny it."
She continued with a calm expression on her face. Gone was the scared and shivering girl before. I laughed nervously.

"What are you talking about?"
I spat the question at her a bit grumpily.

"That Sher—"
I didn't make her finish what she was about to say and just glared at her. And went walking ahead.

When I realised she isn't coming, I stopped in my tracks and went back to where she was standing.

"Let's go home, Harriet."
I said quietly this time. She then looked at me sadly, straightened her dress and coat and dusted off the snow in it before we started walking home.

My mind then couldn't help but just replay how the young man looked. And I felt it again, that gentle tug inside my heart.

But then I thought whatever it was, it's not worth it.

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True enough, I haven't seen Sherlock again after that first encounter. Harriet pestered me every single day to look for Sherlock. But I told her that the truth, I know nothing of her saviour.

On the second day of the cold spell's grave condition, low temperatures not exceeding five celsius started to hit our town and no one even dared to go outside. The lake continued to be frozen and the Frost Fairs and skating fêtes had been halted for the safety of the townspeople. Soup feeding sprouted from the frontyards of well-off families who are kind enough to share their blessings to those who have nothing to eat. Coal mines are closed and the men who digged for minerals before became an extended hand for those who cannot reach the feeding houses. They wheel borrowed pots of chicken soups and porridges to the neglected including the homeless.

Not much were consumed though, for the cold weather got to the homeless first.

When I started working extra hours for the grand daughter of the Duke, it was then that I saw him again.

Sherlock.

I was helping Lady Victoria, one of the Duke's daughter to load warm cooked dishes on her carriage that was clipped at the back of her steam powered car. An elegant looking young lady. She's two years younger than me. We are in town and I was tasked to help her on carrying her pots of beef broth for the homeless. A charitable person.

Lady Victoria was the one who saw Sherlock first. We were standing side by side by the carriage, when she pulled the hem of my winter jacket.

"John. Look up—"
She whispered in my ear. I hummed in response and turned to look at where she was pointing.

And there he was. Sherlock was standing on the balcony of the Piazza Inn owned by old Guido overlooking the frozen river of Thames. He has that far-away look on his face and somehow I knew that something was wrong with him. But I couldn't really go to him and leave Lady Victoria alone. She was left on my care by the Duke and the last thing I wanted to do was to go home without food to put in our plates. And so I looked away. My mind automatically chanted the words, 'Focus, John. Think about Harriet and Cynthia. And Henry working on the other side of the country.'

"Isn't he beautiful? I wonder what's his name." Lady Victoria said in a hushed voice.

I watched her as she stared at Sherlock in trance. As if she was caught in time. She looked beautiful just like him. Her golden locks of curls tied in a purple ribbon looked beautiful in par with Sherlock's dark raven curls. Her silver winter jacket somehow matched Sherlock's navy blue trench coat. They looked like a perfect couple if one observed.

I understand her.

That's exactly how I felt when I first saw Sherlock. Something inside me stirred alive. A gnawing feeling that I can only name as jealousy. When I know I shouldn't. I didn't even know if he... whom
he fancied.

"Do you know if he's from a rich family? I haven't seen him before—John?"

Does he? Where did he came from? I don't know. I have no idea. Even I haven't seen him before.

"John—he's looking at you."

I barely heard what Lady Victoria said, for my eyes searched Sherlock's.

And my heart, my heart, just slammed in my chest.

I looked away immediately before the lady noticed my reaction.

"Your Grace, we should go. The food would lose its warmth. And—And the Duke would worry —" I almost stammered. I didn't know what's wrong with me but what I do know was that I couldn't breathe. There's an invisible lump on my throat caused by anxiety.

With careful movements, I loaded the remaining pots and closed the wooden gate of the carriage but as I turned away, Lady Victoria touched my left wrist. It was the softest touch that I have ever felt from a woman after my mother passed away.

And the very first from her.

"Free your mind of worries, John Watson." She said to me looking intently into my eyes. "I would never tell anyone what I have observed."

I held her gaze and swallowed that lump on my throat, gambling on fake innocence.

"Pardon me, Your Grace. But I couldn't comprehend what you are talking about."

I said with an edge on my voice. I cleared my throat again and she just smiled. A knowing one.

And suddenly, I hated myself that I couldn't even hide what I truly feel. My expressions are as transparent as the frost beneath my feet.

She said nothing more as she walked to her steam car and somehow I am thankful. I don't doubt her words. But I would never dare to confirm it.

In this trying moment, being labeled as indifferent was as frightening as to be sentenced of death by being stoned.

When I looked up at the balcony, the lights inside the room are now dimmed low and the curtains are left half-open. Sherlock was already inside. I tried to focus looking on his windows but then Her Grace called out to me from her steam car's window.

"John—the pots aren't placed over a burning coal." I hear her say in her usual commanding voice.

"Forgive me, Your Grace." I answered back politely.

After one last look on the balcony, I ran to the other steam car and let myself sit on the front.

As we are moving onwards, I could hear a faint sound of a stringed instrument being played. And it has the saddest melody that I have ever heard.

The following days counting down to Christmas was very busy. Despite the killer spell throughout the country, any business that could be done over the ice has bloomed. When the temperature outside allowed people to buy their needs, so they did.

At night I raked fireplaces and earn extra money. I was able to save some and could send Harriet
and Cynthia on a warmer place in the East. To where my father works. As I was sitting by my own fireplace, a letter arrived from my father, saying he received the money and would be able to go home once he was reunited with her daughter and wife and we'd be family in Christmas.

I don't know what has gotten into my mind, and I scribbled a response saying that they should stay wherever they are. And I would be fine alone. As I needes to work some more. When summer comes, everything will go back into the way it was before.

I wiped the tears in my eyes and sealed the envelope with my response. The telegram couldn't be delivered at night. So I have to wait in the morning.

I decided to call it a night when a slow knock sounded on my door. The peep hole was useless for it was frosted as well. And so I trusted my instincts and prepared my bare knuckles.

One should never trust a cold winter's night and a knock on the door.

When I opened the door, the gust of cold winds entered almost dousing the flames on the fireplace.

A figure was shivering and leaning on the doorframe. And as I neared, it spoke.

"J-John..."
Came that clattering deep baritone voice. And I was almost scared to say his name.

"Sherlock?"
For he might vanish in the air.

"Hello," was all Sherlock said as he fell into my arms.

Chapter End Notes

I am with no professional knowledge of the courtesy titles of the UK. So, I sincerely apologise about the mistakes you've read. Thank you for the hits! I'm on vacay, but talk to me! My SMA's are on my profile! :)

a one night's warmth

Chapter Notes

I went narrative I think. I'm really most comfortable when writing that way. So you'll notice there's only a few dialogues. Thank you for reading still!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I dragged him inside and laid him carefully on the wornout rug in front of the fireplace. Sherlock was surprisingly light. I worried if he's eating at all. With the coals burning brightly and warm again by the fire, I went to the kitchen to reheat the chicken soup that has gone stale while the other stove nurses a warming kettle of water for a hot cup of coffee. Food unlike people, doesn't stay warm enough these days.

I immediately went to my bedroom and rummage for my first aid kit. Then I looked for a change of clothes that can fit him, grabbing them carelessly from the closet on other side of the room, Henry's. My father was as tall as Sherlock. And then I got my pillow and walked back to the living room.

I found him curled up in a fetal position, still shivering and teeth clattering. He already removed the scarf on his face and his coat lie on a heap beside him. He left his white thin undershirt on and black breeches that just sinfully blended with the creaminess of his skin.

My thoughts went to a halt.

It was only then that I get to have a good look at him. He looked younger than I thought and much beautiful in this distance. When I met him on the ice a few weeks ago, he was all covered up and only his eyes were what I've seen. Remembering my task, I left the things near him then went to the kitchen to prepare the warm essentials.

After painstakingly balancing the food tray on my hands. I went back to him. I was almost surprised to see him up already and looking at me, it has only been a few minutes after he was out cold.

I placed the tray in front of him and sat on the ragged carpet as well. I cleared my throat and tried to start a conversation.

"Alright?" I asked in a whisper.

Sherlock coughed when he tried to speak to me so he went with nodding instead. I nodded back at him then jerked my head on the direction of the food tray. After a minute, I watched him consume the stale bread and the warm soup in a hurry. I guess I'm right when I thought he haven't eaten.

The flames dance above the branches and a resounding crack of burning wood serves as our music. After sometime Sherlock drank the coffee and muttered his thanks to me. It was then that I noticed his clothes has dried from the heat of the fireplace.

"You should uhm... remove your clothes and change them." I said.

As if he was a child, Sherlock obliged and started unbuttoning his shirt, letting it slid off his frame.
Then next was his breeches and high boots. They all ended up on the floor, kicked on the side of the empty tray.

My breathing started to change as Sherlock stepped forward towards me with nothing else on but his pants. His hands are cold when he took mine but I didn't resist. Not a second passed and once again, I was too weak for the beauty that was before me. I could feel his hands roaming in my chest then in my back. Then he pushed off my jacket and unfastened the clasp of my trousers with precision as realisation dawned upon me.

"S-Sherlock," surprised by how my voice ended rough and husky. I cleared my throat and tried again.

"Sherlock... W-What do you think you are doing?"
I stammered. But Sherlock only smiled at me. His eyes are burning with unhidden lust and desire that made me go weak on my knees. And true enough, when I was pushed down without any word, my knees gave up. I wondered to myself why I feel helpless and weak and let only Sherlock do what he wanted. When he's still a complete stranger at the moment.

He successfully pulled off my trousers and I was left with my pants and my jumper on. And for the love of God, I let him. I let him instead of stopping him. My throat constrict and my heart hammered inside my chest. My mind went reeling, chanting—Stop him, stop him, stop him!

But before I could even do anything, there he was looming over me, desire burning in his opalescent green pair of eyes. My own eyes involuntarily closes when he started touching my face. His hands roam on my chest. His palms are big, strong and yet they felt sensual against my skin. I shivered when his hands reached for my thighs. He made a movement in slow circles with his fingers as he nosed on the fabric covering me. And I could feel myself straining to be free.

And then he leaned down letting his weight burden my thighs. I didn't dare to speak nor squirm nor fret when I felt his clothed hard length brushed against my stomach. But I let myself smile a little when that little bit of contact made Sherlock moan.

Pleasure stirred inside me as he started to bit my earlobe, as he kissed my jaw, my throat. While his hands now caressed my chest. Feeling bolder a bit myself, I took his left hand and placed soft kisses on the inside of his palm and then down his wrist.

I felt the change in his breathing—his heartbeat and the way he looked at me. And that's when he chose to say those words. With a deep thought, no hesitation and a final decision that I could hardly breathe just by hearing it.

"I want you, John. Make love with me."

I turn wanton at the firmness yet gentleness of his voice. Deep, baritone voice that swept me off my feet.

I looked down at our almost naked bodies and thought 'Why me?,' 'What is it about me that you see?' I wanted to ask. But I could never do it.

Then Sherlock speaks again, "I know this might sound a bit absurd. But I was very attracted to you, the moment I saw you helping your sister to safety. And even if you clearly didn't know how to save her without the help of anyone, you still managed to keep her calm. That was something."

I stared at him dumbfounded. Did he just praised me and insulted me at the same time? Because
yes, that's what it is. That's how I felt. And he said that he was still attracted to me?

"One night, John. That's all I ask."

He said. When I look up, he was still staring at me like he did when we first met.

What I dared to do was to put my hands on his hips and leaned on the expanse of his naked torso. There, I nodded slowly.

Not a blink of an eye passed and I felt Sherlock's palm cupped my jaw before he leaned down and kissed me deeply.

And there by the light of the fireplace, we stripped off everything as we lay bare, skin to skin and made love. Sherlock never made me feel that I'm inexperienced. He guided me every step of the way. His voice, his body—it's as if they have their own language—want, pleasure, lust, desire, warm touch and soft and rough kisses. We learned together for the first time.

With our bodies united together it felt like flying. Every repeat is much bolder, much slower until we could no longer move. Sherlock made me feel so high, as if I was soaring the sky. And the thought that I've fallen in love with him gives it even more sense. Importance.

In the end, the smell of love-making and our joined bodily fluids are enough to tip us off over the edge. As exhaustion overthrown me, I thought I heard him whisper something in my ear as I felt him squeeze me tight in a hug.

But my mind was too muddled to even comprehend what it was.

Afterwards, although tired, we managed to clean ourselves and then transferred to the bedroom and fell asleep.

When the morning came, I thought he'd be gone.

I opened my eyes and my mind became aware of the weight half draped over my back. Sherlock's arms wrapped tightly around me. Being beneath him should've made me feel taken advantaged of. But him, over me, around me, his morning wood poking on my back, I smiled weakly at what we did last night. I was still sore and aching but in a good way.

Sherlock stirred awake and I felt his hand slowly making its way again to my aching member. I let him. I was pulled, fumbled and caressed. Then came the soft kisses on the back of my neck, on my shoulders, the sound of gentle sucking and then biting, it was all what I needed to come undone once again. Then I felt him move behind me, humping on my thighs and after a low growl from Sherlock, the next thing I felt was the trail of warm liquid on my behind. Then he fell asleep, still draped over me.

The morning light has illuminated the room already when I removed myself under Sherlock. I watched his sleeping face for a minute then kissed his lips and his curls softly then I went out of the room. I need to gather a few things and food in the market. However expensive they may be at this time around, one doesn't stop living even if he have less money. I left a note to where I'm going. And then after I showered and had breakfast from last night's left over I left Sherlock sleeping soundly on my bed.

With the thought of him still being there when I get home, I began my day. I wrapped my jacket around me and adjusted my winter boots and walked to the market. When I got there I did what I had to do. When lunchtime came I've skipped it over an extra working hours on the baker's mill. By the time it was evening, I already forgot that I haven't got lunch. With me are the bread leftovers from the bakery, some beans from the pub and a few blankets given by the town's mayor to
those who needed them.

I tried to deny to myself that I wasn't excited to go home just because Sherlock was there. Thinking about it while walking, I needed to have a real conversation about it with him. Maybe over dinner, I plan to cook something for him as we try to learn about each other and maybe Sherlock and I could be something.

When I reached the wooden door, I took my key and unlocked it. The house was still the same as I left it. If only Sherlock was there as well.

"Sherlock?" I called out. "Sherlock are you here?" But no one answered.

I walked inside and saw everything was still in place even the tray was still on the floor. And the blankets as well. I left them there to deal with tomorrow.

Feeling tired from a long day, I decided to go to bed. The weather outside was turning bad again and I can only hope that Sherlock got passed through that. Maybe Sherlock needed to go home for emergency.

I walked to the bedroom and was about to sit on my bed when my gaze finds a piece of paper folded neatly over it.

I took it and read what's inside.

"John, I am grateful for last night. It was something I will never forget. I will carry that dream of having you with me as I travel far south for some familial matter. Please expect to receive a letter again as my journey will go.

Keep warm. Happy Christmas.

Signed, Sherlock Holmes."

And he was right. One night indeed. Just one night. I stripped off my clothes and lied on my bed in disappointment.

I just wish one night could be enough. And with that thought I fell asleep wrapped in a warm blanket thinking it was a warm body instead.

Chapter End Notes

This has gone out of hand but when all you do was watch porn every evening for days—well, one cannot help but write something like it. No matter how sloppy it could be. Lmao.

One last chapter I think?
The migrating birds flew over the main sail of HMS Majestic as the Port of London came into view. The river Thames remained calm and peaceful as the anchor was lowered.

Everything looked the same.

With the exception of not being buried on ice this week but just a good inch of frost on the roads, Thames is buzzing with buyers, merchants and entrepreneurs coming to and fro. Majority of them are on foot. Some of them rode on smaller ships, boats, yachts, on steam cars and even horse-pulled carriages. I belong to those who are on their feet aboard Her Majesty's ship. Hauling sacks of coal over my back, I took the steps of the steel bridge from the frosted roads up to the deck of the ship. I walked and walked along others until the engine room was reached. My work clothes latch on my back tightly because of sweat. I reached out for my towel wiping the black grime of sweat and coal on my face and turned my gaze to the sea.

It's been a week since Sherlock left and until now I haven't heard any news about him. When the day turned nights, I decided not to expect anything anymore. That was my way of coping. What more could I ask for? If he could only give me a night, I should be grateful about that. Not that I mean something to him. At the short period of our acquaintance I knew that already. He's not the one to stay. I finished the chores I was asked to do and prepared on going home. The holidays passing wouldn't stop the weather changing.

As I am passing through some sailors sipping their warm coffee mugs while seated on fish barrels, I overheard them talking about the Great Storm. I asked one of the faces I knew, Thomas, and he gladly explained what it is to me.

"Terrible storm, Watson." Thomas declared in between sips of coffee. "We are even advised not to sail at all. Says it's death we are going to battle with in the midst of the sea."

I hummed in response, "That bad, eh?"
And he nodded at me before turning to his friends again. I murmured my gratefulness and started walking home.

Just as I am turning the corner of the alley, a chorus of voices sounded behind me, shouting my name. When I turned to see who it was, I was surprised to see Harriet. She came running at me with a hug.
Then came Cyn and—Henry.

I asked them what they were doing back already when I just escorted them to the trains a few days before.

"How's my oldest?"
Henry murmured as he approached me and giving me a single arm hug. He smelled of the sea and warm coffee. I wrapped an arm on his back as well and felt him patted my shoulder. I nodded even if he could only feel that then I pulled away. I ruffled my sister's hair and kissed Cyn on the cheek.

"I told your father that we should just go home since you'll be alone come Christmas. And no one should be left alone on that time of the year John." Cyn said softly to me.
"You didn't have to, but thank you."
I murmured followed by an inaudible thanks. She put a hand on my shoulder and patted it lightly. I smiled at her. Then my father chose that opportunity to speak in a voice that mimics those of the higher class.

"We almost couldn't make it because of the brewing storm. The blizzard is to come later in the evening, John. Are we prepared? Have you made sure the barn and the house are safe from the winds?"

But before I could snap at him, I saw Cyn's expression turned hard while facing my father sideways. "Henry—"

"I'm just asking." My father replied in a bored voice.

I spared my father a glance while giving him a stern nod before angling my body sideways.

I ruffled my sister's head and she laughed in glee. "Good to see you too, Harriet, Cyn—"

There was an unbidden silence before I found the voice to say the word I haven't said in years since my mother died.

"Dad."

And then I turned my back started walking to the alley. A few minutes passed before I heard my estranged family followed. Around me, the neighborhood has been preparing for the impending storm. While I, on the otherhand, am struggling to fight my own catastrophe called emotions.

The night has started to drape the dimly lit blue sky with an unnerving colour of black.

Not an hour had passed and we are covered in darkness.

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The branches from the tree outside the window illuminated by the single candlelight made shadows above the ceiling. I lie in bed staring at it thinking of the many shapes that formed. My room as I have prepared it for the winter storm has a small fireplace where I could keep it burning enough to last for the night. I feel tired as usual. Everyone is asleep. But sleep seem to deprive its spell over me. I toss and turn and tried to think of different thoughts instead, and that's when it came to rest on one.

**Sherlock.**

I wondered how is he? Is he safe from the cold? Does he have a room for the night? Does he even have food to eat? It made no sense to worry and no use in worrying. But I still did. Sure he's a traveller, that at least I know.

That one night something happened to us, it wasn't just the thing that we did. When sated and still naked, we talked about a lot of things. Finally I am able to ask him about his life. And gradually, I have unfolded the mystery that is Sherlock Holmes.

Sherlock was born in Surrey from a middle class family and had an estranged older brother who lives in America. Mycroft, seven years older than him was a fruit from a first marriage that had gone wrong. I almost said that we're the same. But I still couldn't tell him that side of my life. Sherlock told me that he dreamt of pursuing to be a man of science because that's what his parents wanted. But when his parents died from a sea accident, his sibling relationship with Mycroft went
downhill. He travelled a lot. From town to town, villages to villages in search of something or someone that could help him. At his young age, Sherlock had almost been to every part of Southern England searching for something, for someone that could help him achieve his goals. But success is just as cruel as fate.

And the only reason that Sherlock was here in my little town was because of the Frost Fairs. His love for dancing came from his mother. And he has planned on joining at one of those events.

"At least, they aren't here to witness their son put them to shame. I can never be what they want me to be." Sherlock murmured against the crown of my head as we marvel from the heat of each other's arms.

"I don't think so." I countered. "I think... personally, you're brilliant. You—you even help me save Harriet. You just have to have the courage to try again." I said to him softly.

Sherlock then turned to me and smiled. But it didn't reach his eyes. He got up from bed and I watch as the candlelight bathe his alabaster skin in ethereal glow. He took my hand and squeezed it affectionately. His pair of grey eyes never leaving mine.

"Thank you, John... If there's one thing that I am grateful while I'm still here in this world—It was meeting you. And being with you. Right now. A chance meeting that I will never forget and I will carry with me on my journey."

We managed to give a genuine smile to one another and Sherlock then returned to bed with me.

I fell asleep with his words on my mind. But the weight of it haven't crushed me until after two hours.

There was a moment between sleeping and waking up that triggers your subconsciously to dream. And I dreamed that Sherlock was running outside of our house calling for me—calling for help.

It was followed by a continuous rap on my window. Hard knocks coming in contact with the wood. I got up startled and pushed the curtains open. And I couldn't help but gape at the figure outside my window.

Her golden curls in chaos, her ears turning bluish, her lips purplish and her cheeks painted red while her breath comes in puffs and huffs. The winter coat she's wearing thrashes wildly around her. I couldn't almost see her from the strong winds. It has picked up speed and the snow fell hard in volume.

The great blizzard has started and I still stared in awe as Lady Victoria stood outside shivering and marking her finger on the frost covered window with a single word that made my heart fell on my feet.

Sherlock.

Chapter End Notes

out of depression, I finished the fourth chapter—we'll have one and two more I guess.
Thank you for sticking with me.
I scramble on my feet as I put on the thickest winter clothes I have and a pair of gloves and a wool hat. I barge out of my bedroom holding a lantern and walked briskly to the living room, praying silently that my movements wouldn't wake the rest of my family.

The moment my hand touches the cold doorknob, I push the door open half-running, half-walking to reach the gate. It was already ajar, and I saw Lady Victoria on the other side being assisted by her two guardsmen. I watch as the snow blurs them before me every passing minute. It was so dark and there were barely street lamps that illuminates the road. I hurried towards her balancing myself on the two feet snow. Her frantic hands waving at me to hurry. It didn't help for the dread pooling inside my stomach vanish.

Once seated, the steam car came to life and we started on the sleek road.

The silence was deafening. And not until I cleared my throat that Lady Victoria seemed to acknowledge my presence.

"Pardon me, Your Grace. But—where are we going and—"

When Lady Victoria turned to me, she didn't say the words. But her silence spoke for her.

••••••

Disbelief. That was my first thought—No. That can't be—and I am aware of my face, contoured in fear, pain... loss. Loss for something that could've been there.

"His body, among others, was found by a constable after being alerted by a local fisherman. It was presumed that he was crossing the Thames on feet, with other refugees from the South.

I don't know what to say. I don't know what to feel. I couldn't feel anything. Lady Victoria cried silently by my side as I took her hand and squeezed it.

After a minute of silence, I surveyed the barely lit warehouse where barters trade their goods for barrels of fish. Where entrepreneurs does business on a warm sunny day. Where spring blooms in every corner once the garden bloomers parade their beauties on the Mayflower feast. Now the wide dark room stinking with the smell of seawater grime, rain, and sleet became a frozen grave. Bodies are curled up everywhere. Some are by two's, those holding their hands, I can only assume
they are couples or family members trying to confort each other with heat. About fifty to a hundred bodies were there. My jaw dropped in anguish and regret. Regret for these lives that could've been saved if they were warned earlier. If someone actually told them not to go out and just keep each other warm and safe inside their houses.

The door from the right corner of the warehouse opened revealing a group of men carrying lamps and thick blankets. They started to survey the frozen faces scattered in the floor. And that's when I realised I need to find Sherlock. I need to see him.

I turned to Lady Victoria and she looked at me with great sadness in her eyes.

"I am so sorry for your friend, John."
Tears fell glistening from her eyes as she dabbed her face with a handkerchief. I have no idea how she assumed we're friends but knowing that someone else knew about Sherlock's existence in my life makes the impending truth bearable. She was about to say something when her guard whispers to her. She looked at me again momentarily then nodded to the guard.

"I have to go, John. My father was looking for me."
She said in a weak voice.

"Of course, I—thank you, Your Grace."

She smiled at me sadly and went on with her guards leaving me to face the grim truth. And I did, even if it's the most painful truth, it was the most important. Sherlock came home. He came back. And after that thought tears threaten my eyes. My eyes that finally found him in the far left corner of the warehouse. How did I know? I don't. But the dreadful feeling that I'm feeling does.

My feet feels heavy with every step I make towards the figure. My breath catches and every drag seemed to squeeze my heart. I closed my eyes when a loud wail broke the eerie chorus of mixed wind and river waters.

'My son! My son!'

I glance to where the anguish sound came and there I saw an old woman cradling the frozen body of his son close to him. Some bystanders helped her to remove her son from the place and I watched them while leaving.

I started walking towards the figure in a trance.

He was like a sculpture of ice. His lips purple, his skin was porcelain blue. He was like... sleeping peacefully, curled by the no longer burning hearth. His palms clasped together and pillowed under his cheek. I touched him. My own skin burned from cold but still I wanted to feel him. So I did. I traced my finger over his nose, his lips, his cheeks, his hands. When I came to his neck that's when I saw it. A folded paper wrapped in a foil.

The foil was still a bit warm and the paper inside it. I unfolded the paper and read Sherlock's messy scribble.

John,

*If ever you're reading this, I will no longer be around. I'll probably die due to hunger but most likely hypothermia.*
*I am just hoping you'll find this letter soon before the blizzard gets worse.*
John, assuming there are still children beside me when you get here, they are alive. I made an experiment, about how to preserve heat, warmth to save them. I want to make a difference John. I want to save lives. I want you to be proud of me. I owe you so much, John and I am grateful to you. I apologise that I am leaving you this way.

As I am writing this, my fingers are already aching. The possibility of frostbite is self-evident.

I want to see you, John. I want to... I want to feel you again. But that would be impossible now wouldn't it? I am so sorry, that I didn't make it home to you. But I want you to know John Watson, I adore you close to my heart. I have treasured our memories together, from that day we met until the day I left. Most importantly, that one night when we become one. I'm afraid my writing is becoming unstable. My fingers feels like they are going to crumble in pieces. So I must stop here.

Never forget me, John.
That's all I ask.

Yours forever,
Sherlock Holmes

I gasp for air as soon as I finished reading. I run my eyes over Sherlock's letter once again and for the second time on that fateful day I scrambled on my feet.

His coat gone, his scarf, his very self that he only have was gone. Then I noticed the children beside him. A boy and a girl, seemed dead to me, poor young ones. When I looked at them closely, that's when I saw it. Over their bodies lies Sherlock's coat. It was draped over the children. I knelt down and checked on them. When my right hand came in contact with the girl's forehead, she flinched. I checked the boy, his breathing was shallow. And then the little girl moved slowly. I stare at them with disbelief tears falling from my eyes. My chest constricted. I could feel my heartbeat fail. I wanted to say something. I wanted to shook Sherlock awake. I wanted to tell him he has indeed saved lives. I wanted to tell him that I loved him.

But then there was a scream. All I could hear was screaming. Someone screaming for help.

And that someone was me.

••••••

The Journal of John Watson
April 1897

(paper clippings inside the brown leather journal)

Entry: December 28, 1895

—Sherlock, my Sherlock... you are a hero and I am so proud of you.

—I wish I was there with you. My heart is in pain. I loved you. I loved you so much... Goodbye, my love. I will always remember you.

—I will never forget you

—the cleverest and bravest of all

The cold spell of December 1895 was a grave remembrance when the Great Blizzard began. The children Sherlock saved are Janice Higgins, fourteen and her younger brother Johan Higgins,
eleven. The news of them surviving the Great Blizzard was the talk of the town for the following six months. The two children stated that they own their lives from the tall man with a mop of dark curls wearing a long coat that urged them to lie into an insulation bed that the man declared he made. I have showed them Sherlock's letter and the children, crying and all promised to me that Sherlock's heroism will never be forgotten.

The Great Blizzard changed our little town afterwards, but for the better. Some wanted to forget it. Some treated it like it hadn't existed. But for me, I treasured it. Because on that time I met the most beautiful man among all.

The cleverest, the most brilliant and the bravest.

___

*Entry: March 1897,*

*It was in the winter of 1895, that I met Sherlock Holmes. It happened in one of those cold spells a week before Christmas. It happened so fast, it was too late when I learned what it was.*

*I fell in love.*

*And never for a second of my life did I regret it. Never.*

—end of journal entry—

***

*FIN*

Chapter End Notes

I could never state the accuracy of every information about The Great Blizzard of the 1890s. But all I could say was I knew I've read it on some History article. But not until the thirteenth prompt of last year's Advent Challenge that this story was born. It has indeed taken quite a different turn in the end and I'm still trying to understand what is this mess??! xD

My deepest gratitude God for keeping me alive. Giving me strength to hold on. And for sending Blue, as my personal Angel and for her unwavering support. You are my light in the dark.

And to all of my readers who tolerates my chosen path in writing. I LOVE YOU ALL SO MUCH. God bless you.
A Major Character Death WIP. The first I'll be writing on the said genre after two months of writing light fluff and angst only—

Thanks for reading!
Talk to me @allsovacant on Twitter

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